

Emotional and Rational Appeals Influence on Purchase Intention of Airasia Products: Implicit and Explicit Memory as Mediator Variables

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Abstract

Online advertising is becoming an integral part of business elements. In the past, the use of traditional media such as newspaper and television advertisements was normal. However, in these past few years, it is becoming increasingly normal for advertisers to use non-traditional media such as social media namely Facebook, You Tube, Instagram and TikTok, to name a few to promote their products. Advertisers wanted their customers to remember, recognise and recall their brands by using advertisements of different advertising appeals. Our brain, meanwhile, plays an important role for us to remember, recognise and recall things happening in our daily lives. That includes memorising, recognising and recalling brands that we saw before we decided whether to buy or not to buy the products we saw. In recent studies on advertising appeals, there is less number of papers understanding the relationship between emotional and rational appeals and purchase intention, mediated by implicit and explicit memory. This paper will aim to understand the relationship between both emotional and rational appeals and purchase intention with implicit and explicit memory as a mediator.

Keywords: Emotional Appeal, Rational Appeal, Implicit Memory, Explicit Memory and Purchase Intention

Introduction

There are 4.80 billion people use the internet in July 2021, with a report of 257 million new users in the last twelve months. Growth of 5.7 per cent rate annually is recorded in the increase of internet users. In average, there are 700,000 new users daily. Indirectly, this data also shows that the numbers of people who subscribe social media such as Youtube and Facebook, to name a few also increase in the past year. This has been supported by (Degenhard, 2021) who suggests that every month, over 2 billion users that are logged in browse YouTube, watching over 1 billion hours of content and generating 2 billion views. This is being supported by HubSpot in 2022 when they mentioned about video as the second most

popular type of content on social media for increasing audience engagement (HubSpot, 2022). The third most popular social media marketing tactic is live video (Kemp, 2020). Wyzowl (2022) also mentioned YouTube is the most popular platform among video marketers, with 88 percent, using them. Advertisers always find new, innovative ways to capture the attention of their customers about their products. Each day, we saw new ideas for advertisements on digital platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest, to name a few. In advertising, advertisers used different types of advertising appeals to promote their products, be it old or new products.

Ipsos, a global market opinion specialist, in its article in 2016 mentioned about the use of emotional advertising as it brought out three significant functions from the form of storytelling. To begin, emotional stimuli can draw attention by introducing fresh, unexpected, or interesting concepts that are either unusual or common. Second, emotional messages can be processed automatically, requiring less conscious attention and lessening the cognitive load on our memory encoding and processing abilities. A brand becomes highly salient as a result of emotional advertising since it forges emotional ties that make it simpler to remember it during a decision-making process (Nicks & Carriou, 2016).

This trend of advertising products on the digital platform is becoming a common practice for industry players. This can be proved when COVID-19 pandemic starts to cause chaos worldwide. Industry players have their sight on increasing expenses on digital advertising such as uploading advertisements videos on You Tube and others platforms because it is harder for them to only focusing on traditional media such as billboard and newspapers. Jordan (2020) from Nielsen analysis made by BIScience noted that advertising industry grew by four percent even though the world faced an uncertain future plus reduction in advert spending among industry players. Brands quickly invest their capital on digital platform to keep in touch with its customers.

Video-based advertising is getting more grounds for the past five to 10 years, compared to the 80s as well. MAGNA (2018) states that industry players do react to this trend by spending more on digital advertising such as video and display. The idea that digital advertising can reach the right customers in context-specific ways, at the right place and at the right time, is fundamental to this change (Bleier & Eisenbeiss, 2015). It will also have the ability to reach the right customers with the right products (Bart et al., 2014). It is due to the existence of new technologies in the shape of gadgets such as smartphones, and laptops and also the increase usage as well as the arrival of social media for example Facebook and Instagram. To make the advertising projects or campaigns successful, the right customers must be in a state of actively participating and conscious of the projects or campaigns that are being done by the industry players. Having a good memory is one of the factors that contribute to the success of projects or campaigns.

