THE IMPACT OF ADVERTISING APPEALS ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION OF WOMEN FASHION PRODUCTS IN MALAYSIA

BY

NUR FARIHAH ISAMUDIN

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science (Marketing)

Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Science
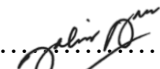International Islamic University Malaysia

JANUARY 2021

ABSTRACT

This study focused primarily on analysing the impact of four advertising appeals on purchase intention of women fashion products in Malaysia. Primary data were collected from 303 respondents using self-administered online questionnaire that was distributed among social media users from all over Malaysia. The collected data went through an extensive process of screening and sorting to prepare for the analyses. Several important tests were conducted using analytical tools namely IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and its added module, AMOS, to reach the findings. Among them are descriptive analysis, reliability tests, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, and hypotheses testing. In addition, two-stage structural equation modelling was used to test for the fitness of the proposed model. The findings from the study revealed that two out of four advertising appeals namely excitement appeal and love appeal had significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intention. Meanwhile, humour appeal and happiness appeal were found to have insignificant impact. In addition, the results of the two-stage structural equation modelling indicate that the full structural model has a good model fit. This research provides invaluable insights for marketers, especially those in women fashion industry, to create effective advertising campaigns to promote their fashion products to consumers in Malaysia.

خلاصة البحث

يركز هذا البحث على تحليل آثار أربعة نداءات إعلانية لنية المستهلكين شراء الأزياء النسوية في ماليزيا، وقد جُمعت البيانات الأساس من 303 مستجيبًا من مستهلكي وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في ماليزيا، ومرت البيانات المجموعة بعملية تصنيفية موسعة استعدادًا للتحليل، ثم أجريت بعض الاختبارات المهمة باستخدام الوسائل التحليلية من مثل برنامج الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية SPSS، والنمذجة باستخدام برنامج AMOS، واستُخدم في التحليل كل من التحليل الوصفي، واختبار الموثوقية، وتحليل عامل الاستكشاف، والتأكيد، واختبار الفرضية، علاوة عن استخدام مرحلتين لنمذجة المعادلات الهيكلية للتأكد من مطابقتها الأنموذج المقترح، وقد تبيَّن في النتائج أن لاثنين من أربعة نداءات إعلانية؛ هما الاستثارة والحب، آثارًا إيجابية دالة إحصائيًا نحو نية الشراء لدى المستهلكين، أما نداءا الضحك والفرح فلهما آثار غير دالة معنويًا، كما أشارت نتيجة نمذجة المعادلات الهيكلية ذات المرحلتين إلى أن الأنموذج المقترح جيد مناسب، وعليه؛ يوفر هذا البحث رؤية لا تقدر بالقيمة التسويقية لصناعة الأزياء النسوية في ماليزيا، وذلك من خلال الحملات الإعلانية المروجة للمنتجات لدى المستهلكين في ماليزيا.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Science (Marketing).

………………………………..
Muhammad Tahir Jan
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Science (Marketing).

………………………………..
Dr. Nik Hziman Nik Mat
Examiner

………………………………..
Dr. Nur Arfifah Bt. Abdul Sabian
Examiner

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of Business Administration and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science (Marketing).

………………………………..
Noor Hazilah Bt. Abd. Manaf
Head, Department of Business Administration

This dissertation was submitted to the Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Science and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science (Marketing).

………………………………..
Hassanuddeen Abd. Aziz
Dean, Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Science

DECLARATION

iv

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

NUR FARIHAH ISAMUDIN

Signature .... Date ....

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION OF FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH

THE IMPACT OF ADVERTISING APPEALS ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION OF WOMEN FASHION PRODUCTS IN MALAYSIA

I declare that the copyright holders of this dissertation are jointly owned by the student and IIUM.

Affirmed by Nur Farihah Binti Isamudin

……..………………….. ……………………..
Signature   Date

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents and dearest people who have

been with me in every way of the journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

x

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study by discussing the problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study and scope of the study. On the same note, the key terms used in the study are also specified and defined in this chapter. Finally, this chapter reviews the organization of all the chapters in the study.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Fashion industry is a part of a fashion system which is not limited to the business of fashion but also includes the art of fashion (Čiarnienė & Vienažindienė, 2014). In other words, fashion industry encompasses not only the production of fashion products but also consumption of the fashion products. Major and Steele (2019) opined that fashion industry comprises the process of designing, manufacturing, distributing, marketing, retailing, advertising, and promoting all types of apparel from the most exclusive and expensive haute couture and designer fashion to affordable ready-to-wear mass fashion. In business, fashion is generally related to textiles and garment industries (Siti, Rosita, & Amer, 2015). Additionally, Siti et al. (2015) also asserted that fashion can be distinctively interpreted as the end products which have symbolic and intangible characteristics that are adopted by customers as a lifestyle.

