Endorser Credibility and Its Influence on the Attitude Toward Social Media Advertisement in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of technology has made many companies shift their advertising strategy to a different medium. Nowadays rather than solely focusing on traditional advertising platforms, marketers have moved towards communicating messages about their products and services using online advertising platforms such as online websites. One particularly popular online advertising platform being utilized by marketers is social media. There are many studies about the effectiveness of using celebrity endorser in advertisements and the results shows a positive relationship but it seems that there are limited researches in social media as a medium. Since the increasing advertising budget was spend in internet, it had shown the internet advertising become prominent in Malaysia. With regard to the significance of the internet advertising to influence the consumer, this paper aims to assessed the impact of endorser credibility on attitude in social media advertisement. The study carried out in Malaysia using 200 respondents. Three elements to measure the endorser credibility, that are, attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness. To examine the relationship, this paper employs a SPSS test that is capable of testing the relationship between the variables. The analysis confirmed that, attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness is significance with attitude toward social media advertisement. Overall, the study provides supportive evidence on the impact of using endorser in social media advertisement and the results help businesses to formulate better strategy in advertising.

KEY WORDS: Online Advertising; social media; endorser credibility.

INTRODUCTION

It is important for marketers to understand consumers' activities when searching for, selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services to satisfy their needs and desires (Kotler and Keller, 2008). This understanding helps marketers to discover the stimuli that they can create to motivate consumers to form a positive attitude about the products offered and create an intention to buy.

One of the medium that has been continuously used to influence consumer is through advertising. There are many techniques that can be used to make the advertising attracted such as use of sounds, nice colours, funny video and many more. The most popular technique that has been practised since many years ago is the concept of credibility in advertisement(Goldsmith, Lafferty, & Newell, 2000; Ferle & Choi, 2005). Source credibility such as endorser become one of the most important stimuli that marketers use to build and enhance consumer's attitude toward advertisement. Research by Wang, Cheng and Chu (2013) showed with the used of endorser in advertising increase the product sales of the company especially when the endorser is celebrities who already have a reputation in specific fields.

Past studies tend to focus on the effectiveness of using celebrity endorser in traditional advertising such as television. Recently, businesses have focused more on trending techniques to compete with their business rivals and to be more attractive to promoting their products. This method is through the adoption of the interactive new media technology (Chiagouris and Lala, 2009). Internet World Stats (2012) revealed about 60.7% out of Malaysia's population use the internet and about 64.7% from the internet user is from people age 15 and older (comScore, 2011). Thus it can be said that the evolution of technology has made consumers to choose internet as their main medium of communication and marketers take this advantage to promote their business online.

Suruhanjaya Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia (2012) revealed about 63.6% out of Malaysia's population use the internet. One of the most Internet sites that become popular is social media. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter is the place where people can get in touch with their friends or people with the same interest (Gwenn and Kathleen, 2011). Surveys done by Suruhanjaya Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia (2012) showed 85.7% out of all Internet users in Malaysia use Internet to socialise with their friends via social media. Reports also found 13 millions of Malaysians become an active users of social media with numbers of 65.5% from overall social media users logged on to their social networking accounts at least once a day. The statistics showed that social media is the most popular platform where all the users get connected with each other to share their activity. Other than that, social media also become the medium for the businesses to advertise their products since it plays a big role in Malaysia's advertising market with the big numbers or active users.

According to Blackshaw & Nazzaro (2004), social media can be describes as a variety of new sources of online interaction that are created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities and issues. While Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) define social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content. Thus social media is a platform where people interact to create, share, exchange and comment contents among themselves in virtual communities and networks.

Social media encompasses a wide range of online, word-of-mouth forums including blogs, company-sponsored discussion boards and chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer e-mail, consumer product or service ratings websites and forums, internet discussion boards and forums, moblogs and social networking websites

(Mangold & Faulds, 2009) In short, social media can classified to five groups which include collaborative projects such as Wikipedia, blogs such as Blogger, social networking sites like Facebook, content communities like Youtube, and virtual worlds like Second Life.

Mangold & Faulds (2009) stated 21st Century becomes a witness of explosion of internet-based messages transmitted through these social media. They have become a major factor in influencing various aspects of consumer behavior including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase behavior, and post-purchase communication and evaluation.

