Using Humor to Sell Product: The Case of HEINEKEN

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A B S T R A C T

Today marketing is in the middle of a main paradigm alteration. Instead of fear or other distress, more and more marketers are shifting to humor (Stanley 2015). The influences of humor in advertisement have long been of great apprehension in academicals as well as practical. In Vietnam, humor in advertisement has been engaged by various brands, yet little understanding of its application has been presented. Furthermore, preceding researches had shown that humor also contributes to the advertising effectiveness, get customers attention as well as enhance the attitude of customers toward the ads. Methodically, this research employed quantitative approach, which applied Structural Equation Modeling, utilized by Partial Least Square method (PLS-SEM) analysis for a sample size of 120 respondents. The results have confirmed significant impacts of Humor on advertisement likability and Consumer attitude toward the brand as well as their beliefs toward the brand and Brand Purchase Intention. Significantly, there are considerable recommendations for advertisers in Vietnam.

A R T I C L E  I N F O

Keywords:
Humor, Ad likability, Consumer Attitude, Brand attitude, Purchase Intention, PLS-SEM.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Although the booming of internet enables marketer to easily connect to their target customers, it also leads to the advertisement avoiding from the audiences. During a commercial ad, a metric of commercial contact was reported to decline by 47%, with only 7% of the consumers giving ads total attention and 53% having separated attention (Krugman et al 1995). Additionally, a phenomenon, which called “Zapping” (the use of a remote-control channel-changer to avoid commercials), appeared. With zapping, customers have the authority to switch to another channel whenever they feel the ads useless and boring. Consequently, thousands of advertisements are wasted every day posing a huge problem impact on the effectiveness of commercial advertisings. Previous research indicated in inconsistent results of related issue. On the one hand, researchers on commercial advertising advocated that advertisement liking would increase as presence of humor appeal, which affected advertisement persuasion positively (Duncan and Nelson 1985; Eisend 2011; Strick et al. 2012; Strick et al. 2009). On the other hand, serious messages could be trivialized by funny advertisement that negatively influences ad persuasion (McGrw, Schiro, and Fernbach 2015a; McGraw, Warren, and Kan 2015b; Nabi, Moyer-Gusé, and Byrne 2007; Young 2008). The marketing previous research gave strong support for enhanced likeability by using humor, which were shown to increase both liking of advertisement (Duncan and Nelson 1985; Speck 1987) and liking of the brand (Duncan and Nelson 1985). Lars and John (2008) had also conducted an advertising experiment, which found that there was significant positive between Ad liking and the immediate brand variables, Brand beliefs and Brand Attitude. Moreover, Goldberg and Gorn (1987) conducted a study the impact of happy and sad television programs on commercials by using beverages and food television commercials. The result showed that evaluation of commercial influenced by the nature of television programs. Happy program significantly created positive commercial thoughts in audience’s mind. It was because happy program led to positive moods and more positive cognitive response toward television advertisements. In contrast, sad program was indicated to bring negative moods; the participants might no longer pay interest as well as attention on the content of the commercials. Hence, humor appeal can be a key factor that should be considered carefully to attract customers. However, could humor appeal motivate people to intent to purchase special products like beers? Despite being typical products that are consumed every day and everywhere, beers are found hard to advertise and get attention from the audiences. Moreover, this study did not stop on clarify the effect of humor on advertisement likeability. Its purpose is to find out the impact of humor on intention to buy of customer through mediators (advertisement likability and brand assessment).

In Vietnam, it could be seen that many advertisements include humor in an effort to attract consumers and enhances their feelings toward the ads. The most outstanding are the Television Ads of Mentos (e.g. Candy and Chewing gums), Heineken (beer), Calofic (e.g. Meizan OIL), Vinamilk, Nissin Foods (e.g. “365” and “Waxada” Instant Noodles), Universal Robina Corporation (e.g. C2 bottled tea), Suntory Pepisco (e.g. 7Up soft- drink) etc. The excessive use of humor in Vietnam
calls for a crucial need to understand what humor is as well as which parts of the advertising activities that humor mostly influences. As such, this research is designated for the precise purpose, which aims to evaluate the potential of use of humor appeal in marketing, especially in Vietnam.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Humor in Advertising