Memory refers to the process by which our brain receives information, stores it, and retrieves it later. Humans have three types of memories. First, consider sensory memory. This is the shortest type of memory and is concerned with what we are currently taking in with our senses. Short-term memory is defined as memories that last less than a minute, but with effort, they can sometimes become long-term memories. Long-term memory, on the other hand, can last from days to years. Implicit memory is a type of long-term memory that is associated with the influence that activities and experiences can have on our behaviour. It may also be referred to as nondeclarative memory. Implicit memory is classified into three types. Procedural memory is the first. Procedural memory is our understanding of how to carry out various tasks, ranging from simple to complex. We use procedural memory all the

time to complete simple tasks. Playing video games, conversing with someone who speaks our native tongue, riding a bike or driving a car are all examples of memory recall. The technique by which a prior experience enhances a response's accuracy or speed is referred to as priming after that. Examples of priming include speaking a word relatively quickly after reading it, feeling competitive when you see a fan of a rival sports team, and having a higher likelihood of thinking of the term "library" upon seeing the word "book." Finally, classical conditioning happens when we unknowingly come to link one item with another. A well-known illustration of this is Pavlov's dog. This alludes to a study in which dogs were given food before a bell was rung. Over time, the dogs came to identify the ringing of the bell with receiving food. Long-term memory is classified into two types. In addition to implicit memory, there is explicit memory, otherwise declarative memory (Seladi-Schulman, 2019). Explicit memory is classified into two types: episodic memory and semantic memory. Episodic memories are long-term recalls of specific and personal events. For instance, what we had for breakfast or where we stayed on our last vacation. Long-term memories of facts and figures such as names, dates, and other general knowledge such as our best friend's birthday or state capitals are examples of semantic memories (Cherry, 2022). Recalling specific details about events and facts is called explicit memory. Contrary to implicit memory, which we employ subconsciously, recalling information from explicit memory necessitates thought. Consider the following scenario: someone asks us for our address. That is our cue to access our explicit memory and retrieve the data.

Purchase intention has always been the main focus of studies among academics in the marketing field. Customers that are highly motivated to process information and actively assess brand information should base their purchase intentions on how persuasive the arguments in commercials are (Kawahara, 2021). On the other hand, consumers who have poor information processing motivation and who are less engaged in assessing brand information do not base their purchase intentions on how convincing an advertisement is. Rather, they base their intention to make a purchase on the pleasant emotions that an advertisement evokes, such as warmth and connection, as well as the overall likability of the advertisement. The purchase intention has become more complicated and significant in recent years (Madahi & Sukati, 2012).

This paper will provide future researchers with a better insight of advertising appeals from the perspective of video-based advertising. It also will provide them with more proof and references for them to develop their research. Students will also benefit from this research as they will be able to understand even better and deeper the role of advertising appeals to advertisements. Industry players also will benefit from this paper as they will refer from this paper on which advertising appeals suit to their business development, especially from the perspective of promoting and advertising their products. This is because the current trend in business is leaning towards online business, with the emergence of e-commerce platforms such as Lazada and Shopee. Advertising companies will also get some valuable information from this paper, especially from the aspect of types of appeals that they should combine in their clients' advertisements. The purpose of this paper is to identify which advertising appeals between emotional and rational appeals are the most effective for video-based advertisements. Besides, it intended to understand to what extend will these appeals affect the memory of the customers once this paper has been concluded.

Problem Statement

The airline industry has been badly affected because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most countries around the world have implemented their movement control order and border restrictions have led to a nosedive in demand to travel. According to data from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a United Nations (UN) agency, the number of seats offered by airlines has decreased by half in 2020.

To reduce their costs, some airlines have taken radical steps to balance their account books such as furloughing their staff and grounding their aircraft with the hope of getting back on their feet in a year or so. This also happened in Malaysia where AirAsia, Malaysia's largest low-cost carrier had to ground their aircraft for months due to border restrictions. In the early days of the pandemic when the Malaysian government had to implement a movement control order throughout Malaysia, an issue occurred between AirAsia and their passengers where the latter demanded their tickets to be refunded. AirAsia through its Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Tan Sri Tony Fernandes had proposed store credit for replacement flights instead of a refund (Fernandas, 2020). This issue continued until this year when passengers still demanded their tickets to be refunded. It is until last April that AirAsia through Tan Sri Tony Fernandes pledged to settle 450,000 outstanding tickets gradually (Vasu, 2021). With this issue expected not to settle for the next three to four months, there will be a question of whether passengers who planned to travel for vacation purposes or working purposes will fly with AirAsia once this pandemic ends. Its reputation as one of the world's best low-cost carriers will undoubtedly suffer as a result of this problem.

