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How Consumer behavior is Affected by “Sight” and “Hearing” in Terms of Promotion?

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How Consumer behavior is Affected by “Sight” and “Hearing” in Terms of Promotion?

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Abstract- This paper discusses about how the consumers are affected by “sight” and “hearing” type of promotions. The objective of this reading is to let the retailers or advertisers to reconsider the strategy before creating promotions. Some of the promotion strategies may be effective for certain products or brands. However, it may be a failure if the strategies do not fit the brands or market segments. The paper includes how each element in these promotions can affect consumers’ behaviors. Examples of promotion of “sight” here are TV advertising, television billboards, website videos and visual merchandising whereas promotion of “hearing” represents radio, word of mouth and personal selling. Advertisers create advertisements to get consumers attention and to increase the sales. Hence, consumers are able to search for more information about the products to make comparison. The consumers may choose the brand as they think the company fulfills corporate social responsibility to advertise some valuable advertisements. Stores are decorated to provide a comfortable environment to promote the brand and merchandise. Well trained selling technique of the salespersons can persuade consumers to change their mind.

Keywords: consumer behavior, “sight”, “hearing”, promotion.

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to help retailers or advertisers to find out how consumer behavior is affected by promotion and to create effective approaches to reach the existing and potential customers. Customers may not realize that the presence of new formulated or new technology of products because the retailers chose the wrong communication channels or advertising techniques to affect consumers’ behavior. To reach the target market or to create consumers’ interests effectively, this paper includes how different elements of promotional tools can influence consumers. The advertisement must be effective to create awareness, message, interest, and trust in customers (Chudzian, 2014).

Promotion is a way or channel to communicate the products or services to consumers (Petkovska Mirchevska & Filkov, 2014). There are two types of promotions that were discussed in this paper. Examples of “sight” promotions are TV advertising, television billboards, website videos and visual merchandising.

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“Hearing” promotions include radio, word of mouth and personal selling. By using these promotional tools, retailers are able to increase the bottom line by increasing the traffic (Small Business Development Corporation, n.d.). However, there are other elements such as the types of appeals in videos that will affect consumers’ behavior. Since visual image from television or internet can capture the consumers’ sights effectively, advertisement is often used to reach the consumer, hence influences their decision making (Chudzian, 2014; Stocia, 2010). Visual merchandising was included as the store environment that affect the consumers’ perception of the brand and qualities of the product (Diamond, 2011). However, there are consumers who do not expose to visual images such as advertisements from television or internet frequently. Some of the consumers approach radio broadcasting more frequent compared to advertisements via television or internet. Besides, word of mouth also plays a vital role because the consumers’ decisions can be affected either positively or negatively by the feedbacks from friends, family or even colleagues. Personal selling is also a type of “hearing” promotion as it involves consumers to listen. For example, consumers’ behavior will be affected as salesperson try to persuade them. However, the elements of “sight” and “hearing” promotions are not suitable for all consumers because they come from different background and status. In order to reach the target market effectively, advertisers must first analyze and understand the customers well before choosing the correct and effective promotional tools and so to create advertisements.

II. PROMOTION TO CHILDREN

Although the purchasing power of children is weak compared to adults but they have disposable incomes. From the other perspective, the children can have parents to purchase something they want (Sandra, 2008; as cited by Haroon, Zaman, Rasheed, Marri, & Raja, 2012). The children influence the adults’ purchasing decisions and this is profitable to the companies (Sandra, 2008; as cited by Haroon, Zaman, Rasheed, Marri, & Raja, 2012). Logo with pictures and audio tracks can influence the children better compared to the adults (Bernhardt, Wilking, Adachi-Mejia, Bergamini, Marijnissen, & Sargent, 2013). According to Bernhardt et.al, (2013), visual reference of food, drinks, and toy premiums were used to target children. Past

research showed that children were more likely to think that food with animated characters taste better and so their preferences could be affected (Bernhardt et al., 2013). Advertisers use cartoons in advertisements to persuade the children and therefore, influencing parents' buying behaviors (Haroon et al., 2012).

III. PROMOTION TO ADULTS

Although the advertisements for adults look similar to children's but there are some slight differences in it (Bernhardt, 2013). Compared to children, adults would be more attracted to the description of the taste of food (Bernhardt, 2013). Adults tend to imagine and feel tempted to try after listening to food description (Bernhardt, 2013; Yuwei, Adaval, Steinhart, & Wyer, 2014).