Conventionally, the use of humor has become common practice in advertising. About one out of five television ads contains humor appeals (Beard 2008). Some research suggest that as much as 24.4% of advertising is intended to be humorous (Weinberger et al. 1992). While the use of humor is high, the efficacy of humor as a communications method remains uncertain. Nevertheless, today marketing is in the middle of a main paradigm alteration. Instead of fear or other distress, more and more marketers are shifting to humor (Stanley 2015). For instance, in a viral marketing effort for “Dead pool”, actor Ryan Reynolds put on his red spandex costume when teaches men how to check their “man berries” for testicular cancer. Completely, several prior studies show that if done well, ads with humor will get attention, especially online ads (Eisend 2009; Guadagno et al. 2013b; Gulas and Weinberger 2006; Madden and Weinberger 1982; Purcell 2010). Taking the marketing campaign of Dead pool as illustration, it has amassed over a million interactions on YouTube and 2 million audiences just by giving viewers a good laugh. Alternatively, a funny advertisement of Australian, which called “Dumb way to die”, attract over 126 million audiences (Cain 2015; Jardine 2015). Undoubtedly, Humor appeal could increase the social advertisement’s attraction. However, could humor appeal motivate people to intent to purchase beers? In this case, Heineken’s beers will participate in this study. The previous researches offer inconsistent evidences. In the one hand, some researches on commercial advertising advocates that advertisement liking will increase as presence of humor appeal, which affects advertisement persuasion positively (Duncan and Nelson 1985; Eisend 2011; Strick et al. 2012; Strick et al. 2009). On the other hand, serious messages could be trivialized by funny advertisement that negatively influences ad persuasion (McGraw, Schiro, and Fernbach 2015a; McGraw, Warren, and Kan 2015b; Nabi, Moyer-Gusé, and Byrne 2007; Young 2008). The purpose of this study is to clarify the effect of humor appeals on advertisement persuasion, specifically in the situation of Heineken advertising.

2.2 Humor Appeals, Ads Liking, and Persuasiveness

The research of Julie (2010) discovered evidence of a positive relationship between perceived humor and liking judgments and evidence of a curvilinear relationship between perceived humor and liking judgments. Humor appeals were liked more than the non-humor appeals since people found the humor appeals funnier than the non-humor appeals. Besides, participants were more persuaded by ads they liked which prove that humor appeal leads to liking and liking leads to persuasiveness, one might logically conclude that humor appeals lead to persuasion. The research also measured vulnerability, response-efficacy, self-efficacy, and social norms given that these measures influenced the effectiveness of social ads (Bandura 1977; Ho 1998; Maddux and Rogers 1983; Pechmann and Knight 2002; Tanner et al. 1991; Witte 1992). However, there were no evidence supporting humor appeals influenced these measures any differently than the non-humor appeals had been found. Generally, the research finding of Julie (2010) was similar to conclusion of Sternthal & Craig (1973), which was concluded that humor enhanced the likeability of the advertisement. Strong avocation was found for this conclusion in both advertising and non-advertising research. The marketing previous researches gave strong support for enhanced likeability by using humor, which were shown to increase both liking of advertisement (Belch and Belch 1984; Gelb and Pickett 1983; Duncan and Nelson 1985; Speck 1987) and liking of the brand (Gelb and Pickett 1983; Gelb and Zinkhan 1986; Duncal and Nelson 1985). Until now, not any study reported a negative impact of humor on liking. Therefore, it was strongly predicted that humor will increase the advertisement likeability in case of Heineken.

H1: Humor positively relates to the advertisement likeability
H2: Ad Likeability positively relates to purchase intention

2.3 Attitude towards the Advertisement, Beliefs about the Brand, and Attitude towards the Brand

Attitudes towards the advertisement took the role as mediator of influence on the attitudes towards the advertised brand and the purchase intention (Mitchell and Olson and Shimp, 1981). According to Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), attitude towards a brand was an effect of the cognitive or affective responses (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981). Nevertheless, the relationship between the advertisement attitudes and brand attitudes weakened over a period of time (Moore and Hutchinson, 1985). Forming the relationships, it was determined that ad-related thoughts develop advertisement attitudes (Lutz, Mackenzie and Belch, 1983; Mackenzie and Lutz, 1986; Lutz, 1985), while brand related cognitions and beliefs developed brand attitudes (Wright, 1973; Mitchell and Olson, 1981). Gordon Brown of Millward Brown Inc. pointed out the high correlation between advertisement likeability and awareness. A well-liked advertisement positively was also proven to affect the information processing audiences’ mind.

