

The Understanding of Sad Appeal in Emotional Advertisement among Audiences in Klang Valley, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The rise in emotional advertising comes at a time when brands are making every effort in creating contents rather than just making advertisements. The aim of this study is related to advertisements that contain sad emotional appeals, and its impact on the viewers and their purchasing decisions. The research methodology of qualitative method and phenomenological approach were applied. The data of this study was then collected by conducting in-depth interview. The data from the interview session was transcribed verbatim to ensure the words and sentences are transcribed accordingly. The findings discuss the attitude shown by the audiences towards the emotional contents in advertisements. The attitude shown by the audiences was observed closely on their reactions after watching advertisements that contains emotional appeals; particularly sad appeals. In point of fact, this research has managed to reveal on the pattern involved among advertisement audiences in navigating the content from advertisements with emotional appeals. This study is predominantly a study of emotional advertisements; *Sadvertising*, as catchy as it sounds, as a popular culture terminology that describes an advertising trend for consumers in which advertisers are using a certain set of game plan to jockey on people's emotions and galvanise feelings of sadness, melancholy or wistfulness. The study adheres to the idea of a growing number of emotional advertisements and its effect on the advertisement audiences.

Keywords: *Advertising, emotional advertisement, sad appeal, emotional appeal, attitude.*

INTRODUCTION

Advertising appeal is explicated as an enkindling force which sparks the consumer state of mind against the products or services thereby shaping the way it is viewed by the consumers and how purchasing certain products can prove to be benevolent to them (Kenechukwu et al., 2013). Nevertheless, these emotional appeals are manifested in the emotional, experiential side of consumption where it seeks to make the consumer feel good about the product, by creating a likeable or friendly brand; they rely on feelings for effectiveness. This paper is predominantly a study of emotional advertisements in Malaysia. *Sadvertising*, as catchy as it sounds, is a popular culture terminology that describes an advertising trend for consumers in which advertisers are using a certain set of game plan to jockey on people's emotions and galvanise feelings of sadness, melancholy or wistfulness (Techopedia Inc., 2018). The study adheres to the idea of a growing number of emotional advertisements and its effect on the advertisement audiences.

Advertisements are highly influencing the purchasing decisions made daily by consumers. On that account, it is the reason why advertisements have remained as one of the most efficacious enlightenment among mass media's medium in hyping a product or a service. As revealed by Richards and Curran (2012), there are five essential elements that are often found in the definitions of advertising; (1) paid; (2) non-personal; (3) has an identified sponsor, and uses (4) mass media; and (5) aims to persuade or influence. An

individual's mental and sound state as well as their personality has an effect on the purchasing behaviour. Their own characteristic personality traits are a reflection on his or her buying behaviour. Kenechuwu et al. (2013) mentioned that there are four psychological factors that affect buying behaviour; motivation, perception, learning, and beliefs and attitude.

In this study, the researcher looked into how emotional appeals in advertisements perform its duty. In Albers-Miller and Stafford (1999) view, emotional appeals initiates brand awareness that later is turned into something that is amiable or friendly where it could institute a feeling that is either positive or negative in creating a positive emotional association with a product. In the process of decision making, emotional appeal would come into a consumer's subconscious mind which are based on emotions and aptitude, or gut feelings where it cannot rationally process information based on a conscious thought, to receive, process, and evaluate information. Brown (2009) remarks that there are two benefits when emotional responds are being generated by the advertisements; it helps the emotions of a consumer transfer to the brand to create brand awareness and brand perceptions, and helps to generate engagement and memorability. Emotional appeals seem to bring an impact in advertisements because studies have shown that emotional advertising can influence customers' reactions to advertisement, can intensify their attention, and can affect their brand attitudes (Mattila, 1999).

