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Emotions Content Advertising and Consumers Attention Engagement

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Abstract

Advertisements using emotional content may have a bigger and different effect on consumers' attention engagement in Malaysia and persuasive gain on consumers than those that do not use emotion content. It is also believed that emotions content in advertisements can make a difference by influencing consumer decision making and evoking subjects of advertisements and brands from memory. This paper presents the evidence to support the impact of emotional content on consumers' attention engagement. It also explores the different influences of emotions on the mental processing during attention to advertisements.

Keywords: positive emotion, consumer, Advertising, Content, Engagement, Attention

Introduction

It is commonly believed by both practitioners and academics such as industrial psychologists, cognitive psychologists and advertisers that advertising works best by delivering a unique emotional engagement and informational message (Khorvash & Khairudin, 2009). Reeves (1961) had once claimed that “Advertising is the art of getting a unique selling plan into the heads of the most people at the lowest possible cost.” Nearly 40 years later Duncan (1999) Moriarty advertising Age, described advertising as one-way communication: creating and sending messages. Jones (1990) describes advertising as an activity which gets “engagement on emotion and increases people's knowledge *as well* changes people's attitudes”. He also states that the selling message must be unmistakable (Bagozzi, 2002). It is essential to explain the meaning of engagement before we can understand its role on consumer viewing advertisements.

Conceptual Definition Engagement

Defining engagement is not an easy task. Engagement can be regarded as what consumers feel when they watch an advertising output with some degree of interest. With engagement can predict how a consumer will respond to advertising. Psychologically have attempted to define engagement (Khorvash, 2007). Terms often related with engagement include: **involvement, experience, connection, wantedness, resonance, and content.**

It is doubtful that a common definition of engagement can be found, particularly across different media. Consequently engagement is dependent on both consumers' opportunities to watch advertisements and their connection with the advertisement itself. It has been favoured in a study done by Khorvash and Khairudin (2009). They also proved that emotional content are processed. Khorvash and Khairudin (2009) evaluated 30 brand advertisements and found that there were bigger effect on consumers' decision and selection behavior when advertisers use positive emotional contents than neutral emotional contents TV advertisement. Table 1 and Table 2 show the results of the study. It is confirmed that the subjects' responses had a significant difference on positive emotion influential TV advertisement than neutral because T test scores in the 90% level shows positive emotion had higher scores than neutral emotions.

Table 1

Mean and Standard.Deviation and Standard Error of Emotions TV Advertisement

Emotion stages	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Neutral Emotion	200	2,20	1,13	.089
Positive Emotion	200	2,54	1,50	.11

Positive emotion contents (T=2,70 > p > .005) neutral emotion (T=2,40 < p < .005)

Table 2

Summary T test of Emotion Type

Type of TV Ads	One-Sample Test					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Positive Ad	2,70	199	.000	2,20	2,04	2,36
Neutral Ad	2,40	199	.000	2,54	2,33	2,75

In addition, others studies by Sorensen (2008) and Damasio (2002) recently provided evidence that emotions and feelings formed decisions and behaviors, while thoughts are formed in what is known as centre awareness. Damasio argued that decisions and behaviors always precede activity in core consciousness.

This therefore means that emotions and feelings are always formed precognitive. This is consistent with Mast and Zaltman’s view, that ‘The processing that underlies (emotional) evaluation is extremely fast and does not require conscious effort’ (Arf, 2006; Sorensen, 2008). It also agrees with Norm Lehoullier’s view, which states that the first level of engagement requires the consumer to be emotionally interested (Arf, 2006; Sorensen, 2008). So this means that models like that of Lavidge and Steiner (1961), far from being about ‘thinking’ leading to ‘feeling’ which leads to ‘motivation’, should really be as shown in Figure 1:

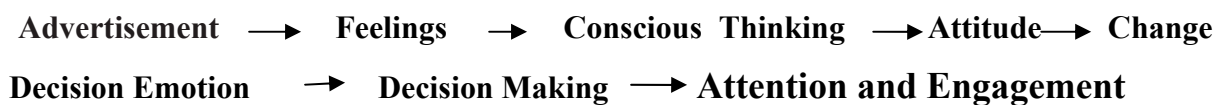


Figure 1. Print advertisement processing model: The effect of emotions in advertising on attention and engagement.

Studies (Sorensen 2008, Damasio 2002) have shown that there is one display which can represent how much conscious thinking is happening, and that is the speed of our eye movements. If we are highly ‘inspire’ for information, we move our eyes around so we can focus on extra features and gather more information. On the other hand, according to Rayner and Serano (1994) if we are inattentive we do not need much information so we move our eyes around more slowly. These minute eye movement are hardly visible to an observer, but can be tracked very exactly by a modern computer-operated eye-camera system. In addition, an advertisement was sometimes briefly fixated, sometimes carefully read, sometimes avoided altogether, but never did the eyes wander over the paper without direction.

With TV, processing was completely different. A few subjects started by watching the screen carefully and followed the action, but most watched in a ‘lazy’ way. Some looked directly at the screen, but others continuously scanned from side to side across it, never looking directly at the screen at all. Within a few minutes all subjects would look away from the screen, and this continued throughout the 30 minute program, sometimes for lengthy periods. However, TV processing is mainly automatic, stimulus driven ‘bottom-up’ processing. This suggests that, although the model in Figure 2 may apply to print, it applies for a lot of TV advertisements (Serano, 1994).

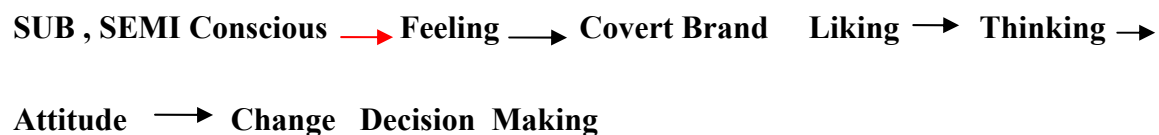


Figure 2. TV processing model.

Level of Engagement and Attention

Finally, Damasio (2002) defined level of engagement as ‘The amount of subconscious ‘feeling’ obtainable when an advertisement is being processed. It is reasonable to assume that the quantity of feeling which goes on when an advertisement is processed is influenced by the quantity of emotional content in the advertisement. Thus high levels of emotional content will associate to high levels of engagement. But we know in the experiment approved that in a definite situation TV advertising is watched in a normal relaxed mode – the level of emotional content correlates with levels of attention. What this suggests is not necessarily that there is an opposite relationship between levels of engagement and levels of attention, but that there is no direct relationship between levels of attention and levels of engagement.

Conclusion

To sum up, engagement and level of engagement is defined as the quantity of subconscious feeling going on when an advertisement is being processed. Our results show that there is a significant difference in consumer engagement between emotional content advertisement and neutral emotional content advertisement. Of course, that feeling needs to be related to the brand idea, if not, it is nothing more than a meaningless transient minute of stimulation.

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