Lars and John (2008) had conducted an advertising experiment, a quasi-experiment specifically due to lack of unexposed control group (Shadish, Cook, and Campbell 2002). New ads for new brands of four different products provided the experimental manipulations of the independent variable, the product type. Immediate responses to the four ads, including ad
liking, were measured in a pre-test. After the pre-test, the participants were exposed to the four ads twice during a three-week period in a simulated advertising campaign. They then participated in a posttest. The ads in the experiment were for new brands in four different product types: painkillers, coffee, pension plans, and jeans. The product types were selected to ensure diversity by having them parallel to the attitude strategy quadrants in the Rossiter-Percy Grid (Rossiter and Bellman 2005; Rossiter and Percy 1997; Rossiter, Percy, and Donovan 1991). The research found that there was significant positive between Ad liking and the immediate brand variables, Brand beliefs and Brand Attitude. These results were in line with results in earlier studies (Brown and Stayman 1992). In the posttest, however, the Ad liking correlations with Brand beliefs were reduced noticeably for the two low-involvement product ads (painkillers and coffee), although they remained significantly positive for all four ads. The Ad liking correlations with Brand Attitudes were all reduced markedly but remained significantly positive for the two low-involvement product ads.

In psychological theories of attitude formation and change, it was generally expected that beliefs about an object influenced attitudes toward that object; and attitude, in turns, influences intention (Ajzen 1988; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). After the exposure to the advertisement, there would be a positive relationship between Brand beliefs and Brand Attitudes, and between Brand Attitudes and Purchase Intention. Previous studies showed that Ad Liking influences immediate Brand beliefs and Brand Attitude (Brown and Stayman 1992; MacKenzie and Lutz 1989; MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch 1986). It was also expected that there would be positive relationships between Ad Liking and Brand beliefs, as well as Ad Liking and Brand Attitudes (Bergkvist and Rossiter 2007; Brown and Stayman 1992). Formally, the following hypotheses can be stated:

**H3:** Ad Likeability positively relates to Brand Beliefs.

**H4:** Ad Likeability positively relates to Brand Attitudes.

**H5:** Brand Beliefs positively relate to Brand Attitudes.

**H6:** Brand Beliefs positively relate to Purchase Intention

**H7:** Brand Attitudes positively relate to Purchase Intention.

**Fig.1.** Research Model

3. **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The data collection for this study was conducted at Ho Chi Minh City, which is considered as the biggest city of Vietnam. Before participating in the survey, participants were asked to watch a short humorous ad. The data were collected by means of a questionnaire. In total, 155 cases were collected, and 120 valid questionnaires were used for analysis. 83 of the respondents were male and 37 were female. 26.7% of the respondents were below the age of 25, and nearly 11% of respondents are over 45. There was some concern about the personal income ratio, which is critical high in the range between 10 million to 20 million. However, they male/female ratio at the city where the data collection was balanced. Detailed descriptive statistics relating to the respondents’ characteristics are presented in Table 1.
Table 1. Descriptive statistics of respondents’ characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 45</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Income</td>
<td>&lt; 10 million</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-20 million</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 20 million</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire, using five-point scales, was employed to collect data for the constructs of the research model. The questionnaire used for data collection contained scales to measure the various constructs of the research model. The measurements for perceived humor were adapted from Zhang and Zinkhan (2006) study, which established their reliability and validity. The measurements for advertisement likeability were adapted from Schiro (2016) study, which also established their reliability and validity. Remaining factor also adapted from reliable and valid studies, which shown in table 2. Descriptive data are also presented in Table 2. All items ranged from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) and showed a reasonable dispersion in their distributions across the ranges, as seen in the standard deviations.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.6083</td>
<td>0.63373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ads Likability</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.6222</td>
<td>0.65527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Beliefs</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.6233</td>
<td>0.68853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Attitude</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.6183</td>
<td>0.70006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.6100</td>
<td>0.67655</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. RESULTS

The structural equation modeling (SEM) approach utilized by partial least square was used to validate the research model. SmartPLS 3.0 with Professional license was used to perform the analysis.

4.1 Out-Weight for Formative Assessment

Table 3. Outer weight and outer loading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ads Likability</th>
<th>Brand Attitude</th>
<th>Brand Beliefs</th>
<th>Humor</th>
<th>Purchase Intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AL1</td>
<td>0.433</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL2</td>
<td>0.397</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL3</td>
<td>0.397</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.207</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA2</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.231</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA3</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.336</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA4</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA5</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.313</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.434</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.319</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In evaluating a PLS-SEM construct, for formative measurements, it should be reported outer-weight, instead. As shown in table 4.1, all items had significant positive effect on corresponding factors.