We often realise that the media has the power to disseminate information to the people effectively. Some people may think that advertisements with emotional appeals will not help in fostering purchasing behaviour, while some are very determined and eager to make purchasing decisions based on their emotions. In simple words, people define sadness in emotions differently according to their lifestyle, culture, beliefs, and norms. Advertisement audience might watch emotional advertisements on the media and only take those messages as a viewing pleasure or to be more responsive. This research is actually prone to understand the current trend of audiences' viewing patterns. The elements of interpersonal communication play its role to determine the individual's perception towards the subject matter. The researcher hopes to see whether the audiences' expectation will be affected after watching the emotional advertisements. This is where the interpretation of purchasing behaviour will be varied in meaning. It is hard to predict whether sad appeals that is being infused in advertisements meets its objectives. For instance, audiences might feel sad for a short moment that the feelings were left aside, while some would have it linger in their head and heart and it would affect their lifestyle; purchasing decision. Specifically, a research objective was addressed in this study related to advertisements that contains emotional appeals, and its impact on the viewers and their purchasing decisions. Specifically this study aims to understand the attitudes shown by the audiences on the emotional contents in advertisements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Contents in Advertisements

"Pathos" embodies the audience's emotional influence. In persuading the audience, it is necessary to put them in the appropriate emotional state. As McCormack (2014) notes, pathos is an appeal to emotion. An advertisement using pathos will attempt to conjure an emotional response in the consumer. As a component in an overall advertising strategy that seeks to entice consumers into purchasing specific goods or services, persuasive advertising often does that by appealing to their emotions and general sensibilities (Bolaito, 2012).

Sometimes, the advertisers ignite positive emotions such as happiness. Other times, advertisers will shed a dark cloud of emotions such as pain. Pathos is often used by advertisers with an intention to create an affirmative emotional affection of the audience towards their advertisements. The overall ability to achieve pathos is eliciting emotions. Thereupon, there are various ways to enact an emotional reaction in the audience.

In creating an emotional response in the form of purchasing decisions by the consumers, some advertisers would choose emotional appeal, or pathos, as a method of persuasion. According to Roozen (2013), commercial that contains sadness appeals works better for commercials and proves to be the most responsive for the for-profit brands. Emotional appeals rely on feelings for effectiveness by creating a likeable or friendly brand that may make the consumer feel good about the product. Kotler and Armstrong (1994) added that purchasing decisions can be motivated through emotional appeals as it attempt to stir up either negative or positive emotions which includes fear, guilt, and shame appeals that get people to pursue doing things they should or stop doing things they shouldn't. Correspondingly, emotional appeals have an influence on how we feel, taste, smell, hear, or see. To put it simply, emotional appeal motivates an individual's psychological and social needs for purchasing certain products or services (Kenechukwu, Asemah & Edegoh, 2013).

Emotional advertisements have been found to be better liked and to have higher levels of recall of brand names and messages (Friestad and Thorson, 1986). This is agreed upon as well by Holbrook and O'Shaughnessy (1984) which says that emotional appeals in advertisements can be used to influence consumer decision making in addition to rational appeals based on product attributes. Relying on such benefits, advertisers in general have created positive feelings to be associated with the advertised product (Shrimp, 1981). However, there are also instances of advertisers focusing on generating intense emotional response, with less conscious attention directed towards 'pleasant' appeal. Hence, emotional advertising appeal places stress on meeting consumers' psychological, social, or symbolic requirements, where many purchase motives come from.

In creating an advertisement that runs a lot of emotions within, advertisers usually use the method of storytelling. Story telling is part of the daily communication experience. Thus, one effect of storytelling is the recreation of a more casual situation in an advertisement. Therefore it is used to give a personal touch, create curiosity in the audience, or bring a vivid example. In communicating their brands, businesses need to tell a story that is irresistible and connects with the receiver of the story on an emotional level. Brand persona plays a huge role in this where the story requires a clearly understood central character with which people can identify and create a long-lasting emotional bond (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010). Studies done by Carnevale et al. (2017), showed that some consumer segments hold a more positive attitude towards the brand when the stories shared by the brand are meaningful, rather than happy—that is, when they are characterised by a sense of purpose and a mixed affective component. Particularly, this effect holds for individuals with a growth mindset. These consumers believe in the changeability of the world and, therefore, are more adept at accepting negative emotions in positive pursuits entailed in meaningful, but not happy, stories. As a business concept, "storytelling" has had a significant impact on how companies can build strong corporate cultures and credible brands.