Survey done by Regas on March 2014 showed 68% of businesses in Malaysia use social media such as social media to engage, connect with and inform existing customers about their products or services. Regas also found that 52% of Malaysian companies devote up to 20% of their marketing budget to advertising in social media. This situation clearly explained that more than half of all Malaysia business use social media as one of their marketing strategies. However, there are some issues found in the social media usage among the businesses. According to The Sun (2013), Malaysian companies are fairly active on social media but they do not recognise it impacts on their businesses. In addition, 30% of the Malaysia businesses do not have a clear strategy or formal performance measurement initiatives in place to track the return on investment of social media usage. Furthermore, many Malaysian businesses do not have a robust strategy to guide their social media activities and quantify their benefits. The issues found showed that although social media give a big opportunity for the businesses to advertised their products, many of Malaysian businesses still do not have the clear strategy on how to use it effectively so that they can utilised the budget allocated for the advertising more efficiently.

Other than issues rising in the industry about social media advertising, the issues in knowledge also has been found by the researcher. Past studies tend to focus on the effectiveness of using celebrity endorser in traditional advertising such as television. Recently, businesses have focused more on trending techniques to compete with their business rivals and to be more attractive to promoting their products. This method is through the adoption of the interactive new media technology (Chiagouris and Lala, 2009).

LITERATURE REVIEW

An endorser can be defined as any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement (Ohanian, 1991). Endorser can be anyone such as celebrities, athletes, politicians, professionals workers or any other individual who get expertise in the specific field to represent the products.

Celebrity endorser will be choose in this context of study. Celebrity endorser refers to a well-known person because of their successes in a special field other than the endorsed product class (James, 2004).

In selecting a celebrity to endorse a product, marketers tend to focus on the credibility of the celebrity. Ohanian (1990) defined endorser credibility as the degree

to which they are considered believable. Methaq (2011) mentioned source credibility model developed by Hovland et. al., (1953) consists of expertise and trustworthiness as the characteristics of source, and attractiveness model which focuses on the character of attractiveness. In order to create consumer attitude that can led to purchase intention, both model had been used together. This dimensions also supported by Ohanian (1990) and developed a multi-dimensional explanatory model to explained about source credibility.

Attractiveness

Methaq (2011) defined attractiveness as the physical appearance and/or the perceived personality of the source. Attractiveness represents that advertising endorsers can catch consumers' attention to a product (Ohanian, 1990; Goldsmith, et. al., 2000). In today's advertisement either traditional or internet advertisement, advertisers always choose celebrities who are physically attractive. Studied by Bahram, Zahra and Zahra (2010) shows attractiveness causes to increase attitude toward advertisements.
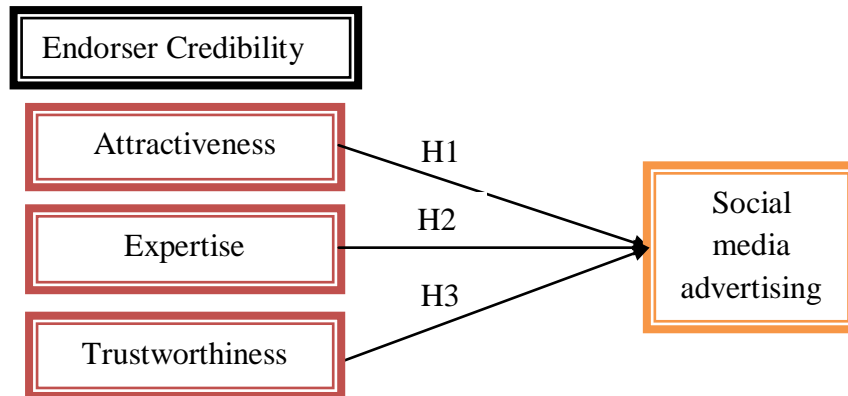
Expertise

Expertise can be defined as that advertising endorser holds professionalism which can persuade consumers to buy products (Desarbo & Harshman, 1985; Ohanian, 1990; Goldsmith et. al., 2000). Erdogan (1999) define expertise as to the extent to which a source is perceived to hold valid assertions. Clinton, Gary and David (2008) indicates that source effectiveness is influenced by receiver's perception of the source's expertise. Other than that, the source's perceived level of expertise and the target person's level of agreement will those recommendations varied with the respondents' actions in response to the source's recommendations. He also mentioned that the subjects exposed to a source perceived by highly expert exhibit more agreement with the source's recommendation than by a source with low expertise. The level of perceived celebrity expertise should predict celebrity endorser effectiveness.

