

THE USE OF CREATIVE AND NON-CREATIVE IDEAS IN CREATING PRODUCT AWARENESS AMONG CONSUMERS

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Abstract

For most advertisers, the bigger challenges in today's world of advertising are to understand the consumer's insight and to stand out from other brands. When creative idea is no longer seen as something bizarre in advertising industry, it creates the world of creative advertising varnished from the colours of creativeness and craziness of the human sense. According to Sharma Pooja (2012) in her research, she stated that media worlds today have faced the difficulty in attracting the consumer way of thinking and intentions that bring them to the next level of purchasing process. However the bigger challenge to the advertisers is that they find it difficult to break the clutter when it comes to competing advertisements. As mentioned by Smit E. G. L., Van Meurs, Et al. (2006), likeability is important for the advertiser. This is because liking was the strongest factor that contributed to the persuasion and sale. This research strives to investigate the means of mitigating the creativity in advertisements. A theoretical study to the literature in advertising and product awareness will be explored before in depth interviews can be taken place to measure the understanding of the usage of creative and non-creative ideas in advertisements through Malaysian consumers. Through thematic analysis whereby the questions and answers will be divided following the theme will led to the result of using non-creative idea in advertisement and the use of metaphor elements in advertising can bring the impact to human ways of thinking and purchasing decision process.

Keywords: Creative idea, advertising, Communication, Media

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising is pervasive. We see advertising everywhere, anywhere at anytime. It evolves according to modern trends; unlimited space. With the tremendous existence of products, advertisers need advertising to highlight their brands. Especially for new product, advertising could be one of the best ways to introduce their brand. The success of a brand depends on how the advertising works. This may rely on the idea and execution used in the advertising that includes advertising campaign (Consterdine G. 2005). However, advertiser has the power to ensure that the advertisements communicate what is intended. Therefore, even well-known companies still use advertising as a promotional tool for their brands.

According to David Ogilvy "we cannot bore people into buying our product"; this shows that creative idea is important in order to make consumer know or be aware of the products. Creative idea is one of the elements that are important in producing an advertisement. This is because creative advertisement could create attention as it plays with viewer's emotion and sometimes it triggers viewer's mind about the messages that it sends.

Creating an advertisement needs a lot of research; about the targeted audiences, the product itself and how it will be advertised. Hence, advertisement that uses creative idea is more successful rather than non-creative one (Hallward J. 2007).

There are lots of products and brands in Malaysia that we can see in magazines, newspapers, TV, billboards and many more. However, we hardly see Malaysian advertising using creative ideas in their advertisement. There are some reasons that are yet to be discussed in this research.

This research not only studies the effect of using creative idea in the advertisement, but it also studies the reason why the use of non-creative idea in Malaysian advertising industry is famous nowadays. The aim of this research is to determine whether the use of creative ideas in advertisement is effective in creating the product awareness among the consumers or it is better to stay as a non-creative advertisement.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Sharma Pooja (2012) in her research "Advertising Effectiveness: "Understanding the Value of Creativity in Advertising", a Review Study in India" stated that media worlds today has faced the difficulty in attracting the consumer way of thinking and intentions that bring them to the next level of purchasing process. However the bigger challenge by the advertisers is they found it is difficult to break the clutter when it comes to competing advertisements.

The advertising industries have faced the dynamic changing over the last several decades due to the competition amongst the agencies. In the growth of technology, advertising agencies found that high technology nowadays brings more opportunities for them to use more techniques to attract the consumers and produces more creative ideas. Her study represents how creativity impacted the advertising and the understanding of creativity value in advertising through the review from various literatures. In her study she found that creativity factors in advertising received a lot of gratitude by the researchers and practitioners; however it is yet to be clarified how creativity relates with the effectiveness.

The use of metaphor elements is another example of creative idea in advertising. Metaphor could be images or words, and it could play with the emotion and trigger your mind to think of the continuity between the image and the copy.

As according to Morris P. K and Waldman J. A. (2011) in their study that stated metaphors; based on culture, are ubiquitous in thinking and communication. When social has affected the culture, advertising has the opportunity to provide the messages to compare the metaphor in different nation.

When social media leads the world of mass communication today, the advertising agencies found difficulty in producing attractive advertising. The difficulties have required the advertising practitioner to do in-depth research on consumer's insight; to study the mind-sets, moods, motivation, desires, aspirations, and motivations that trigger their attitude and actions towards the advertisements. This is where the creative idea is needed and the creative process created by James Webb Young will take apart.