AirAsia, as one of the best low-cost carriers in Asia, has a diverse customer base ranging from Southeast Asia to Southern Asia, including India. With that in mind, it is difficult for AirAsia to not utilize digital advertising to advertise its products. AirAsia has been using YouTube to promote and advertise its brand and products. Lots of videos showing the products that AirAsia carried and promotional campaign videos have been uploaded to their YouTube channel. It is safe to say that some of the videos that they uploaded have been viewed millions of times in the past, which fulfills the metrics for a digital advertising campaign.

There have been numerous videos uploaded to YouTube in the past, including motivational videos, tutorials, food reviews, and so on. Comedy and skit clips, prank and fail videos, as well as light-hearted vlog and gaming videos, are some of the most well-liked YouTube genres. Situational, anecdotal, or character-driven humour can also be used in advertising (Point Park University, 2021). The main goal is to always have the product prominently displayed right when the laughter occurs. Businesses want their brand to be associated with a positive feeling.

In the past, most researches more focused on video advertising from many contexts such as brand recall Simmonds et al (2020), gender stereotypes Aramendia-Muneta et al (2020), and the role of product category, product involvement, and device (Stewart et al., 2019). There is research that focused on combining three advertising appeals namely rational, fear, and humour appeals from the context of video-based advertising (Kendro & Narhetali, 2018). Videos needed for this research will be extracted from YouTube.

Several academic studies have previously linked customer memory and advertising. Kark et al (2020) in their research show that advertisements with both an image and a price were the least effective, while stimuli with both text and a price were the most effective in capturing the respondent's attention. The best recall was generated by advertising that

included an image, text, and price. Gender, task, and experience all had a significant impact on the results.

Studies about advertising appeals on memory and purchase intention act as dependent variables have been studied in the past (Wirtz et al., 2018). However, studies on how advertising appeals influence purchase intention with customer memory as a mediator have not been studied in the past. This paper will contribute to the particular subject. This paper also will understand which customer memory between explicit and implicit memory will influence purchase intention the most. In the meantime, this paper will be the first to use video-based advertising as its context.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

There are three types of variables involved in the formulation of hypotheses. The first is an independent variable, and the second is a dependent variable. Independent variables for this paper are emotional and rational appeals. These variables will influence the mediator variables. For this paper, its mediator variables are implicit memory and explicit memory. These appeals will influence purchase intention, as the dependent variable of this paper. Based on the extensive literature review in the previous section on all of the key terms as well as implicit and explicit memory, it will be possible to form hypotheses linking the independent, mediator and dependent variables.

Emotional Appeals influencing Implicit memory and Explicit memory

According to some advertising researchers, positive emotional appeal, can be used to maintain attention (Strick et al., 2009) and increase positive attitude toward the advertised product or brand, purchase intentions, and brand awareness (Couvreur, 2015). Kendro and Narhetali (2018) in their study had found out that explicit memory for a humorous advertisement is relatively high, while implicit memory is not significantly different. They also had found out that humour is better suited for use on a well-known brand or product. In previous literature comparing between emotional and rational appeals, it has been demonstrated that emotional advertising can be more memorable than rational advertising on both recall and recognition measures (Ambler & Burne, 1999; Mehta & Purvis, 2006).

H1: Emotional appeal will have positive influences towards implicit memory

H2: Emotional appeal will have positive influences towards explicit memory

Rational Appeals influencing Implicit memory and Explicit memory

In previous research, rational appeals have rarely been tested to influence implicit and explicit memory as attention were more towards emotional appeal. However, Sadeghi et al (2015), in their study mentioned that while emotional appeals are more vivid, rational appeals are more relevant, providing clear, product-related information, and thus rational appeals attract more consumers' attention. According to Rizwan et al (2013), rational advertising appeal has a greater impact on positive customer attitudes regarding advertisements than emotional appeal. Albers-Miller and Stafford (1999) stated that after analysing commercials in the service sector, rational appeal advertising reduces consumers' uncertainties and ambiguity from respective service.