4.2 Outer Loading for Reflective Assessment

In this study, Purchase Intention was the only variable that possesses reflectively measurement scale. According to standpoint of Sarstedt et al. (2014), Loadings should above 0.70, which indicated that the construct explained over 50% of the indicator’s variance. As presented in Table 3, purchase intention had loading above 0.5 that satisfy rule of thumbs.

4.3 Reliability and Validity Examination

It is crucial to establish the reliability and validity. However, these examinations are not valid with formative indicators (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004; Petter et al., 2007). It means reliability and validity examinations such as indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity are not reported if the latent variable uses formative measurement. Convergent validity would be reported, instead.

Table 4. Reliability and Validity Examination for Purchase Intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>rho_A</th>
<th>Composite Reliability</th>
<th>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>0.838</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.885</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this research, there was only Purchase Intention factor that used reflective measurement scale. For Indicator reliability, this factor had all items with outer loading over 0.7 (as shown in Table 4.4), which implied good indicator reliability. As shown in table 4.3, the composite reliability ratio equaled to 0.885, which implied strong internal consistent reliability. The AVE was equal to 0.607, greater than acceptable level of 0.5. Therefore, Purchase Intention satisfied both convergent validity and discriminant validity. For formative indicators, convergent validity could be examined by establishing a “redundancy analysis” for each latent variable distinctly. (Appendices A). As statistical standpoint, all four formatively exogenous latent variables had very good convergent validity. The value of path coefficients presented as following table:

Table 5. Redundancy Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exogenous latent variable</th>
<th>Path coefficients with reflective measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HUMOR</td>
<td>0.901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADS LIKABILITY</td>
<td>0.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND ATTITUDE</td>
<td>0.922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND BELIEFS</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Multi-Collinearity Assessment

In order to assess the level of collinearity among the formative indicators, the researcher should compute each item’s variance inflation factor (VIF). A higher VIF implies a greater level of collinearity. As a rule of thumb, in order to elude multi-collinearity problems, the VIF value of five or lower (Tolerance level of 0.2 or higher) need to be acquired (Hair et al., 2011).
Table 6. Inner VIF Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ads Likability</th>
<th>Brand Attitude</th>
<th>Brand Beliefs</th>
<th>Humor</th>
<th>Purchase Intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ads Likability</td>
<td>1.651</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Attitude</td>
<td>1.651</td>
<td>0.628</td>
<td>0.328</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Beliefs</td>
<td>1.739</td>
<td>0.352</td>
<td>0.306</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The inner VIF value strongly suggested that there was no exist of collinearity in Inner model. Additionally, based on the result of Outer model multi-collinearity testing, all items in outer model was very good; hence, the collinearity problem was avoided.

4.5 Hypothesis testing results

![Fig. 2. Structural Equation Modeling results]

From Table 7, the coefficient of determination, $R^2$, was 0.791 or 79.1% for the Purchase Intention endogenous latent variable. This meant that the four latent variables including Humor, Ads Likability, Brand Attitude, Brand Beliefs abstemiously explained 79.1% of the variance in Purchase Intention. Humor, Ads Likability and Brand Beliefs together explain 77.1% of the variance of Brand Attitude. Humor, Ads Likability together also explained 39.4% of the Brand Beliefs’ variance. Humor latent variable explains 71.8% variance of Ads Likability.

Table 7. Inner-Model Path Coefficient

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ads Likability</th>
<th>Brand Attitude</th>
<th>Brand Beliefs</th>
<th>Humor</th>
<th>Purchase Intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ads Likability</td>
<td>0.756</td>
<td>0.628</td>
<td>0.328</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Attitude</td>
<td>0.628</td>
<td>0.352</td>
<td>0.306</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Beliefs</td>
<td>0.328</td>
<td>0.352</td>
<td>0.306</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>0.328</td>
<td>0.352</td>
<td>0.306</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on path coefficient sizes and significance, the inner model revealed that Brand Attitude had the strongest effect on Purchase Intention with the weight of 0.352, Followed by Ads Likability and Brand Beliefs that were 0.328 and 0.306, respectively. Ads Likability had stronger effect on Brand Attitude (0.756) compared to Brand Beliefs. That latent variable also had moderately effect on Brand Beliefs (0.628) and Humor moderately influenced Ads Likability (0.847). The hypothesized path relationship between all variable were statistically significant (greater than 0.1). Therefore, these following implications were proposed:
Both Brand Attitude and Brand Beliefs were moderately strong predictors of Purchase Intention
Both Ads Likability and Brand Beliefs were moderately strong predictors of Brand Attitude
Ads Likability was moderately strong predictors of Brand Beliefs
Humor was moderately strong predictors of Ads Likability