Besides, fashion is a subjective term that is interpreted differently by individuals. According to Čiarnienė and Vienažindienė (2014), fashion can simply

be defined as the styles of clothing and accessories worn by certain groups of people at any given time. Moreover, for youth nowadays, fashion is the dominant socio-cultural term (Mahfuzur, Mohamed, Che, & Nurul, 2018) where it has grown to become the most significant component of their everyday consumption choices and a central part for everyday occurrences (Ahuvia & Wong, 2002). People tend to believe that fashion products can help them to enhance social status and to be more accepted in a certain group of people (Mahfuzur et al., 2018). Furthermore, Jan and Kalthom (2015) described fashion as means of self-expression and beautification.

Since early 2000s, Kuala Lumpur Fashion Week has become the major platform putting Malaysia as a booming promising fashion capital (Rabimov & Syahirah, 2018). Among categories of fashion markets that can be found in Malaysia are luxury or designer fashion market, fast fashion or mass fashion market, green or sustainable fashion market and Islamic or modest fashion market. Luxury fashion can be recognized through its premium characteristics (Heine, 2010) such as high price, high quality, high aesthetics, rare, extraordinary, and symbolism of the products (Sjostrom, Corsi, & Lockshin, 2016). Next, fast fashion or mass fashion market is defined by affordability and availability where high-quality but inexpensive fabrics are produced for the masses (Anguelov, 2016). Meanwhile, sustainable fashion according to Carey and Cervellon (2014) is a part of the slow fashion movement, which is used interchangeably with eco-fashion, green-fashion, and ethical-fashion. It can further be described as a market where fashion products are made in an environmental and social-friendly manner which includes raw material production, manufacturing, distribution, and retailing (Shen, 2014).

On the other hand, modest fashion industry involves Shari'ah ruling even in creating marketing strategy (Muhamad Izzuddin, Abdul Kadir, & Faridah, 2019). Modest clothing according to Nestorović (2016) means covering of the head and body by following Shari'ah principles. In simpler words, modest fashion refers to clothing of modest cut that covers most of the body and conceals the shape of the body without compromising on style. Among popular modest fashion products in Malaysia are hijab or scarves that cover the hair, neck, and chest, Malay traditional costumes like baju Kurung and Kebaya, long dress or Abaya as well as modest workwear and activewear. Apart from popular local modest fashion brands like dUCk, Naelofar, Poplook and Calaqisya to name but a few, renown international brands such as DKNY, H&M, Mango, Uniqlo, Nike, Gap and even exclusive brands like Dolce & Gabbana, Carolina Herrera and Burberry have also ventured into modest fashion market.

Furthermore, fashion products in Malaysia are marketed both in bricks-and-mortar stores and e-commerce platforms. According to the February 2020 report by Statista, the top five online fashion stores by net sales in Malaysia are zalora.com, jdsports.my, fashionvalet.com, uniqlo.com and nike.com. Zalora and FashionValet are two Malaysian companies that marketed fashion products such as apparel, footwear, bags and accessories that range from designer brands to mass fashion. Fashion Valet focuses more on featuring local designers and brands in its marketplace. Meanwhile, at the second place, JD Sports, also a local Malaysian company, specialized in activewear and sportswear retailing. It features most of the big brands in activewear and sportswear like Nike, Adidas, Reebok, Puma and few others in one marketplace. In the fourth place, Uniqlo is a Japanese company that produces mass fashion while upholding the principal of sustainability. Finally, in

the fifth place is Nike, the big US brand that is a big player in activewear and sportswear market. However, in the recent August 2020 report by Statista, the ranking of top five online fashion stores by net sales in Malaysia had slightly changed. The new ranking of top five online stores in Malaysia following the sequence from the top place to the fifth place are zalora.com, fashionvalet.com, nextdirect.com, nike.com and uniqlo.com. Next Direct is an e-commerce platform that sells various fashion products from a variety of famous brands from all over the world. In essence, the conclusion that can be drawn from the report of top online stores in Malaysia is that fashion industry is indeed a fast changing and promising industry in Malaysia.

