

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

6.0 Introduction

This chapter sums up the salient points posed by answering all the research questions from this study and the limitations of the study. It will also provide guidance for future research and the implications from the study to advertisers and marketers.

6.1 Summary and Conclusion

Based on the study and analysis carried out as described in Chapter 5, it shows that both independent variables namely attitude and subjective norm are positively and significantly correlated to the intention to purchase, for both advertising appeals, fear and sex. This is consistent with the TRA (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), which suggests that human behaviour can be predicted by an individual's stated intention to behave in a given way. Two factors, an individual's attitude toward a given behaviour and his/her subjective norm, contribute to an individual's behavioural intention (Hyllegard et al., 2009).

Nevertheless, attitude is a stronger factor than subjective norm to predict intention to purchase and this apply for both advertising appeals. In both appeals, attitude is more than average predictor. This is supported by Lutz, 1985 that found attitude towards advertisement has been defined as a predisposition to respond in a favorable or

unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion. This is also known as likeability factor. Likeability does have a persuasive effect, as it can directly affect feelings towards a brand (Biel and Bridgwater, 1990). On the other hand, subjective norm is a weak predictor of purchase intention in the context of fear appeal advertising, and in the case of sex appeal advertising, it is medium.

Furthermore, the study reveals that there is significant difference between attitude towards fear appeal advertising for male and female, where attitude explains significantly more of the variance in purchase intention for male than for female. The correlation between attitude and purchase intention for female is weak and it is moderate for male even though both views the advertisement as positive. The reason perhaps due to women elaborate more on the information in the advertisement, that they are more detailed processors of the information especially negative information and that men will overweigh positive emotions rather than negative emotions (Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy, 1990; Meyers-Levy and Maheswaran, 1991; Meyers-Levi and Sternhal 1991; Dube and Morgan, 1996).

Meanwhile, there is no significant difference between attitude towards sex appeal advertising for male and female, where attitude explains moderately of the variance in purchase intention. Both genders view the sex appeal advertisement positively and this leads to higher purchase intention. This is consistent with study done by Price (2002) that claimed sex appeal has become one of the most popular and effective tactics in mainstream consumer advertising. Latour et al. (1990) in addition have

found a direct relationship between the positive arousal evoked by sexual appeals and evaluations of the brand. Sex appeal basically increases persuasion (e.g. La Tour et al., 1990; Saunders, 1996) as well as buying intention (e.g. Grazer and Keesling, 1995). In addition, Reichert et al. (2001) summarized that using sex appeal in advertising is attention-grabbing, augment recognition, bolster brand image, increasing receivers' interest in processing the advertisement and enhance persuasion.

The finding also discloses that in general, there is a significant difference in attitude towards both appeals. Though the respondents view the advertisements positively, but they view fear appeal advertisement significantly more positive. Perhaps this is because fear appeal increases the interest and persuasiveness of individual advertisements (Higbee, 1969; Hyman and Tansey, 1990; King and Reid, 1990). In fact, empirical studies indicate that subjects better remember and more frequently recall advertisements that portray fear than they do warm or upbeat advertisements or advertisements with no emotional content (Hyman and Tansey, 1990).

6.2 Suggestion for Future Research

In view of the earlier discussed limitations, future studies may look into several aspects as recommended here and shall go beyond the scope of this study. The recommendations are as follow:

1. Extend consumer response to other advertising appeals such as humour, warmth, violence and so forth.

2. Study and compare other demographic variables such as age, religion, level of income, level of education and so forth against the advertising appeals.
3. Expand the sample size and population outside Klang Valley for better generalisation of findings.

6.3 Implications

Before we proceed further on the managerial implications, a caveat is appropriate at this juncture. This study is based on student sample and their might not reflect reality nor can be generalized to the wider population even though, many studies have used student samples and justified their use in similar attitude research by arguing that there is little difference between student attitude towards advertising and beliefs and those of other segments of the population (Andrews, 1989; Pollay and Mittal, 1993; Ramaprasad and Thurwanger, 1998).

6.3.1 Fear Appeal Advertising

This research provides evidence that attitude has a fair positive influence on the overall assessment of fear appeal advertising. This appeal may contribute to positive evaluations of advertisement and may build positive response towards the promoted product, which in turn lead to buying intention. This is because anticipatory fear is stimulated by considering negative consequences of some action and according to Keller et al. (1996), fear appeal can be effective in changing attitude and attitude towards advertising is important indicator of advertising effectiveness (Mehta, 2000). Nevertheless, subjective norm has little role on fear appeal advertising as the

relationship between subjective norm and purchase intention is weak. As such, when designing a fear appeal advertisement, the focus is the attitude of viewers and not the subjective norm, which is the perception of the desirability of the behaviour to important others.

In the context of fear appeal advertising, male seems to view it more positive than female and there is moderate relationship between male attitude towards fear appeal advertising to intention to purchase. Meanwhile, there is only weak relationship between attitude towards the fear appeal advertising and purchase intention for female. Negative emotional advertisement in the fear appeal advertisement is assumed to make the consumer to buy the solution offered in the advertisement (Aaker et al., 1986) but not all advertisement has the power of persuasion to persuade consumer to purchase (Severin and Tankard). As such, advertiser or marketer that target male market may want to apply fear element in their advertisement. However, at the extremes, fear appeals appear to be ineffective (Yankelovich, 1991). When a problem is not perceived as serious, it only evokes a low level of fear or none at all. When the level of fear is too high, one may engage in defensive denial by denying either the existence of the problem or its importance (Keller et al., 1996). Therefore, advertisers may want to employ a reasonable quantum of fear elements in their advertisement. In the meantime, advertiser or marketer that target female market may want to avoid from using this appeal as it may has less effectiveness.