Factors of Emotional Advertisement

Now, 'empathy' seems to be a popular phrase at the moment, with many brands aiming to create meaningful content that truly echo with consumers. Empathy was experienced as an effective response that acknowledges and attempts to understand individual's suffering through emotional resonance (Sinclair, 2017). While authenticity and honesty is also critical in marketing, a key differentiation is that these characteristics are owned by the brand. As opposed to being something – empathy is something that is offered. And unlike sympathy, which is the third-party emotion of feeling compassion, empathy means putting yourself in another's shoes and truly diagnosing their situation.

For brands, empathy can be used in creating the personas of the customer, which can help to inform more compelling targeting. In terms of marketing on the other hand, it means asking what customers truly value rather than what will sell. And by creating content that elicit empathy, consumers are more likely to take action - sharing, responding, and even encouraging change within their own communities. The depiction of this is that today's consumers are not only interested in passively consuming content. Alternately, they are actively seeking out content that prompts change, in both themselves and/or the world around them.

Another factor on why advertisers are opting for emotional advertisements is because it would incite brand association. Brand association is the way in which people think of a particular brand of product when they think of a particular activity because they are closely connected with each other. It is anything which is deep seated in customer's mind about the brand. Brand should be associated with something positive so that the customers relate the brand to being positive. Brand associations are the attributes of brand which come into consumers mind when the brand is talked about. It is related with the implicit and explicit meanings which a consumer associates with a specific brand name. Brand association can also be defined as the degree to which a specific product/service is recognised within its product or service's class and category. Brand association would provide consumers with a purchasing reason, because most brand associations are related to brand attributes, the target consumer market, and the benefits that consumers need, so that they form the foundation of brand loyalty and consumers' purchasing decisions (Len, Millman & Martin, 2010). Consequently, brand association plays a very important role in consumers' purchase decision making (Jean & Burton, 2011).

Effects of Emotional Advertisement

On the whole, advertising is the communication link between the seller and the buyer or the consumer. It does not simply provide information about products and services but is an active attempt at influencing people to action. In other words, advertising does not end with the flow of information from the seller to the buyer; it goes further to influence and persuades people to action. In ensuring that consumers are making a favorable purchasing decision towards their product and services, we can often hear that companies are spending a huge dime on working with advertisers to boost up their marketing. The final goal is to influence the purchase decision of consumers as most advertisers realise that purchase decision is the result of a long process of consumer decision making. In delving and discovering the psychological impact of advertising on the consumer buying behaviour, a research conducted by Jakštienė et al. (2008) revealed that emotions influence causes an optimistic thought on the respondents and advertisements do create a psychological vigour on the consumers.

Emotional advertisements are also used to create a sense of brand awareness. Brand awareness is created by anything that causes the consumer to experience the brand – advertising, promotion, publicity, public relations, among others (Hutter et al., 2013). Needless to say, brand awareness is the breadth to which consumers are cognizant with the qualities or image of a particular brand of goods or services. Baker et al. (1986) asserts that familiarity with a brand is a unidimensional construct that is directly related to the amount of time that has been spent processing information about the brand, regardless of the type or content of the processing that was involved.