Trustworthiness

Ohanian (1990) stated that the degree of confidence in the source's intent to communicate valid assertions is defined by trustworthiness. Erdem and Swait (2004) claimed trustworthiness as consistently deliver what has been promised. Researchers found that the trustworthiness of advertising endorser is one of the important factors to obtain the customer purchase intention, is the higher the trustworthiness is, the higher the positive advertising and brand attitudes are (Goldsmith et. al., 1999). According to Clinton et al. (2008), many studies supports that trustworthiness effect the effectiveness of the advertising. Miller and Baseheart (1969) said in their studies that highly trustworthy communicator who deliver opinionated message produced an effective attitude change.

In another study, Yoon, Kim, and Kim (1998) found that expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness were important to predict purchase intention and affected attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the brand in United States and Korea. The research framework for the current study attempts to show the relationship between endorser credibility and its effects on attitude toward social

media advertising. From the research framework, we can see that the dependent variable is social media advertising and the independent variables are endorser credibility.

Figure 1.1: Proposed Research Framework

H1:   Attractiveness positively related to Social media advertising.

H2:   Expertise positively related to online Social media advertising

H3:   Trustworthiness positively related to Social media advertising

Attitudes toward Social Media Advertising

Attitude toward advertising has been a focus of research in a range of traditional and new media (Moore and Rodgers 2005; Obermiller, Spangenberg, & MacLachlan 2005). According to Schultz (2008), consumers have the ability to control the information flow and build the attitude toward advertising. Research shows that trustworthiness of the medium will influenced the consumers to view the information credibility provided (Moore & Rodgers, 2005). Online medium also has been considered as more credible source of information as compared to traditional media.

Findings by Goldsmith et. al. (2002) on effect of viewing web sites on Internet advertising are both positive and negative. Positive attitude toward social media advertising leads the consumers to more likely to recall the brand names. Social media advertising can give advantages like provide a privacy and disadvantages including too many advertising exposed.

Lastly, studied by Newman, Stem and Sprott (2004), it shown that if there is a compatibility between the banner and the web site, the attitude toward the social media advertising is increase. Same goes to the consistency condition.

METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive research design. In essence, the study is to make specific predictions on the relationships between endorser credibility and attitude toward social media advertising. The study will be conduct in Klang Valley area where the respondents were from district of Bangi, Putrajaya, Serdang and Kuala Lumpur. The reasons for selecting Klang Valley as the respondents is because the usage of using social media in this area is high.

The sampling frame is a list of elements in the population from which a sample is selected (Babbie, 2007). The subject chosen for this study is the all residents in Klang Valley who used social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WeChat and etc. The important step in this research is to identify all the residents has used the social media in their daily life. This study used a data from Suruhanjaya Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia on 2012 that stated in Malaysia, there is about 15.9 millions of social media users. So, total population of social media users in Klang Valley is about 5.8 millions.

The suitable sample size is a very important in most studies in order to provide the accurately represent the population. According to Kline (2005), sample sizes with more than 200 respondents is consider as large sample size and relevant for the study. For this study, researcher used the 200 respondents to answer the questionnaires.

The study use non-probability sampling, which is judgmental sampling procedure. Judgemental sampling was used because the researcher will select the respondents who suit the sampling criteria of the study. The criteria of this study was only those who resides in Klang Valley and have a social media's account.

Close-ended questionnaires were used as the vehicle of data collection. The questionnaires used for this study is developed by incorporating many establishments. For this study, the questionnaires were divided into three major sections and use nominal and interval scales.For the current study, the research approach will use the quantitative approach, because this approach will use a large number of respondents to test the hypothesis so that the results will be more reliable. Other than that, a quantitative method is the best way to find out about the behaviour and attitude in study. Specific questionnaire will be developing for this study based on previous researches. The main sources of data collection for this study were primary and secondary sources. At the beginning of the study, secondary data were used to construct the ideas and it will be support by primary data.

Data analysis involved statistical analysis. According to Lucey (1996), statistical analysis is a scientific method of analyzing masses of numerical data to summarize the essential features and relationships within the data in order to generalize from the analysis patterns of behavior, particular outcomes of future tendencies. After the major data collection, the raw data was manually keyed through SPSS version 20.0 in order to conducted statistical analysis.