H3: Rational appeal will have positive influences towards implicit memory

H4: Rational appeal will have positive influences towards explicit memory

Implicit memory and Explicit memory influences Purchase Intention

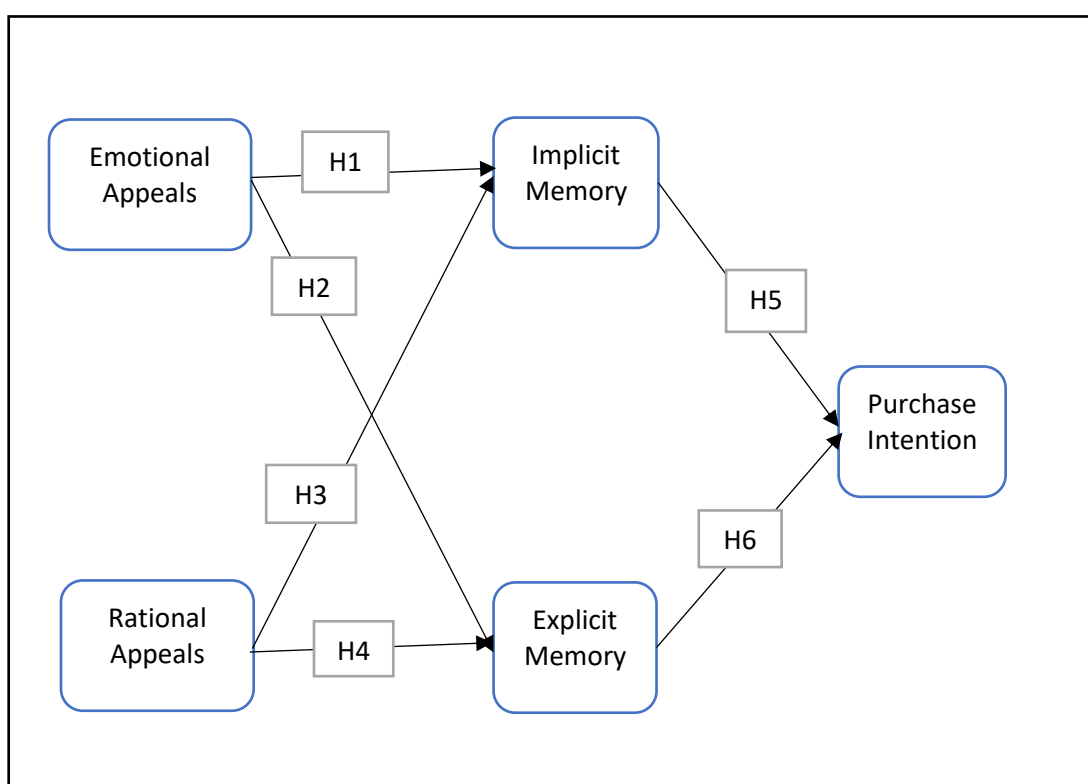
As there are no recent studies that confirming the influence of both explicit and implicit memory, this paper will be the first to understand the influence of explicit and implicit memory acting as a mediator for advertising appeals on purchase intention.

However, there are study from Wirtz et al (2018) that show no effect of purchase intention when it act as dependent variable when advertising appeals namely sexual appeals act as independent variable. From this paper, researcher believe there will be no effect of purchase intention when customer memory act as a mediator while music, fear and humour appeals act as independent variable.

H5: Implicit memory will not influence purchase intention.

H6: Explicit memory will have no influence towards purchase intention.

Research Framework



Conclusion

This paper will study on how emotional and rational appeals affect purchase intention when explicit and implicit memory act as mediator variable. Previous studies have shown that the variables mentioned above related to each other. Study on airlines has not been done in previous study of the same variables and therefore, this paper will investigate from the perspective of airlines, especially low-cost airlines and its customers. However, it has not been proven whether explicit and implicit memory can influence the outcome when it is act as mediator variable. This paper will help to contribute from the theoretical and practical aspects of advertising industries as the current trend of business is heading towards online business.

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