Significantly, Malik et al. (2013) stated that a higher brand awareness would mean that it is the first brand name that clicks in the mind of a customer whenever they have the intention in making either a product or service purchases. For this reason, a brand that has some level of brand awareness is far more likely to be considered, and therefore chosen, than brands which the consumer is unaware of (Macdonald & Sharp, 1996). This is further agreed upon by Gustafson and Chabot (2007) that says brand awareness passes on how to aware current and potential customers towards your product and services. An organisation with a successful brand awareness will be reflected in their products and services which will have a good reputation in the market and simply acceptable. With brand awareness and brand image, comes brand satisfaction and brand trust. If and only if a consumer has a representation of the brand in memory including awareness and a positive image, he or she cannot be satisfied by the brand or trust the brand, both brand satisfaction and brand trust require brand knowledge (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Social Judgment Theory

The discussions above lead us to the Social Judgment Theory, which is the theory focused on in this study. Social Judgment Theory, also known as a self-persuasion theory, oversees how attitude change (persuasion) intercede judgmental processes and effects. The founders of the theory, Sheriff et al. (1961), stated that the cognitive process of an individual would reflect on their decision to accept or reject the information being presented to them. They also emphasised that the accepting of information by an individual is due to one's own ego-involvement falling within the latitude of acceptance.

Additionally, according to Brehmer (1988), Social Judgment Theory is a general framework in the study of human judgment and defines the term judgment as a process which involves the integration of information from a set of cues into a judgment about some distal state of affairs. In Adelman, Stewart, and Hammond's (1975) view, social judgment theory provides (1) a theoretical framework for understanding the origin of a decision making and (2) an approach of resolution.

The key point of the Social Judgment Theory is that attitude change (persuasion) is mediated by judgmental processes and effects. Put differently, persuasion occurs at the end of the process where a person understands a message then compares the position it advocates to the person's position on that issue. A person's position on an issue is dependent on the person's most preferred position (their anchor point), the person's judgment of the various alternatives (spread across their latitudes of acceptance, rejection, and non-commitment), and the person's level of ego-involvement with the issue.

In the latitude of acceptance, persuasive messages that advocate positions in this will be assimilated by the person. The latitude of acceptance are those positions which are acceptable. That is, they will appear to be closer to your anchor point than they actually are.

That's good news for the would-be persuader. In the latitude of non-commitment on the other hand, you don't have positive or negative feelings towards it. The latitude of non-commitment are those positions which are neither accepted nor rejected. Persuasive messages that advocate positions in your Latitude of Rejection will be contrasted by you. The latitude of rejection are positions which will be actively opposed. That is, they will appear to be further away from your anchor point than they actually are.

In this discussion, it gave an overall picture of the level of involvement of audiences of emotional advertisements on their brand awareness and purchasing decisions made, the reasons and factors of involvement, and the effects from consuming it.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher had considered for qualitative approach for it suggests analytical and cavillous understandings towards subject matters by observing human behaviour or their experiences. This research is conducted qualitatively also due to the researcher's interest to explore the research problem and interpret it from the interpretive perspective without considering any hypothetical analysis, or any variables measurements and its relations yet to produce generalisations. In this study, the researcher aims to understand what audiences think and feel about emotional advertisements and how it has affect their purchasing decision hence choosing qualitative approach in the study is the decision that has been well thought out.

The researcher is guided by the phenomenology approach and bound to every step and procedure as to make up the whole process. Lester (1999) interprets that the purpose of phenomenological approach is to shed a light on phenomena by gathering information and perceptions through qualitative method; for instance through interview, like the approach the researcher is taking, and representing it from the perspective of the research participant(s). The phenomenon is observed on audience involvement, which involves about 8 emotional advertisement audiences as subject being studied. It focuses on audiences' experiences and their interpretations on specific involvements.