IV. "SIGHT" PROMOTION

TV advertising, television billboards and internet are used to present the products or services because the object in advertisement would be more attractive or lively after using photoshop products. The consumers are exposed to TV advertisements through television and internet at different places (Stocia, 2010). For examples, the retailers or in house visual merchandisers can use window display and in-store décor to promote the merchandise in mini boutique stores or departmental stores (Diamond, 2011).

a) TV Advertising

TV advertising is used to communicate with the existing customers and potential customers or even to position brand image in customers' mind (Petkovska Mirchevska & Filkov, 2014). Besides, television advertising is used to promote upcoming or new products (Diamond, 2011). The advertisements that are creative or attention-seeking will be able to convey messages to the viewers effectively. However, the program schedule is also vital to make sure that the target market is able to watch the advertisements on the TV during the particular schedule (Petkovska et al., 2014). There are two types of advertisements that can be used to influence the consumers: information dominant advertisements and image-dominant advertisements (Mahapatra, 2012). Global advertising does not work if the consumers have various backgrounds. It only works for global consumers (Marieke de Mooij, 2010). To be effective, the advertisement that is being advertised on the TV must be related to the local consumers (Marieke de Mooij, 2010). For example McDonald, Malaysia often uses local celebrities in the advertisements as an element to influence consumers' behavior whereas Japan uses the connection of products and model as selling technique (Marieke de Mooij, 2010). Japan model whose name has "ebi" word which means shrimp is used to promote a shrimp burger (Marieke de Mooij, 2010). If the consumers find the advertisements valuable

or interesting, they are more likely to watch them repeatedly (Yang and Smith 2009; as cited by Rosengren, & Dahlén, 2015). Furthermore, the consumers may expose themselves to future advertisements of the same brand (Rosengren, & Dahlén, 2015).

Although some of the advertisements may be considered excellent from all of the aspects but there are also other advertisements available for the consumers to watch (Zhao, 1997; as cited by, Jeong, Kim & Zhao, 2011). Hence, the effectiveness of advertisements is reduced as consumers will overlook and able to process only three to five advertisements clearly (Ray & Webb, 1996; Zhao, 1997; as cited by, Jeong, Kim & Zhao, 2011).

i. Rational Appeal

Rational appeal of advertisement is mostly used on high involvement transformation products (Mahapatra, 2012). Consumers need to spend large sum of money to purchase certain products, therefore information about the products is very important for consumers to compare the products and consider which one to buy (Mahapatra, 2012). Information dominant advertisement is an advertisement that tells facts such as features or advantages of the products or services to influence consumers (Abernathy & Eranke 1996; as cited by Mahapatra, 2012). Information dominant advertisements influence the viewer's rationality to compare the products' benefits (Mahapatra, 2012). Information dominant of advertisement is similar to what commonly known as hard sell where the advertisement includes the attribute of the products, the materials or the technology used to produce the products, functions of the products and the quality of the services and environment to attract the customers (Abernathy & Eranke 1996; as cited by Mahapatra, 2012). Not all the elements are supposed to be included in an advertisement but it varies based on the type of the products or services that are going to be advertised (Pickett et al., 2001; as cited by Mahapatra, 2012). However, the consumers may perceive the advertisements negatively if there is too much information and may result in lower effectiveness (Decock and De Pelsmacker 200; as cited by Mahapatra, 2012).

ii. Emotional Appeal

Image dominant advertisement uses emotional appeal to influence the consumers (Mahapatra, 2012). In other word, advertisers use image dominant advertisement to perform soft sell (Leiss, Klein, & Jhally, 1997; as cited by Mahapatra, 2012). Image dominant advertisements include the brand, product, color, image, story, message and music to relate to the viewer (Leiss, Klein, & Jhally, 1997; as cited by Mahapatra, 2012). The method of using storyline to advertise products are more effective to earn the viewers' trust for

the brand (Moraru, 2011). However, the downside of this method is that the information of the products is merely mentioned (Homer, 2008; as cited by Mahapatra, 2012).

Past research showed that music is an effective tool as it presents a feeling to people (Gorn 1982; Leather et al., 1994; De Pelsmacker & Van den Bergh 1998; Roehm 2001; as cited by Mahapatra, 2012). Furthermore, repeated music was found to have the ability to influence consumers' moods and perceptions towards the product (Yoon, 1993; as cited by Park & Jeon, 2014). Hence, music can be used in advertisements to help the customers to recall the products or relate the music with the brands when they are deciding to purchase certain related products (Park & Jeon, 2014). However, it is important to choose music which fit the products rather than making audience to be familiar to music (Park & Jeon, 2014).

For advertising composition, humor is an element that is useful to play a role in customers' mind (McCullough, 1992; as cited by Mahapatra, 2012). Many advertisers have successfully used humor on low-involvement transformational products such as fragrance and apparels to attract the consumers (Jain, 2009). Furthermore, creativity is another important element to create impressive and attractive impressions in the consumers' memories (Kover et al., 1995; De Pelsmacker et al., 1998; as cited by Mahapatra, 2012). However, the idea that is to be presented must be clear or otherwise it would create different meanings to different consumers due to cultural differences (Kover et al., 1995; De Pelsmacker et al., 1998; as cited by Mahapatra, 2012).

