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The Impacts of Social Media Advertisement on Millennials' Consumption

[1]Izian Idris, [2]Siti Suhana Alias, [3]Arman Ahmad [4]Christine Wong Mei Kee

[1][2][4]Department of Marketing, Sunway University, [3]UNIKL

[1]iziani@sunway.edu.my,[2]suhanaa@sunway.edu.my,[3]arman@unikl.edu.my, [3]arman@unikl.edu.my

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Abstract:

Social media is increasingly being used as a platform to conduct marketing and advertising activities. Organizations spent a lot of money on social media ads to turn prospects into actual consumers. However, some might face the challenge of designing effective social media advertising in order to motivate consumers to purchase the advertised product. Hence, this study aims to examine the factors that might affect the effectiveness of social media advertising in order to enhance Malaysian Millennials' purchase intention. Quantitative research method is adopted to enable larger sample size of Millennials in Malaysia through convenience sampling. Data from a total of 200 respondents were collected to ensure that the results are accurate and minimize the non-response rate. The proposed conceptual model is based on findings of previous studies and the hierarchy of effects model theory. Findings in this study indicated there are 4 factors (advertising appeal, informativeness, perceived relevance and emotional-based evaluation) that have positive influence on Malaysian Millennial's intention to purchase the advertised product. This study will hopefully provide some insights for the advertising industry and marketers in Malaysia to effectively plan and implement their ads over the social media platform.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Advertisements according to Adam & Stanton (1984) are simply used for product branding wherein positive consumer attitude towards the brand is stimulated. By 2017, Facebook gained nearly 2 Million worth of investment from organizations that would like to use their platform for advertising purposes and about 88% of companies open up a Twitter account for their marketing campaigns (Kapoor et. al., 2017). These sorts of online platforms improve consumer relations through the display of marketing messages on social media. The displayed marketing messages on Facebook, Snapchat, Youtube and Twitter for instance; are driven by users' generated content that could persuade

Consumer's purchase intention towards the advertised products or services. This study mirrors

previous studies such as Shareef et al (2017) and Kapoor et al. (2017) that examine the effectiveness of social media marketing. As an effective tool of viral marketing, Priyanka & Srinivasan (2015) pointed out that social media marketing is able to reach a larger audience and popularize brands on a global scale compared to the traditional way of advertising.

In this study, the effectiveness of social media advertisement towards influencing consumer consumption is tested among Millennials. Millennials otherwise known as generation Y are people born between the year 1981 and 1997 (Pew Research Center, 2014). Most of them grew up to be tech savvy as Gibson & Sodeman (2014) credited this is due to the technological advancement achieved throughout the years in terms of social media, mobile and electronic devices. TNS Global Research Consultancy (2017) reported that the average of Millennials in Malaysia spend 3.8 hours per day in

social media platform whereas the average spending hours of global Millennials is 3.2 hours per day. Local Millennials thus is deemed to be a suitable focus group as adverts are more likely to be seen by younger consumers whom have more time and they like shopping compare to others generations (Taken Smith, 2012).

II. ADVERTISING APPEAL

In advertising, the element of appeal is used to attract consumer's attention, motivate and help create a more eye catching message advertisement (Moriarty, 1991). Advertising appeal thus influences any emotions that a consumer may have towards advertised products. Such appeal heightens consumer's purchase intention as they would find advertisement to be more appealing resulting in stimulating consumer desires. There are two main elements in advertising appeal; rational ad emotional (Chu, 1996). Rational appeal emphasizes the quality, functionality and performance of the product (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). It is opted by advertisers in reassuring their clients that the advertised product possessed the competitive edge in the market. This appeal compared to emotional appeal however is less effective in products that require high degree of involvement. Emotional appeal put emphasis on consumers' emotions and how they feel towards certain products (Kazmi & Batra, 2009). Consumer are more likely to share adverts that strongly uses this appeal's message on social media (Alhabash et al, 2013) as they are more relatable thus invoking their purchase intention (Abideen & Saleem, 2011). Therefore, the first hypothesis proposed is as follows:

H1: Advertising appeal has a positive influence on customer intention to purchase advertised product.