In the traditional five stage consumer decision making processes introduced by Engel, Kollat, & Blackwell (1986), consumers go through several stages in making decision which starts from problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decisions and post-purchase decisions. Understanding how consumers search for product information and the way the evaluate the information can help marketers to design effective advertising campaigns (Clow & Baack, 2018) that will influence customers to purchase the product. In corporate and academic world, several studies have been done to analyse the roles of an advertisement on consumer buying behaviour. This is due to the fact that consumers' buying behaviour is often influenced by the advertisement of a product (Rasool, et al., 2012).

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012), advertising is "any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor" (p. 436) while advertising appeal is described as the theme of an

advertisement. Based on Yeshin's (1998) work, there are three main functions of advertising which are to inform, to persuade and to sell. In Malaysia, fashion products are normally advertised through fashion shows, magazines, billboards, and online advertising tools such as mobile ads, email marketing and others, with more emphasize given on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

In the fast changing and extremely competitive market, fashion brands struggle to differentiate themselves to evermore indifferent consumers (Clark, 2017). Numerous brands and explosion of advertisements has made customers to behave indifferently and it poses as a challenge for brands to distinguish themselves from the competitors. Therefore, fashion brands need to develop new tactics to steal consumers' attention by speaking to their hearts (Kim, 2019). Yet, designing a successful advertising campaign that can break through the clutter proves to be a challenging task for the marketers. Kotler and Armstrong (2012) suggested a way to break through the clutter by trying out a method known as 'Madison & Vine' which bring together advertising and entertainment in order to create a more engaging message. A more engaging advertising can be designed by selecting appropriate advertising appeals or themes of advertising (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012) based on rational or emotional arguments which aims to build a direct relationship between the product or service with the consumer's needs or wants (Yeshin, 1998).

However, selecting the appropriate theme for an advertisement is not as straightforward since there are variations of advertising appeals such as fear appeal, humour appeal, sex appeal, music appeal, rational appeal, emotional appeal and

scarcity appeal (Clow & Baack, 2018), feature appeals, competitive advantage appeals, price or value appeals, quality appeals, news appeal, popularity appeals, social acceptance appeals, star appeals, testimonial appeals, sensory appeals, novel appeals (Yeshin, 1998), romance appeals, adventure appeals, play on words (catchphrase) appeals, snob appeals, less than perfect appeals (Nwankwo, Aboh, Obi, Agu, & Sydney, 2013) and few more variations of advertising appeals.

As discussed earlier, there are variations of advertising appeals which can have different influence on customers in making purchase decision. In this study, the attitude model of cognition, affection and conation has become the inspiration for researcher to analyse how affective or emotional advertising appeals impact the purchase intention of consumers in buying fashion products. Current study intends to investigate the impact of several emotional advertising appeals namely love appeal, humour appeal, happiness appeal and excitement appeal on customers' purchase intention of women fashion products in Malaysia.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In present days, there are numerous women fashion brands competing in the Malaysia market ranging from the luxurious haute couture and designer fashions to ordinary everyday wear fashion or the mass fashions; be it local or international brands. This situation has led customers to a more complex decision-making process since they are exposed to various forms of advertisements. Besides, with abundant choices and explosion of advertisements, customers are becoming indifferent towards the brands and almost immune to the advertisements.

Engel et al. (1986) introduced five sequential stages in which customers follow in making a buying decision and the stages are problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decisions and post-purchase decisions. In the information search stage, consumers will look for internal information source such as past purchase experience and external information sources like the recommendation from family and friends and also marketing-controlled sources such as advertising to help them evaluate the decision to purchase a product (Stankevich, 2017).

Advertising is a promotional tool which involves in the information search stage in which understanding how consumers search for product information and the way they evaluate the information can help marketers to design effective marketing messages (Clow & Baack, 2018). The overall goal for spending money on advertisements for any fashion brands is to build and enhance customer relationships by communicating the values desired by the customers through the products (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). Effective advertising can be designed by selecting appropriate advertising appeals or themes of advertising (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012) based on rational or emotional arguments which aims to build a direct relationship between the product or service and the consumers' needs or wants (Yeshin, 1998).

In addition, the current COVID-19 pandemic has brought changes to the landscape of consumer behaviour in Malaysia. According to a summary of the Fashion E-Commerce Global Market Report 2020-30: COVID-19 Growth and Change (2020), the global fashion e-commerce market is predicted to decline from $531.25 billion in 2019 to $485.62 billion in 2020 due to several constraints

imposed to the daily activities such as social distancing and remote working as well as the closure of industries and other commercial activities. These measures have impacted the entire supply chain from production to international trade. Fashion brands in Malaysia have also been reported to suffer from the pandemic (Syahirah, 2020). Since fashion products are known as a type of shopping good, there is a probability that it will not be in the priority list of goods for consumers to buy in the time of pandemic. In this situation, marketers must be creative in designing effective advertising messages so that the advertisement can attract the target groups of consumers to buy the fashion products that they have produced.