A semi-structured approach was chosen by the researcher to design the process. The semi structured interview is designed to ascertain subjective responses from persons regarding a particular situation or phenomenon they have experienced. It employs a relatively detailed interview guide or schedule, and may be used when there is sufficient objective knowledge about an experience or phenomenon, but the subjective knowledge is lacking (Merton & Kendall, 1946; Morse & Field, 1995; Richards & Morse, 2007). Due to the nature of qualitative approach, the researcher reports all data collected exhaustively in emphasising the findings of this study. Hence, it is appropriate for the researcher to combine several strategies in gathering all information pertaining to the research objective. In this particular case, the informants are selected based on the purposive sampling supported with convenience and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is used as the sample is selected based on the characteristics of the population and the objective of the study. This is also because the researcher relies on her own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in this study. Convenience sampling on the other hand is applied by the researcher in approaching informants based on the researcher's convenience and availability of resources. As potential participants are hard to find, the researcher relies on the existing informants to suggest any potential individuals from their acquaintances who are willing to share their experience in order to find a good informant

that could help guide the study to its objective. This is the stage where the researcher utilises the snowball sampling strategy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The attitude shown by the audiences was observed closely on their reactions after watching advertisements that contains emotional appeals; particularly sad appeals. This included the audience's decision to make purchases after watching those advertisements which contains emotional appeals. The researcher was able to explore on the advertisement audience (AA) understanding from the audience activity towards receiving issues being reported.

In point of fact, this research has managed to reveal on the pattern involved among advertisement audiences in navigating the content from advertisements with emotional appeals. The excessive availability of emotional advertisements especially during festive seasons has led to AA's high consumability. With the advancement of technology, digital communication has been taking control of every aspect in our lives, including advertising. The age of social media where everything is at a click has also led to AA's excessive consuming of emotional advertisements. The attitude shown by audiences was explained further in the resemblance between themselves and the characters in the advertisements where it reflected on their own personal journey growing up and to some, it does not, as the life on screen are just another fictional life.

Table 1: Categories and sub categories derived from the in-depth interview with individual informants reflecting on the attitudes of the audience on emotional contents in advertisements.

Categories	Sub Categories
Excessive Availability of Emotional Advertisements	Festive Season
Emotional Hunger	The Age of Social Media
	Personal Time
	Social Participation
Resemblance of Characters	Personal Journey Growing Up
	Fictional Life

As claimed by Mitchell and Olson (2000), attitude is defined as an individual's internal evaluation of an object. This is in agreement with Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975 which stated that a person's attitude is a function of his salient beliefs at a given point in time. In the first research objective, the researcher attempts to find the answers to the question "What are the attitudes of the audience on the emotional contents in advertisements?". Learning how emotional advertisement affects the participants helped to understand the participants' attitudes prior to this phenomenon. In this study, the attitudes of the audience on emotional contents in advertisements are gathered in six themes: (i) festive season, (ii) the age of social media, (iii) personal time, (iv) social participation, (v) personal journey growing up, and (vi) fictional life. These themes were derived from the AA responses towards their attitudes towards emotional advertisements. Four out of eight participants had responded that the excessive number of emotional advertisements available either through mass media or alternative media such as on social media had led to their consumption of these advertisements.

Excessive Availability of Emotional Advertisements

a. Festive Season

The idea of reaching out to their customers in accordance with the ethnic groups to which they belong to during their respective religious festivals have been adopted by corporations in hopes that their current and future customers will be drawn further to their company and become more aware of the products and services that these corporations carry (Lean Mei Li, 2011).

To me, these advertisements *selalu datang waktu waktu macam perayaan* [usually will appear during festive seasons] like Deepavali, Chinese New Year, *Hari Raya*. (AA1 of Kuala Lumpur: Line 0101 - 0103)

There are also some kind of advertisement that makes me think for example, *Hari Raya*... Not just *Hari Raya*, but also Chinese New Year and Deepavali and all other festivals in Malaysia. (AA3 of Subang Jaya: Line 0725 - 0730)

As a result, McMahan (2017) remarks that brands have been spending billions every year trying to push deep rooted emotional feelings in an effort to coax consumers to make purchasing decisions while they are in the spirit of the holidays.