The role of celebrities gives big impact on how to carry the advertisement. In Malaysia, celebrities play a major role to attract the consumers to buy the product. The use of celebrity endorsement has become a tremendous trend in Malaysian business culture especially in personal care and beauty type product. Simultaneously, celebrity's brands has also become a trend in business culture in Malaysia (i.e. Twinkle by Elfira and Naelofar Hijab).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted through qualitative approach. The reason of using this approach is because qualitative research can provide a much deeper understanding on how the consumer thinks. The population of the informants are Malaysian consumers living in Malaysia. By using non-probability sampling techniques, the informants were selected by random based on their ages, lifestyle and income, and throughout the convenience sample. Meanwhile, the data is collected by conducting a focus group and through depth interview.

Through the focus group, informants have been divided into groups with one moderator. They were shown a number of advertisements produced by the agencies and they discussed it in the group where each of them is free to voice up their own opinion. The advertisements shown are from both creative and non-creative. There are some relevant questions raised during the focus group. For the in-depth interview, 5 advertising agencies were selected and were willing to work with this research. The interview was conducted through face-to-face session and through email. The data was analysed through thematic analysis whereby the questions and answers received are divided following to themes.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analysed based on thematic analysis upon in-depth interview and focus group; whereby the focus group are divided into 3 groups based on their age, lifestyle and household income. Each group comprised of 8 informants; the first group consists of fulltime students aged from 18 to 25. The second group consists of a group of fulltime housewife aged from 25 to 40 years old and the third group is a group of working people with the range of age from 30 to 40 with household income worth RM 20,000 per month. For in-depth interview, the data was collected through interview sessions with the advertising practitioners from 5 different agencies.

The details about the focus groups are as listed below:

- Group 1
This group consists of four women and four men; all of them are fulltime students. 3 are from Taylor's College, 2 are from University Malaysia (UM) while the remaining 3 are from University Teknologi MARA (UiTM). There are 3 Malays, 2 Chinese, 2 Ibanese and 1 Indian in this group. Out of 8 informants, 3 students are currently undergoing a diploma in business, 2 are in their bachelor degree and others are completing their master in communication and media studies. All informants in this group are unemployed and are fulltime students.
- Group 2
Informants in this group came from middle class citizens. They are fulltime housewife and receive income from their husband. They are living in Klang Valley and are living a modern lifestyle. The range of age for this group is 25 to 40 years old.
- Group 3
The selection of this group is based on the household income. There are 8 informants; 4 men and 4 women with range of age from 30 to 40 years old living in Klang Valley; adapted with metropolitan social life. 3 of them are managers working with the Non-government organisation while the others manage their own business.

The interview process was conducted amongst the advertising expertise, there are 5 interviewees and all of them came from different advertising agency. The age is between 30 to 45 years old. They have been working for 5 to 20 years in the industry

This research approach includes identifying the themes from the designed questions. The respondents were asked about their advertising preferences; how they look at the advertisement and also the reason why they chose their certain brand as their favorite brand. The major themes for the focus groups are:

- The elements of creative advertising,
- The impact of using creative ideas
- The purchase influencers.

5. FINDINGS

To identify the elements of creative advertising

There are 7 keys of creative elements in advertising according to Neha Bhargava & Eury Kim (2014). The 7 keys are:

- Focal point: The image has one obvious focal point.
- Brand link: How easy is it to identify the advertiser?
- Brand personality: How well does the ad fit with what you know about the brand?
- Informational reward: This ad has interesting information.
- Emotional reward: This ad appeals to you emotionally.
- Noticeability: While browsing online, this image would grab your attention.
- Call to action: This ad urges people to take a clear action.

These 7 keys are the major reasons as to why the advertisements shown really captured the participant's attention. The strong image used in the advertisement and the copy makes the advertisement looks interesting and persuasive. Other factors that create awareness of the advertisement are the feel of self-belonging shown through the advertisement which creates an emotional effect to the viewers.

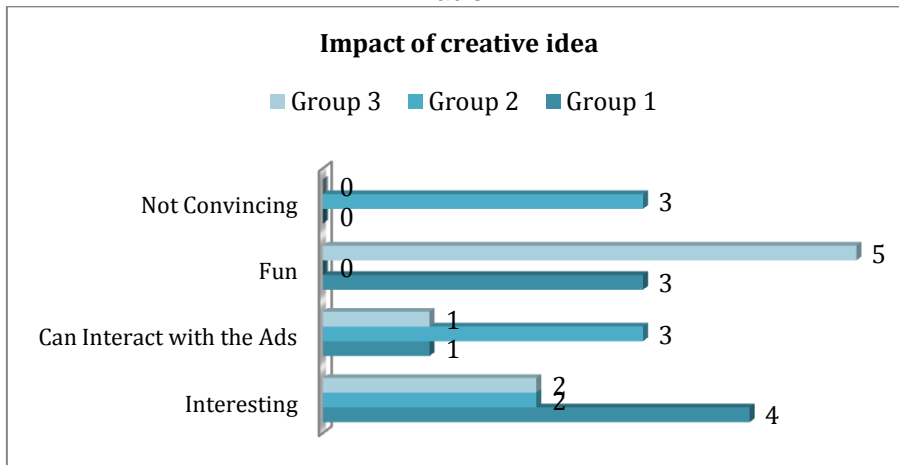
Based from the in-depth interview conducted, advertising practitioner Mr. Joseph concluded that he believes the use of creative elements in advertising is to create the attention and awareness of the product. Consumers might remember the product but they could not recall the brand and this shows that the creative elements used in the advertisement were successful. This finding can be supported by informant #4 from group 1 where she said that she often remember the advertisement but she finds it difficult to recall the brand name. Furthermore the reason why she bought the product was because she heard about the brand by others or was suggested by her friends.