Table 8. Cross-Validated Redundancy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SSO</th>
<th>SSE</th>
<th>Q² (=1-SSE/SSO)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ads Likability</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>202.336</td>
<td>0.438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Attitude</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>322.288</td>
<td>0.463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Beliefs</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>471.081</td>
<td>0.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>333.282</td>
<td>0.445</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 8, Cross-validated redundancy (Q2) or blindfolding of all latent variables are greater than zero, which was indicted the path model’s predictive accurateness is good (Rigdon, 2014; Sarstedt, Ringle, Henseler, & Hair, 2014).

5. DISCUSSIONS

The hypothesis H1 predicted that humor would enhance the advertisement likeability. As statistical standpoint, there was a positive relationship between humor and ads likability, whose weight equals to 0.847. This result provided support for H1. This finding was literately in line with the research of Schiro, J. L. (2016), which suggested that humor appeals can positively influence on ad likability. The study of Sternthal and Craig (1973) also concluded that humor enhance advertisement likability. The hypothesis H2 assumed that Ads Likeability would positively related to intent to act, which is Purchase Intention. Based on the statistical analysis result present in Figure 2, it indicated that ads likability has influence weight equals to 0.328 and explained 79.1% variance in purchase intention together with brand belief and brand attitude. Undoubtedly, the hypothesis H2 has been confirmed. This finding was in favor of study of Duncan and Nelson (1985). They found that when people liked an advertisement, they were successively more interested in buying the advertised product. The positive correlation between ad liking and ad persuasion is consistent with wider findings from the psychology literature, which demonstrated that people were more easily persuaded by people or things that they like (Cialdini 2001, 2003; Frenzen and Davis 1990; Goei et al. 2003; Guadagno et al. 2013a; Hepler and Albarracin 2014; Regan 1971; Reinhard, Messner, and Sporer 2006). The hypothesis H3 proposed that Ads Likeability positively affect Brand Beliefs. The weight of this relationship was 0.628, which indicates positive relationship between two variables. Thus, H3 was supported. As proposed by hypothesis H4, Brand Attitudes has been predicted to be positively influenced by ads likability. The result supported the hypothesis H4, which provided the weight, equaled to 0.756. As statistical standpoint, the proposed hypothesis H5 has been supported, which was brand beliefs would be positively related to brand attitudes. Hypotheses H6 and H7 also be confirmed, which are, brand beliefs and brand attitude would positively relate to purchase intention. Through the attitude toward advertisement, Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention was enhanced in a one-way direction relationship, similar to the finding of previous studies (Brown and Stayman; 1992; MacKenzie and Lutz, 1982; Lutz et al., 1983).

6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to empirically investigate the effectiveness of advertisements employing humor appeal to determine if it could serve as a predictor of purchase intention of customer. Quantitative approach with Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling has employed to clarify the relationship. The result shown that through brand assessment and advertisement likability humor has certain positive affect on intention to buy of customer. The implication findings give approval for the usefulness. However, there are also have some limitations and opportunities for further researches.

6.1 Implications

6.1.1 Theoretical Implication

The results of the academic analyses have important implications for academic studies of ads. The findings support Schiro, J. L. (2016) argument that humor appeal had positive effect on advertisement likability. Although additional applications of this research model need to be confirmed to confirm that the proposed paths are robust under variables varying conditions, this study supports the hypothesized influences of advertisement likability on Brand Beliefs, Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention as research findings of Lars B. and John R. (2008). Similar to Lars B. and John R. (2008), this study confirmed that Brand Attitude had a greater effect on Purchase Intention (0.352) than Brand Beliefs (0.306), although both paths were significant; and advertisement likability had a greater effect on Brand Attitude (0.756) compared to effect on Brand Beliefs (0.628). Moreover, the research also confirmed the hypothesized path from Brand Beliefs to Brand Attitude (0.177).