Instead of other ads, me personally if there is a sad advertisement, it is equal to a festive seasons. ... kalau during that seasons, memang I will play and click [during the festive seasons, I will definitely play and click them] because I know it's something that I will be sad and something that I will appreciate more. (AA5 from Sungai Buloh: Line 1316-1319)

Advertisements during festive season are about familiarity and the ability to bring out the familiarity but interpret it in a different way. The fundamental ingredients for advertisements during festive seasons are largely the same: happy family values, festive food, moving music, and usually an ending that has a "light at the end of the tunnel" feeling. So why is it that some campaigns leave more impact than others?

The idea of equating emotional advertisements during festive season is often used by companies that need not necessarily boost their marketing skills many times in a year. Hence, according to AA7, these companies need to ensure that at least once a year, they need to make an impact in their advertisements.

... I think the nature of their company is not fast pace ... They can only make an impact once a year, few times in a year ... So they have to make an impact. What more a better way than to have that gauging viewers, customers with that emotional advertisements. That's why they want to stick with that. (AA7 of Shah Alam: Line 1885 – 1892)

Based on the responses given by AA, advertisements have a clear role in this; the idea of making purchases must be equable to the idea of instilling goods with social significance. Customers must be encourage that they are killing two birds with one stone by

purchasing an item while communicating the pleasure, significance, and human values that giving it will bring (O'Barr, 2006).

b. The Age of Social Media

Social networking sites have been blooming tremendously in recent years. With the advancement of technology, digital communication has been taking control of every aspects in our lives, including advertising. In driving digital engagement, advertisers are enthusiastically integrating social media into their advertising programs (Voorveld, Noort, Muntinga, and Bronner, 2018).

I don't really watch a sad advertisements, it just appears in many places. For instance, social media. Because I don't watch TV often. So it pops up throughout your timeline and when I watch it. (AA2 of Subang Jaya: Line 0250 - 0253)

Most of the time, if I have to watch it like before you start a YouTube video, there are a certain advertisements that you cannot skip. So I will just continue watching it. But in other cases where I can choose either to watch it or not, I will watch it if I find that I have time to watch it (AA2 of Subang Jaya: Line 0257 - 0261).

With more than half of the AA agrees that the age of social media has led to a high consumption of emotional advertisements, this tells that it is excessively available on the digital platforms. The remaining responses of AA on describing this phenomenon are stated as below:

Ok, can't help it but sad advertisements of course are everywhere (AA3 of Subang Jaya: Line 0624).

Obviously it is not because why I want to watch sad ads, but it is generally there in TV and today since we are in new media environment, it's everywhere! (AA5 of Sungai Buloh: Line 1309-1311).

I do not choose to watch sad advertisements, it chose me. ... And *macam kalau jalan cerita menarik, okay la, tengok la* [If it has a good content, I will watch it]. (AA1 of Kuala Lumpur: Line 0035 – 0038)

Basically I get to watch sad advertisement through Facebook ... other that in Youtube when you have no choice but you have to go through the advertisement then only you can watch your video... (AA8 of Shah Alam: Line 2064 - 2071).

Based on the findings, on social media, people are discussing ideas, communicating experiences and exchanging knowledge (DiMauro & Bulmer, 2010). In consequence, social media is transforming the interactions between consumers and brands and how brand-related content is created, distributed and consumed (Tsai & Men, 2013).

Emotional Hunger

As illustrated by Small and Verrochi (2009), (1) the emotions displayed on a victim's face are often clearly illustrated and (2) sad expressions bring a far more impactful persona than happy or neutral expressions. Sadness, which often mediating the effect of emotion expression on sympathy, are the result when people view something that is sad. Contagion effects are automatic and non-inferential, but they are diminished by deliberative thought.

... it is so hard to find things that are sad lying around. When you see that kind of commercial or advertisement, for me it's an emotional hunger. It fits my emotional of being sad. So it's kind of satisfactory issue. (AA6 of Shah Alam: Line 1569 - 1573)

Depends on the advertisement...normally *macam takdela menangis menjurai-jurai*, but it touched my feelings [but normally I will not be crying, but it does touch my feelings]. (AA1 of Kuala Lumpur: Line 0040 - 0041)

Based on the findings, Mogaji (2015) noted that marketing researchers and practitioner use emotions as a tactic to increase the effectiveness of the advertisement because it affects the consumers' judgement.

a. Personal Time

As a result of emotional hunger, some participants said that they purposely look for advertisements with sad appeals and indulge in them.