III. FACTORS INFLUENCING PURCHASE INTENTION

Informativeness of Adverts

Before consumers even consider purchasing advertised products, they first need to understand the intended message in the advertisement. Consumers are able to evaluate products in a rationale way from

understanding the informativeness of adverts. Xu (2007) defines informative in modern time's context as the process of information delivery regarding product details via electronic means. Mobile advertisement for instance, consumers will not feel that the ads is irritating (Martins et al., 2018). Instead, they would be more intrigued with the apt amount of information leading consumers towards developing a positive attitude for the advertised products. Nicosia (1966) reasoned that consumers have the tendency to analyze advertising information based on cognitive learning theory. The theory broadly explains the thinking processes of consumers and how their individual learning outcomes are affected by internal and external factors. A more interactive advertisement mean nowadays is social media advertisement. These advertisements take advantage of existing platforms used for digital social interactions for adverting purposes. Information provided through social media are shared with family and friends so it is easier to make such advertisements viral (Saxena & Khanna, 2013 and Lee & Hong, 2016). Li & Suomi (2009) added that consumers' dependency of information regarding the advertised products is much higher due to its intangible state. Thus, the second hypothesis proposed is as follows;

H2: Informativeness of advertising has a positive influence on customer intention to purchase advertised product.

Consumer's Perceived Relevance

Relevance in the context of social media refers to any perception that consumers may have towards the advertised product based on their understanding of the advertisement. Such relevance is nonetheless self-related (Celsi & Olson, 1988 and Zhu & Chang, 2016). Social media enable advertisers to create customized adverts that targets specific group of consumers. Customizing advertisement improve the likelihood of better understanding among the targeted consumers since only relatable information regarding the products are presented to them. Dehghani et al. (2016) added that the effectiveness of advertisement

is enhanced through the ability of consumers to relate with social media advert’s messages. If consumers are able to relate better, they are more likely to remain loyal to the advertised brand or product. Kalia & Mishra (2016) claimed that brand loyalty among online consumers increases with relevancy of advertising message. When advertisement posted on social media is related to their interests and preference, consumers tend to have a positive attitude toward to advertised product. Consumers therefore will pay more attention toward the advertisement and subsequently making the advertisement more persuasive for them to purchase the advertised product (Tam & Shuk, 2005 and Rimer & Kreuter, 2006). A recent study done by Alalwan (2018) also found out that consumers’ intention to buy the advertised product increases if the social media ads is relevant to their preferences. Hence, the third hypothesis proposed is as follows;

H3: Perceived relevance has a positive influence on customer intention to purchase advertised product.

A. Emotional-based Evaluation

Purchase intention of consumers can be intrinsic motivated whereby it involves emotional-based evaluation. Venkatesh et al. (2003) separates emotional-based evaluation based on perceived entertainment and irritation. Entertainment refers to consumer’s reaction towards advertisement that invoke emotional enjoyment, aesthetic enjoyment (Ducoffe, 1996) and the ability of an advertisement to promote enjoyment that positively influence consumer’s attitude towards the advertised product (Shavitt, Lowrey, & Haefner, 1998). Nowadays, many social media platforms have become a ‘provider’ for online entertainment. Rehman et al. (2014a) explained that consumers might perceived advertisement that they see on social media with positive emotions. These emotions aid social media adverts towards enhancing consumers’ relationship with the advertised product through higher recollection of the product brand and willingness to buy (Kim & Ko, 2010 and Duffett, 2015). In contrast, irritation according to Yang, Kim & Yoo (2013) refer

to the possible negative emotions that consumers perceived from an advertisement. Irritating adverts are thus less effective due to the incomprehensible advertising message (Liu et al., 2012) as well as inappropriate time and channel shown (Raktham, Chaipoopirutana & Combs, 2017). The fourth and final hypothesis proposed is as follows;

H4: Emotional-based evaluation has a positive influence on customer intention to purchase advertised product.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH DISPOSITION

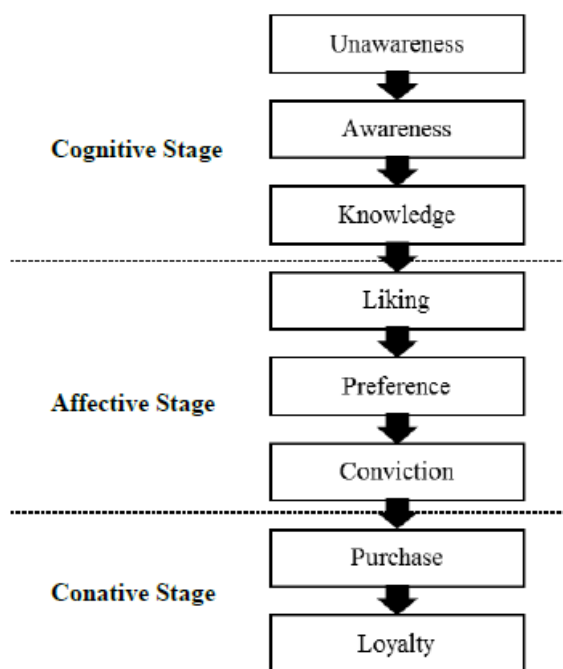


Fig. 1 Hierarchy of Effects theory

Fig. 1 illustrate Lavidge & Steiner (1961)’s Hierarchy of Effects theory that involves 7 phases. The phases; awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction and purchase represent different consumer’s reaction towards advertisement. Initially, consumers are unaware of the advertised product or brand. They become aware when the necessary knowledge is gained. Rehman et al. (2014b) emphasis that gaining such knowledge involves understanding informative commercial messages provided by advertisers in advertisements. Knowledge of the advertised product is influential in consumer’s liking and subsequent preference. Consumer preference is built upon preconceived