Another element that can be seen in creative advertising is the connection between copy and image as Suzan stated during the interview session; she believes that if the image is powerful but the copy is weak, the advertisement can actually failed. That is why creating creative idea in advertising need both strong image and strong copy. To support this statement, during the focus group session, informants have been shown advertisement with strong copy but contains weak image. Surprisingly, 20 out of 24 participants could not understand the advertisement and said they cannot relate the copy with the image and with the brand.

To investigate the impact of using creative ideas in advertising

When the informants were exposed to the advertisements, majority of them agreed that advertisement with creative image and copy captured their attention and looked more interesting compared to those who do not. Their reasons were because the advertisement is interesting and they could interact with the advertisement in an intrapersonal way of communication (thinking and wondering about the advertisement and the advertisement play with their mind). Hence, the advertisement creates fun and they can share about the advertisement ideas with others. They also believe that the layout and graphic elements in the advertisement makes the advertisements stands out and triggered their interest to read it.

Table 1



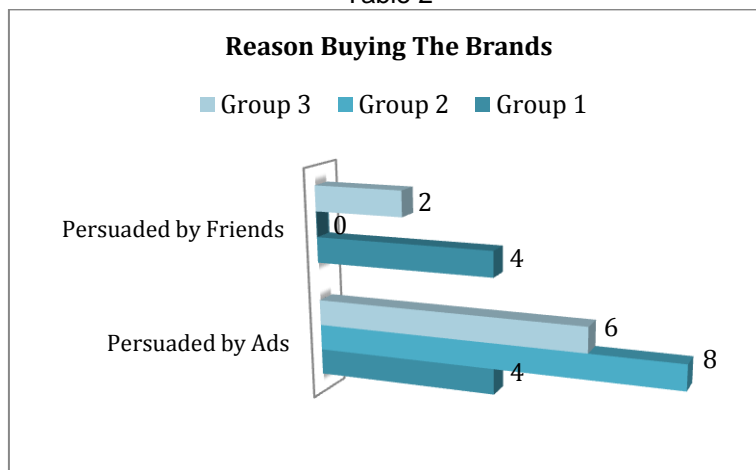
Although majority of the informants agreed, 3 informants from group 2 said differently. The reasons why the other 3 decided to chose differently were; the advertisement look more straight forward - it shows the reality on how the product is being use by the user. Moreover the advertisements are understandable and looked more convincing and the use of images, copies and graphic elements in the advertisements does not play any role for them to purchase or not purchase the brand.

The purchasing Influencer

Reasons buying the brands

18 out of 24 informants believed that majority of the brands they use today are based on the advertisement that they saw through variety types of advertising tools. While another 6 informants said that the reason they bought the product because of the words of mouth and suggestion by friends or family members.