Maybe because I want to feel some part of empathy inside me and sometimes after a while, you just want to be alone in your room and you want to look for something that will fill that emptiness. (AA4 of Shah Alam: Line 1024 – 1027)

Memang [Of course] I will play and click because I know it's something that I will be sad and something that I will appreciate more. (AA5 of Sungai Buloh: Line 1317 – 1319)

This basically sums up that emotional advertisements have it easier to make the audience dwell in them, as a choice of their own.

b. Social Participation

Social participation can be defined as a person's involvement in activities that provide interaction with others in society or the community (Piškur et al., 2014).

Of course, the understanding that people try to build and try to have this kind of understanding. ... So, they feel like I need to contribute something, to participate something. Maybe this is the reason why they feel like 'this advertisement is impactful ... I will remember till the end of time. (AA3 of Subang Jaya: Line 0632 – 0640)

It is based on total viewers also... the number of viewers watching it and how many people dislikes... their comments triggered me whether to watch it or not. Sometimes people are saying about this...so that will be the reason why I want to watch that sad advertisement... (AA8 of Shah Alam: Line 2075 - 2080).

It was pointed out that individuals can verbally report how they feel about an advertisement and the brand. In addition, the comments can be looked through by advertisers and brands and understand what is likely to appeal to consumers and assist in cultivating a more creative advertisement (Mogaji, 2015).

Resemblance of Characters

Choi and Lee's (2012) research shows that there is a positive effect of using characters in advertisements that will be transferred to the brands they endorse that will help marketers establish an emotional link between the consumer and the brand. In sad advertisements, people often find themselves imagining being in the shoe of those to acts as the characters. This could be as a result of their own personal journey growing up. Five participants had responded that they watch emotional advertisements because could feel that there are similarities between themselves in reality and the characters in the advertisements. These themes were derived from the AA responses towards the resemblance of characters between them and the actors in the advertisements.

a. Personal Journey Growing Up

It is undeniably true that your own journey growing up is unique and it is something that you will always cherish. Advertisers often take this feeling in developing their advertisements so that the audience could watch and relate. In this study, AA in Klang Valley and Kuala Lumpur stated a few solid reasons to confirm this:

So that one I guess I can relate and understand especially when I grow older, because your parents grow older with you... So I think that one resonates with me until today. (AA1 of Kuala Lumpur: Line 0093 - 0098)

Of course, definitely... when I see advertisements that portray a guy who is working, not spending too much time with the family, it reminds of me personally not spending too much time with my parents and also with my family. (AA3 of Subang Jaya: Line 0745-0747)

Of course, the main character would normally make you feel relatable in a way that we are always so busy living our life and we just never look back and stop to think about what really make as who we are today. ... yes I felt related to the main character of the video. (AA4 of Shah Alam: Line 1093 – 1097)

Yes, obviously. ... kalau my mom tanya apa-apa [when my mother ask me anything]. I will kadang-kadang buat bodoh je, kalau malas nak jawab, I pergi je [I will sometime ignore. When I am too lazy to answer them, I will just walk away]. (AA5 of Sungai Buloh: Line 1375 – 1383)

Yes... For instance if I see a lot of advertisements that display people who are now doing pretty okay with their lives but they have been, they have gone through some hardship throughout the period they were growing up, that's the example of the thing that I can relate to. (AA2 of Subang Jaya: Line 0333 – 0338)

... the advertisement in Malaysia, they are able to catch the attention of the viewers ... I can see myself in that character as well. I can feel the hardness, the struggle to be a better person. I can feel the resemblance in me. (AA8 of Shah Alam: Line 2114 - 2121)

b. Fictional Life

Advertising affects many aspects of our lives and can promote different behaviors that if misdirected can cause harmful outcomes in the life of the affected being (Melgar & Elsner, 2016). The ultimate goal of advertising and marketing strategies is to deliver persuasive communication convincing another party to change opinions or attitudes (Meyers-Levy & Malaviya, 1999).