relevance with the advertised product brand (Zhu & Chang, 2016). Sadeghi et al. (2015) nevertheless argued that advertising appeals can affect consumers' attitude towards the product or even brand. Once consumers are convinced of their attitude, the advertised is purchased and brand loyalty is forged over a period of time.

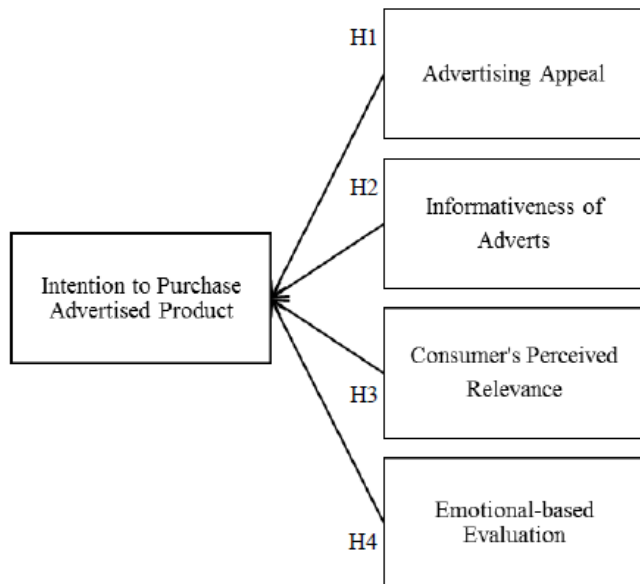


Fig. 2 Proposed Conceptual Framework

This study concerns the intention of consumers to purchase advertised product. Wu, Yeh & Hsiao (2011) define purchase intention as consumer's conscious plan and willingness to purchase a product. Studies on purchase intention (e.g. Lin & Chen, 2009 and Mirabi & Tahmasebifard, 2015) indicated that consumers with a high purchase intention are more likely to execute their intention of purchasing the intended product. Furthermore, Dao et al. (2014) and Brown, Pope & Voges (2003) highlights the possibility of increased likeliness if consumers are convinced by advertising product details that meets their needs and wants. In this study, advertising done through social media means are focus on as consumers have more faith of social media advertisement. They believe in consumer's rave product reviews (Dehghani & Tumer, 2015) and positive attraction towards creative advertising (Mirabi & Tahmasebifard, 2015). It could be concluded based on literature that consumers' attitude towards online advertisement will affect the intention to purchase the advertised product. Fig 2 is

the proposed conceptual framework for this study. The framework is designed based on Hierarch of Effects theory and consists 4 main variables; advertising appeal, in formativeness of adverts, consumer's perceived relevance and emotional-based evaluation. Each variable shall be tested in order to determine their respective impact on consumer's intention to purchase advertised products.

V. METHODOLOGY

This study collects quantitative data through self-administered surveys involving Millennials residing in Malaysia. Due to time and financial constraints, the scope of this study was limited to high density areas of Millennials around Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. Target respondents were Millennials as they have the tendency to be loyal consumers of certain product brands. Sproutsocial (2017) estimated that 58.9% of them follow the brands' social media activities in order to be able to use the latest information available online in their purchasing deliberation. The sample population therefore consists of 200 Malaysians born between the year 1981 until 1997 as targeted respondents are aged 22 to 38 years old (Pew Research Center, 2014). Hair et al. (2010) suggested a minimum of 200 respondents to lower down the study's margin of error. The data collected shed light on what is the most significant factor that influences millennials' intention to purchase advertised product and what is the social media platforms that local Millennial mostly use to view the advertisement and search for news. Data collection in this study is based on pre-determined variables and measured using a five-point Likert scale to enhance the response rate and quality. IBM SPSS statistical software was used to analyse the quantitative data collection.

VI. RESULTS

The results in this study showed that the most used social media platforms among 200 Millennials in Malaysia are Facebook with 53% followed by Instagram; 23%, YouTube; 18%, Twitter; 2.5%, Reddit; 2.5%, Snapchat; 0.5% and Pinterest; 0.5%.