An unsuccessful advertisement will irritate the consumers (Obermiller, Spangenberg and MacLachlan, 2005; as cited by Mahapatra, 2012). Consumers do not like overdramatized advertisement (Obermiller, Spangenberg and MacLachlan, 2005; as cited by Mahapatra, 2012).

b) *Visual Merchandising*

According to Easey (2009), visual merchandising is one of the promotional tools to differentiate the store from others. An attractive window display enables the retailers to attract the potential customers to step into the store whereas the interior display enables the retailers to retain customers to stay longer (Diamond, 2011; Krishnakumar, 2014). When the environment of a store or mall is bad, it will worsen the impression positioned in customers' mind (Runyan, Kim, & Baker, 2012). Sales will decrease following by the reduced numbers of customers (Runyan, Kim, & Baker, 2012). Retailers or visual merchandisers often use colors, mannequin, fixtures, lighting effect and also music to create the store identification (Diamond, 2011; Cant, Hefer, & Machado, 2013). With the use of mannequin, consumers are able to relate themselves and therefore, the decision is affected (Diamond, 2011).

Using themes or colors in painting enable the retailers to create different feelings to the consumers (Diamond, 2011). For example, red, orange and yellow colors provide the impression of warm atmosphere while blue represents cool and calmness (Diamond, 2011).

Furthermore, signage and the combination of fixtures in a store enable the consumers to look for their preferences of products easier (Diamond, 2011). The level of lighting helps the stores to be classified differently (Diamond, 2011). For example, mass merchandiser like Walmart uses high level of general lighting in its store while upscale department store like Neiman Marcus uses moderate general lighting and subtle lighting to represents its store image (Diamond, 2011). Consumers prefer stores to replenish their stock frequently and consistently so they can purchase new products (Cant, Hefer, & Machado, 2013). From the other perspective, replenishment of new products provides freshness to the customers and results in increasing the competitiveness among the retailers (Cant, Hefer, & Machado, 2013). Customers or shoppers are comfortable as they believe the products match their identities and therefore, create customers' loyalty (Cant, Hefer, & Machado, 2013).

c) *Television Billboards*

Television billboards are shown when the TV program or movie is sponsored by some companies (Jeong, Kim & Zhao, 2011). These billboards can be the logo of the brand or even the announcement from the brands that customers can either see it or hear it (Jeong, Kim, & Zhao, 2011). Although the duration of time consumers are exposed to the sponsors is short but television billboards provide a less cluttered environment for consumers to remember (Lardinois & Derbaix 2001; as cited by Jeong, Kim, & Zhao, 2011).

d) *Internet*

Internet enables the products, information of the companies and also advertisements to be exposed to the consumers (Diamond, 2011). Besides, it enables the customers to leave comment on the company profile or even exchange ideas on the webpage (Diamond, 2011). From the other perspective, the consumers can visit the company page or profile on anytime at any place (Diamond, 2011). Social media, for example like, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Google Plus enable the web users to share information, pictures and video (Dafonte-Gomez, 2014; Mcpherson, 2015). Retailers create profile and upload advertisements so that the consumers are exposed to the upcoming events and new products (Dafonte-Gomez, 2014; Mcpherson, 2015). However, the consumers are more alert to discount framing (Shen & Fu-Chiang, 2014). When consumers see discounts on online sales, their intentions to purchase get higher (Shen & Fu-Chiang, 2014).

V. "HEARING" PROMOTION

Consumers have to think or guess the message of the advertisement trying to convey (Stocia, 2010). However audio broadcasting does better in clarifying the message, the information is more direct and straight forward which makes the information understandable to the listeners (Stocia, 2010).

a) Radio

Consumers can listen to radio broadcast at any time as it can be listened online, at home, on vehicles or even at malls (Diamond, 2011). Most of the radio advertisements are for sales or timely promotion event (Diamond, 2011). Compared to other promotion tools, radio is more suitable to focus on markets with different ethnics (Diamond, 2011).

Foreign-accented commercials are found to be less attractive from consumers' perspective (Hendriks, van Meurs, & van der Meij, 2015). According to Hendriks, van Meurs, & van der Meij (2015), the foreign-accented commercials are hard to understand and they cause the message unable to be conveyed to the consumers successfully. On the other hand, consumers perceive that the speakers are not the place originated people but someone who disguise as he or she is (cf. Tsalikis et al. 1991; as cited by Hendriks, van Meurs, & van der Meij, 2015). It is hard for the consumers to trust the advertisements because there is lack of creditability (cf. Tsalikis et al. 1991; as cited by Hendriks, van Meurs, & van der Meij, 2015).