6.3.2 Sex Appeal Advertising

This study offers evidence that attitude and subjective norm have an average positive influence on the overall effectiveness of sex appeal advertising. This appeal may contribute to positive evaluations of advertisement and may build positive response towards the promoted product, which in turn lead to buying intention. Shimp (2003), spelled out that sex appeal serves several crucial functions in advertising as an initial attention lure to the advertisement, enhance message recall and to evoke emotional responses. This emotional response in turn can create stimulation and desire for the product (Bumler 1999). According to Hoyer and MacInnis (2001), this role may affect the consumer's mood and can result in favourable cognitive processing of the ad and increase the persuasion impact.

The study also reveals that both male and female view sex appeal advertising positively and there is a moderate relationship between their attitude and intention to purchase. As such, advertiser or marketer that targets both markets may want to use sex elements in their advertisement. Nonetheless, positive or negative reaction against sex appeal advertising depends on the appropriateness to the advertised product. Richmond and Hartman (1982) ascertain that sexual stimuli will enhance brand recall only if it has an appropriate relationship with the product category and the advertising execution. When sex appeal is used inappropriately, such as utilizing it solely as an attention device, exploiting the female body, degrading the female role or insulting propriety, weak brand recall may occur and may in fact produce a negative attitude towards the brand. In other work (e.g., Alexander and Judd, 1978; Panda, 2005) suggests that consumers may respond most favorably to a "moderate" level of sexual

intensity in apparel advertisements. Advertisements featuring lower levels of sexual intensity may fail to attract consumers' attention, whereas those featuring higher levels of sexual intensity may distract the consumer from focusing upon the product being promoted (Alexander and Judd, 1978). Therefore, advertisers may want to consider these factors before using sex elements in their marketing plan.

6.3.3 Support for Existing Theoretical Models

This study provides support for existing theoretical models of consumer behavior, including Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) classic premise that attitudes and subjective norm predict behavioral intention. Within the classic models tested for this study, attitude is a better predictor than subjective norm in predicting intention to purchase across both advertisements.

It also holds up the generalized notion that consumer responses toward advertisements may shape intention to buy (Mitchell and Olson, 1981; De Pelsmacker and Van Den Bergh, 1996). Consumers with a more favorable attitude towards advertising are more likely to recall the brand and be persuaded by advertising in term of buying intention (Mehta, 2000).

6.4 Contributions of the Study

Basically, this study identifies that attitude and subjective norm are significant predictors to purchase intention for both fear and sex appeal. Yet, attitude has more weight than subjective norm in forecasting the behavioural intention.

Generally, consumer may view fear appeal advertisement more positively than sex appeal advertisement. The more positive consumer perceives the advertisement, the higher the intention to purchase. However, in the context of fear appeal advertising, attitude may give more variance against purchase intention for male compared to female. On the other hand, in the context of sex appeal advertising, there is no significant difference between genders on the relationship between attitude and purchase intention.

6.4.1 Fear Appeal Advertising

The study supports that attitude is a good indicator of behavioural intention and in this study is purchase intention. Attitude has positive influence on the overall assessment of fear appeal advertising. By applying right amount of fear elements, this appeal could contribute to positive evaluations of advertisement and by extension positive response towards the product and the brand, which will lead to buying intention. The study also discovers that subjective norm has little power of persuasion on fear appeal advertising as the relationship between subjective norm and purchase intention is weak.

From the findings, male seems to view fear appeals advertisement more positive than female. There is moderate relationship between male attitudes towards fear appeal advertising to intention to purchase. Meanwhile, there is only weak relationship between attitude towards the fear appeal advertising and purchase intention for female. Perhaps, negative emotional advertisement in the fear appeal advertisement makes male consumer to buy the solution offered in the advertisement. According to Yankelovich (1991), at the extremes, fear appeals appear to be ineffective. Probably that this advertisement is extreme to female consumers but moderate to their male counterparts.

6.4.2 Sex Appeal Advertising

This study reveals that attitude and subjective norm are good interpreters of purchase intention in the case of sex appeal advertising. Both have positive relationship with behavioural intention studied and have influence on the overall effectiveness of sex appeal advertising. Sex appeal could trigger positive evaluations of advertisement and subsequently positive response towards the promoted product and brand. Positive evaluation will lead to higher buying intention.

The study also discovers that both male and female view sex appeal advertising positively and there is a moderate relationship between their attitude and intention to purchase. Richmond and Hartman (1982) ascertain that sexual stimuli will enhance brand recall only if it has an appropriate relationship with the product category and the advertising execution. Probably, apparel including jeans is a suitable product

category as far as sexual stimuli is concerned. This is supported by Alexander and Judd, (1978) and Panda, (2005) that suggests consumers may respond most favorably to a “moderate” level of sexual intensity in apparel advertisements.

6.4.3 Support for Existing Theoretical Models

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6.5 Overall conclusion

Chapter One has served to introduce the study as a whole and to give the reader an overall view of the study and why it has been undertaken. Meanwhile, Chapter Two describes on the overview of advertising in Malaysia and its variable based on past established studies. Chapter Three serves to describe the conceptual model development of the study while Chapter Four and Five explain the research methodology and data analysis. Finally, Chapter Six summarizes the conclusions from the study and the implications of the study.