However, selecting the appropriate theme for an advertisement is not straightforward since there are variations of advertising appeals and each variation can have different influence on customers decision making. Past studies had shown that personal feelings and experiences affect customers' evaluation of brands better as opposed to packaging information such as product attributes, features and facts (Zukin & Maguire, 2004; Schmitt, 2009; Jenkins & Molesworth, 2017). Marketers need to be tactical in finding out the best advertising appeal that works well to leave the most impact on consumers' purchase intention of fashion products in Malaysia, which in return will translate into sales and profits for their company. In this study, the attitude model of cognition, affection and conation has become the groundwork for the researcher to analyse how emotional appeals in advertising impact the purchase intention of consumers in buying fashion products.

In the academic field, there are plenty of studies that have been done to describe fashion industry in Malaysia. However, there is a scarcity of academic studies in the area that explores various types of advertising appeals and their

impacts on consumers' behaviour in Malaysia. While there are studies that have been done on advertising appeals, the number of literatures that employs quantitative method to analyse the impact of advertising appeals on consumers' purchase intention is still limited. Therefore, this study attempts to fill in the gaps and provide valuable insights to the academic world by doing a quantitative analysis on the impact of several advertising appeals namely love appeal, humour appeal, happiness appeal and excitement appeal on customers' purchase intention of fashion products, with specific attention on fashion products for women in Malaysia. This study also hopes to provide vital information for marketers to create effective advertising campaign for women fashion products in Malaysia.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are divided into general and specific objectives.

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study is to propose a conceptual model of consumer purchase intention for women fashion products in Malaysia' based on emotional appeals.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To analyse the impact of love appeal in advertising on consumers' purchase intention of women fashion products in Malaysia.
2. To analyse the impact of humour appeal in advertising on consumers' purchase intention of women fashion products in Malaysia.

3. To analyse the impact of happiness appeal in advertising on consumers' purchase intention of women fashion products in Malaysia.

4. To analyse the impact of excitement appeal in advertising on consumers' purchase intention of women fashion products in Malaysia.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions in this study are as follows:

1. What is the impact of love appeal in advertising on consumers' purchase intention of women fashion products in Malaysia?

2. What is the impact of humour appeal in advertising on consumers' purchase intention of women fashion products in Malaysia?

3. What is the impact of happiness appeal in advertising on consumers' purchase intention of women fashion products in Malaysia?

4. What is the impact of excitement appeal in advertising on consumers' purchase intention of women fashion products in Malaysia?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings from this study contribute valuable information for marketers in fashion industry in Malaysia to plan their fashion advertising campaigns effectively and efficiently. In the competitive and fast changing fashion market, marketers must be creative in choosing the right advertising appeal that will break through the clutter, grab the attention of consumers to watch the ads, retain viewers' attention, create positive feeling towards the brand and eventually influence them to 'voluntarily' make the purchase. This study aims to help marketers to research on

the right advertising appeals to promote their women fashion products to consumers in Malaysia.

Moreover, COVID-19 pandemic has also changed the behaviour of consumers in Malaysia. Thus, it is high time to conduct a research on consumers' behaviour during this time. This study will benefit the marketers by highlighting how different emotional appeals can influence customer's purchase intention in buying the product. Concurrently, the information from this study can help marketers to understand the behaviour of consumers in Malaysia in the light of purchase intention of women fashion products. This study can help marketers to design effective marketing messages and thus help them to gain more consumers and generate more sales and profits.

In the academic world, this study presents new insights in the field of advertising by finding out how advertising appeals, specifically love appeal, humour appeal, happiness appeal and excitement appeal can impact consumers' purchase intention of fashion products for women in Malaysia. Consumers are known to go through five classical stages in purchasing a product which are problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase behaviour and post-purchase behaviour. This study is concerned on the information search stage where consumers are faced with abundant information and loads of advertisements. Understanding how to grab the attention of consumers and motivate them to purchase is indeed a valuable information for both marketers and academicians. Many studies have been done previously on advertising appeals. However, most of the studies employed non-quantitative method. This study adds values in the academic field by analysing the impact of advertising appeals through quantitative