However, there were foreign-accented commercials that were acceptable by the consumers (Hendriks, van Meurs, & van der Meij, 2015). These commercials are success when the product is famous to represents its country (Hendriks, van Meurs, & van der Meij, 2015). For example, when olive oil advertisement is compromised with German accent and beer advertisement is compromised with French accent (Hendriks, van Meurs, & van der Meij, 2015).

b) Word of mouth

Consumers' purchasing decisions are also affected after listening to other customers' review on the brand or the product (Kozinets, Valck, Wojnick, & Wilner, 2010; as cited by Claro, Reali Fragoso, Laban Neto, & de Oliveira Claro, 2014). According to Martin (2014), there are also times when the consumers do not follow customers' reviews as they believe the customers might be getting any rewards from the company. Consumers believe that other customers are trying to hide some negative facts about the products of services (Martin, 2014).

From another perspective, consumers' decision may be affected when others try to provide negative feedbacks about the products or warning them to consider about the consequences (Matos & Rossi, 2008; Singh & Wilkes, 1996; Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels,

2009; as cited by Claro, Reali Fragoso, Laban Neto, & de Oliveira Claro, 2014). The choice of words used by consumers to convey certain information may affect the listener (Moore, 2010). For example, the product color may fade easily but the consumers may say that the product has bad quality (Moore, 2010). Hence, negative word of mouth is created. The listener receives a distorted message and changes his or her expectation of certain brands (Moore, 2010). However, if the language used creates a positive message, it will enhance the brand image to the other customers (Moore, 2010). Furthermore, it will increase the potential customers' confidence level in trying new brands (Moore, 2010).

c) Personal Selling

Although technology is advancing and purchasing with a click is common in this era but there are still consumers who like to shop at brick and mortar (Runyan, Kim, & Baker, 2012). However, the attitude of salesperson and the way they persuade the consumers can affect the consumers' purchasing decision (Runyan, Kim, & Baker, 2012). Some of the salespersons are pressured by the managers or employers, they may promote the products aggressively (Runyan, Kim, & Baker, 2012). When the consumers listen to the salespersons, it creates negative emotions and experiences to them (Runyan, Kim, & Baker, 2012).

VI. DISCUSSION

Some of the researchers argued that advertisement image is more effective in targeting consumers than using audio broadcasting. As the children have lesser experiences, audio broadcasting would be hard for the children to imagine the food or drinks that are advertised on radio (Bernhardt et al., 2013). Image is effective when the target market is children as they are more likely to be attracted to animated character or images than words (Bernhardt et al., 2013). According to some researches, rational appeals of advertisements use hard sell as selling technique (Mahapatra, 2012). However, some of the consumers like this kind of advertisements as they can have a clear image of the products characteristics and usage (Mahapatra, 2012). For emotional appeals of advertisements, it may turn out to be a heart touching story that positions institutional image to affect consumers. However, some of the viewers or web users may view the advertisement as a normal short video (Mahapatra, 2012).

TV program schedule may not be suitable for audio broadcasting (Petkovska et al., 2014). Some of the consumers work on weekdays and they spend most of the times in the car or at the office. In the car or at the office, consumers are exposed more to the radios compared to the televisions. Hence, weekends would be a better period for advertisers to advertise advertisements on television for this targeted market

group as consumers have leisure time to spend on watching televisions. According to Lu, Su, & Yang (2007), both television and radio advertisements have likenesses in using sound effects and themes to impress audiences or viewers. However, the consumers may have different interpretation after listening or watching the advertisements of the same products as consumers are exposed to different kinds of media and appeals.

Visual merchandising can be a silent salesperson that affects the consumers' behavior. By showing store image, retailers can attract the consumers to purchase the similar products. Furthermore, stock replenishments provide neat and clean atmosphere that attract shoppers to shop the store. A salesperson's selling skill can also boost up the sales by persuading the customers to buy more. However, customers' mood may be turned down because of annoying way of persuasions from the salespersons (Runyan, Kim, & Baker, 2012).

VII. CONCLUSION

The focus of this paper is on how "sight" or "hearing" promotions affect consumers' behavior. Advertisers create advertisements to get consumers attention and to increase the sales. The flow of the advertisements can either be informational or emotional appeal to influence consumer purchasing decision. Consumers may have much information about the products to make comparison. Consumers may choose the brand as they think the company fulfills corporate social responsibility to advertise some valuable advertisements. Some of the consumers may be exposed to the advertisements as they spend their time in front of the TV. However, some of the consumers may not have time to watch television programs so radio is available as an alternative to them. Stores are decorated to provide a comfortable environment to promote the brand and merchandise. Besides, well trained selling technique of the salespersons can persuade consumers to change their mind. To compete fairly, the companies should exercise the business ethically by advertising without make up or implying false facts (Danciu, 2014). Customers who are satisfied with the products will create positive word of mouth to reach retailers ultimate goal.

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