The majority of respondents use Facebook to view online advertisement and search for the latest news. The results also showed that 37% of all respondents spend the most time on social media which is more than 4 hours daily compared to only 3% spending less than 1 hour. Table 1 summarized the proposed hypotheses in this study and their results. The results indicated that all of the variables p-value is in the range of 0.000 and 0.036, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, all the hypotheses in this study is supported.

Table 1 Summary of Hypotheses and Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Decision
H1	Advertising Appeal-> Intention to purchase the advertised product	Supported
H2	Informativeness-> Intention to purchase the advertised product	Supported
H3	Perceived Relevance-> Intention to purchase the advertised product	Supported
H4	Emotional-based Evaluation-> Intention to purchase the advertised product	Supported

VII. DISCUSSION

A. Discussion on Advertising Appeal

Results from this study mirrors He & Qu (2018) study's which indicated the influence of advertising appeal towards consumer purchase intention within social media context. The results indicate that both appeal has a positive influence on consumer intention to purchase the advertised product. Advertising appeal in this study are rational appeal and emotional appeal. Nonetheless, respondents were more influenced by emotional appeal compared to rational

appeal in advertisements. This supports Behboudi et al. (2014) whom reasoned that consumers perceived emotional appeal adverts as more memorable this it is easier to recall.

B. Discussion on Informativeness of Adverts

The study's results indicate that informativeness of advertising has a positive influence on customer intention to purchase the advertised product. Lee & Hong (2016) clarified that informativeness will influence consumer attitude towards social media advertisement and enhance their purchase intention. As a younger generation that grow up with technology advancement, Millennials believed that online advertisement is a good source of updated product information. They are also more likely to share informative advertisement with peers when they perceived the information is beneficial to their peers (Haida, & Rohim, 2015). The tendency to share information through social media platforms has become the norm for Millennials

C. Discussion on Perceived Relevance

The results in this study indicate that perceived relevance has a positive influence on consumer intention to purchase the advertised product. The results are similar to Alalwan (2018)'s study outcome whereby consumers' willingness to purchase the product increases parallel to their perceived relevancy with social media advertisements. Celsi & Olson (1988) clarified that perceived relevance can impact the effectiveness of the process of delivering advertising messages. Millennials are more comfortable with customized advertisement compared to older generation as they perceived that these advertisements are more relevant to their lifestyle and preference (Nyheim et al., 2015). Customizing advertising message to meet consumer's preference is thus more beneficial and they are more likely to pay attention to these ads (Yaakop et al., 2012).

D. Discussion on Emotional-Based Evaluation

The results reflect Dehghani et al. (2016)'s study whereby emotional-based evaluation influence social

media advertising value and enhance their purchase intention. The results in this study indicate that emotional-based evaluation has a positive influence on consumer intention to purchase the advertised product. The study separates emotional-based evaluation into entertainment and irritation. If consumers perceived the social media adverts as entertaining, their willingness to purchase and recall the advertised product or brand increases. Meanwhile, if consumers perceived the social media adverts as irritating, their purchase intention decreases.

VIII. IMPLICATIONS

In order to enhance customer's purchase intention, organization has to improve advertisement contents. Advertiser also have to know the dimension of social media advertising that can enhance the intention to purchase advertised product as a good advertisement will help shape positive consumers' attitude towards to the product. In appealing today's savvy younger generation, social media albeit its costly price tag has become a common advertising tools used to reach out to potential consumers in their marketing campaign. Therefore, it is imperative to know possible factors that might affect the effectiveness of social media advertising in order to enhance Malaysian Millennials' purchase intention. Results from this study found out that all of the pre-determined factors; advertising appeal, informativeness of adverts, perceived relevance and emotional-based evaluation; have the possibility of affecting Malaysian Millennials' intention to purchase advertised products. This study provides a better understanding of younger generation consumers thus enabling the creation of social media ads that are more relatable towards the consumer's preference and interest as this age group are more 'active' online than other consumer's age group. Among the 200 respondents, this study also found out that about half of them view adverts and keep up with the latest news updates through Facebook. Hence, advertisers should take the opportunity to turn such prospects into a reality by investing more in Facebook advertising than other

social media platforms. Marketers can also take this opportunity to grab consumer's attention by using customizing advertising messages on Facebook.

IX. CONCLUSION

This study looks at the effectiveness of social media advertising based on pre-determined factors. These factors however are not the only variables that might bring affect as there are other variables that have similar effect towards consumers' purchasing intention. This study was also constrained in terms of time and cost that limited the scope of study. Respondents were selected from main urban area within Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. Further study thus may involve more diverse respondents from all the states in Malaysia in order to improve the representativeness of sample population.

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