Table 2

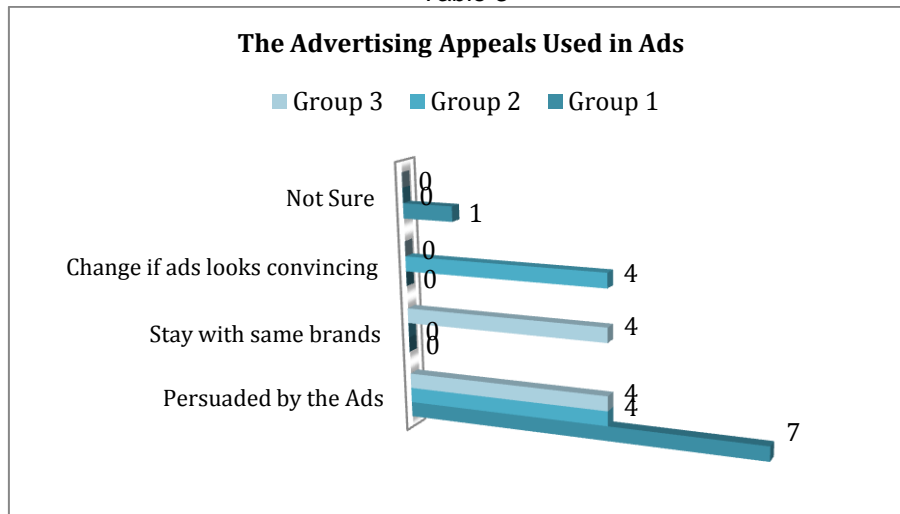


The Advertising Appeals Used in Ads

A total of 15 informants agreed that after they watched and saw the advertisements shown in the focus group, they have been persuaded to try the brands by the advertising appeals used in the advertisement; while others are not sure. 4 informants from group 3 will still stick with the brands that they use and will only change if the product does not work anymore or if other brands look more astonishing. 4 informants from group 2 said that if

the brand looks more convincing than the brand that they are using now, the probability for them to shift the brand is high. 1 informant from group 1 said that he would only use the brands that his parents bought for him.

Table 3



Majority of informants in group 3 claimed that the reasons they use the current brands are because of the characteristic and brand positioning of the product. They use the certain kind of brand because of the prestige and elegant look that the brand carry and sometimes it depends on the price; the higher the price, the better the product.

Using Celebrity Endorsement

Using celebrity in advertising also plays an important role as purchasing influencer. Majority of the participants in group 1, group 2 and group 3 agreed that at some point, the reason they bought the brand was because of the celebrity endorsement used in the advertisements. They believed that once they use the brand, it could give them the same good look as shown by the celebrities. 1 informant in group 1 stated that he never wear any product from H&M before until he saw the brand video advertisement on YouTube. Because of the brand endorsement is David Beckham; and he is a big fan of him; the advertisement has successfully influenced him to buy the brand. 2 out of 4 informants in group 1 admitted that the reason she bought Sugarscarf designer scarves is because they were influenced by TV3 top ranking drama. In the drama, the actress looked elegant wearing that scarf from the stated brand. They believed that by wearing the same scarf can make them look elegant and beautiful; at the same time be trendy.

6. CONCLUSION

With all the data analysed, the use of creative and non-creative elements in advertising plays an important strategy in selling advertisers' product and creating consumer awareness. Creative elements in advertising are important as to attract users to be aware of the brand. Majority of informants agreed that by using creative elements, it creates the attention, interest and desire to purchase and to know about the brand. According to Priyanka Rawal (2013), AIDA process can stimulate purchasing decision. AIDA stands for Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action; an acronym term used by marketers and advertising agents as guidance when dealing with target market. This process is part of creative elements in advertising and always prevailed by the advertising practitioner when dealing with clients' money. Moreover, AIDA can also be used by the advertising practitioners in developing creative ideas, besides the 5 steps creative process as stated by James Webb.

Strong image can give good impact with the support of good copywriting. When Kancil Awards 2014 winner BBDO produced the winning advertisements, the first thing that came to the informants' mind is they could relate the image and the copy with their real experiences. The power of image captured their eyes and the copy created the impact. Advertisement is really powerful where it could play with the consumer's emotions and mind. Nigel Hollis (2010) believes that people emotions are rooted from past experiences; therefore advertisement that contains familiar action will generate more attention and attraction.

The use of metaphor elements is not necessary in creating product awareness. This is because not everyone can understand the puzzle. Especially in today's lifestyle people is confined with internet whereas they put limit on what they want to see, read and hear; therefore the use of direct elements is significant. However, this type of elements should be done in creative way by the advertising agencies.

This research concludes that creative idea in advertising gave huge impacts towards the audiences and there should be no non-creative ideas in advertising. Creative idea can be in both; direct or indirect way and it

depends on the target audiences. Result received from the focus group shown that at least 3 informants will only read an advertisement that consist direct message and fact about the product. This proved that there are variety types of consumers in this world that have different interest, different preferences and different favor; therefore to create creative ideas, the use of consumer's insight is important. This can be the reason why most of the advertising agencies in Malaysia practice those types of advertisements today. Only those who know how to use it in creative way will manage to gain consumer's attention and awareness.

Advertising professionals use different strategies to assess the creativities; and this creativity depends on the type of products and target audiences. The best creative idea is the advertisement that have the 'effective' advertisement; the one that can attract the consumer. According to Erik Modig (2012) in his research on Understanding Creative Advertising, he found that advertising creativity might not only enhance persuasion but also send signals about the brand. Thus, creativity or creative idea should be use in advertising strategy in order to persuade the consumer and to gain the attention and one major reason in to receive the Return On Investment (ROI) for the clients.

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