I think what makes a good emotional advertisement is the storyline behind it. Because I believe that when you have an impactful storyline, not very cliché, not very straightforward, but the storyline is, you can feel that the story is genuine or sincere. (AA2 of Subang Jaya: Line 0415 - 0419)

However, some interviewees do not feel the same way. According to the AA, advertisements are meant to be reaching out on the lives of the audiences therefore the advertisers are taking every steps to make everyone positive on the messages that they are setting out, which is not absolute, but an and to constantly attempt to achieve.

No, most of the advertisements I watched I don't see the resemblance... In relation to how I live my life, *memang tak boleh nak* [I definitely cannot] relate because it's totally different than the stories. (AA1 of Kuala Lumpur: Line 0053 - 0056 and Line 0061 – 0063)

I don't think so because I don't feel that strong connection. (It is) because it is always fictional. (AA6 of Shah Alam: Line 1621 - 1622)

Because I think you know the advertisements are advertisement.... promote their products which is for their advantage. So at a certain point, you don't really buy it I think. (AA2 of Subang Jaya: Line 0319 - 0324)

These three responses are totally from a different perspective. Even so, Melgar and Elsner (2016) points out that advertising can affect and create positive effects in many fields.

CONCLUSION

This study has managed to alleviate the gap of research findings that is related to the existing research wherein sad appeal in advertisements is one of the type of advertisement available in emotional advertisements – focusing on the attitude shown among audiences towards series of content being exposed with, affecting on their purchasing decisions that inferred by the significance level of emotional-involvement. In other words, the advertisements which contain emotional appeals could help increase or decrease the level of decisions being made in terms of purchases. From the observation, there should be more similar research to be conducted in the future emphasising on sad appeals in advertisements in order to enhance audience involvement and improve purchasing decisions being made.

Finally, this study will help to bolster the previous research findings of audience involvement in emotional advertisements, scope of issues, as well as the tools of advertisements being selected by the audiences. The researcher also expects this study will contribute to increasing knowledge pertaining to audience analysis in understanding their social judgment. At more thorough and directed, this study shall augment the notion of disposition on audience activity that leads to involvement; influenced by specific social judgment that is responsible for the audiences' cognitive and behavioural changes.

From the theoretical perspective, the concept of audience involvement is to be associated with the social judgment theory with an emphasis on the emotion-involvement. It relates to the reality of audiences and their involvement in selecting the route of message selection processed by individuals towards information acceptance. In this situation, the theoretical propositions within the theory are observed consistently with one another generating propositions in expanding the range of information being received from media resources. Sheriff et al. (1961) emphasise on the message coordination through the existing knowledge about attitudes in audiences' minds with the great suggestion that such conditions reflecting closely on their behavioural cogitation. Therefore, the messages being received by audiences are characterised from the attention given with sufficient understanding towards information structuring. Thus, according to the present research findings, it gives an overall picture of the level of involvement of audiences on the advertisements by emphasising on the reasons and factors of involvement.

While the researcher has looked into the effects that emotional advertisements have in terms of encouraging purchasing decisions to be made after watching those advertisements, future researches should be focusing on whether using emotional appeals to foster purchasing decisions are actually ethical (Heath, 2007). The rationale is to understand the significance of using this type of advertisement to foster purchasing decision. The researcher is expected to see on future research trend on emotional advertisement. In terms of research design, it is suggested that similar study could be expanded to another qualitative inquiry, as to get a thorough and exhaustive observations towards the issue being studied. Thus, the findings would be more comprehensive by using different exploration of data inquiry.

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