This study also lends support to the hypothesized direct path from advertisement likability to Purchase intent (0.328) as in study of Schiro, J. L. (2016), not as high as brand attitude (0.756) but greater than brand beliefs (0.628). These findings
represent an advance in understanding of the complex interactions among the various features of advertising and consumer cognitions that lead ultimately to purchaser. They focus attention on the impact of humor appeal on advertisement effectiveness through brand assessment with brand beliefs and brand attitude.

6.1.2 Practical Implication

This study indicates that humor plays an important role in advertisement effectiveness. In addition, advertisement likability seems to have a direct effect on customer perceptions toward the brand and purchase intentions. Because these customer perceptions may be central to the success or failure of promotions and sales, managers need to become much more aware of how consumers view the brand through the advertisements (Schiro, J. L. 2016; Lars B. and John R., 2008). Consequently, corporations must repetitively manage perceptions of brand by consumers as well as other stakeholder groups. Annual, or even more frequent as monthly, surveys to get feedbacks of consumers and their feelings about the advertisements and the brand seem to be fundamental for effective decision-making. By tracking consumer perceptions of brand and advertisement, managers can identify modifications in this important marketing metric and take corrective action if needed. The measures for advertisement effectiveness and brand perception (brand attitude, brand beliefs) presented in this research model can provide managers with a better idea of how customer intent to purchase a product. Advertisement likability may be particularly well aided by the humor appeals on the ads. By understanding how humor affect the perception of audience toward the ads, and in particular how each aspect of the advertisement has been altered, companies such as Heineken during advertisement produce process, may have been better able to develop appropriate add humor characteristic in the ads in order to get attention, likability toward the advertisements. Take the case of Samsung for illustration, in the ads, Samsung uses a baby-police image to pursue a vacuum cleaner with its Motion Sync technology. Thanks to this new technology, the vacuum cleaner can be easily moved indoors without worrying about collisions during work. This advertisement is the most view ad in current week, and consequently, the sale of this vacuum increase very much. Nevertheless, there are several other benefits of humor appeals that are not captured by this research, but has been prove by preceding researches. Eisend (2009); Gulas and Weinberger (2006); Madden and Weinberger (1982) have proven that humor appeal increased attention. As stated by Damon (2013); Guadagno et al. (2013b); Purcell (2010), humor appeal has helped ads reach more audiences. Moreover, humor also help audiences remember the ads longer (Carlson 2011; Chung and Zhao 2003; Duncan and Nelson 1985; Hansen et al. 2009; Krishnan and Chakravarti 2003; Murphy et al. 1979; Schmidt 1994, 2002).

6.1.3 Methodical Implication

This study employed second-generation multivariate data analysis method called Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), with a focus on Partial Least Squares (PLS) which is an emerging path modeling approach. PLS-SEM is a much-appreciated method for developing and testing theories in business research (Henseler et al., 2014). Furthermore, powered by SmartPLS, PLS-SEM provided a visual result, which assist the analysis process more easily. Researchers can quickly evaluation the importance of each path as well as the consistent of whole model.

6.2 Limitations and Further Research Directions

As preceding discussion, Madden and Weinberger (1982) have proven that humor appeal increased attention, which could lead to enhance the comprehension of the ad and memory for the advertisement messages. In so far, humor appeals could become more persuasive over time because of sleeper effect (Nabi et al. 2007; Pratkanis et al. 1988). Recall that Nabi and colleagues (2007) found preliminary evidence of a sleeper effect in the context of stand-up comedy procedures (Schiro, J. L., 2016). Participants attended to either stand-up comedy or serious observation on several critical matters (e.g., gun control, drug legalization). Instantaneously after participants listened to the message, the humorous and non-humorous advertisements were similarity effect. Nevertheless, after a time such as a week, Nabi and colleagues found partial evidence that the humorous messages were more persuasive (i.e., a sleeper effect). However, they suggested that their findings replicate evidence of increased explanation of the humorous message over time without evidence procedures. Therefore, further research should investigate the potential for a sleeper effect in commercial advertising.

Acknowledgement

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REFERENCES


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APPENDICES A

Convergent validity evaluation

Convergent validity evaluation for HUMOR exogenous latent variable

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Convergent validity evaluation for ADS LIKABILITY exogenous latent variable

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Convergent validity evaluation for BRAND ATTITUDE exogenous latent variable

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Convergent validity evaluation for BRAND BELIEFS exogenous latent variable

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