First, the reliability of the questionnaire survey will be tested to check whether the items meet the research objectives. Second, descriptive statistics, such as frequencies were performed to understand the characteristics of the data. And lastly, the hypothesis were tested using the linear regression analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Respondents' Demographic Profiles
In this study, a total 200 respondents was analyzed to get the frequency of the respondents. For the gender category, 58.0 percent of the total respondents were female and 42.0 percent accounted for male respondents. In term of age category, the highest respondents come from age between 26 years to 40 years old with percentage of 69.0 percent. When respondents were asked about their marital status, about 54.5 percent from the total respondents are single. In terms of race category, most of the respondents were Malay with the highest percentage of 76.5 percent. In terms of education level, the highest percentage of respondents are bachelor degree (55.5 percent). In terms of occupation, 62.5 percent of the total respondents work in private sector. Finally, when the respondents were asked about their monthly income, about 32.0 percent were having monthly income between RM1001 - RM2999.

Table 1.1: Frequency and percentage distribution by demographic profile

Demographic	N	%
Gender		
Male	84	42.0
Female	116	58.0
Age		
18-25 years	47	23.5
26-40 years	138	69.0
41-56 years	14	7.0
75 years and above	1	0.5
Marital status		
Single	109	54.5
Married	88	44.0
Divorce	2	1.0
Widow/widower	1	0.5
Race		
Malay	153	76.5
Chinese	24	12.0
Indian	17	8.5
Others	6	3.0
Education Level		
Certificate level (PMR/SPM/STPM/LCE/MCE)	10	5.0
Diploma	46	23.0
Bachelor	111	55.5
Postgraduate	33	16.5
Occupation		

Government employee	37	18.5
Private sector	125	62.5
Self-employed	5	2.5
Housewife	2	1.0
Retired	1	0.5
Students	29	14.5
Others	1	0.5
Monthly income		
RM1000 and below	32	16.0
RM1001 - RM2999	64	32.0
RM3000 - RM4999	63	31.5
RM5000 and more	41	20.5

Source: Survey

Reliability analysis

Generally, Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the reliability and value of less than 0.60 are considered to be poor, whereas those close to 0.70 are considered good and those over 0.80 are considered to be high (Azizi, 2007). The average alpha values for variables for every section are shown in Table 4.1 below.

For attractiveness, the overall Cronbach's Alpha is 0.842 or 84.2 percent. For expertise, the Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.879 or 87.9 percent. For trustworthiness, the overall Cronbach's Alpha is 0.918 or 91.8 percent. The last section which represents attitude toward social media advertising, the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.736 or 73.6 percent. As conclusion, in general, the Cronbach's Alpha values were good for all sections with the Cronbach's Alpha value 0.772 or 77.2 percent.

Table 1.2: Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Attractiveness	0.842
Expertise	0.879
Trustworthiness	0.918
Attitude toward social media advertising	0.736

Source: Survey

Attractiveness positively related to attitude toward social media advertising

Linear regression analysis was used to analyze the relationship between attractiveness as independent variable and attitude toward social media advertising as independent variable.

Table 1.3: Model summary b-regression between attractiveness and attitude toward social media advertising

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.337[a]	.113	.109	.63989

a. Predictors: (Constant), Attractiveness

Table 1.4: ANOVA b-regression between attractiveness and attitude toward social media advertising

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.361	1	10.361	25.303	.000[b]
	Residual	81.074	198	.409		
	Total	91.435	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude toward social media advertising
b. Predictors: (Constant), Attractiveness

Table 1.5: Coefficients b-regression between attractiveness and attitude toward social media advertising

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.185	.264		8.263	.000
	Attractiveness	.347	.069	.337	5.030	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude toward social media advertising

Table 1.3 to 1.5 shows the results of regression analysis. The model summary table (table 1.3) shows that the value of R^2 is 0.113. This means that 11.3% of the variance in the dependent variable (attitude toward social media advertising) can be explained by the independent variable (attractiveness). In addition, based on the ANOVA table (table 1.4), the regression result (F-value = 25.303, p-value = 0.000) can be conclude that the regression fit is good. Based on the coefficients results (table 1.5), attractiveness is significant (t-value = 5.030, p-value = 0.000).

Expertise positively related to attitude toward social media advertising
Linear regression analysis was used to analyze the relationship between expertise as independent variable and attitude toward social media advertising as independent variable.

Table 1.6: Model summary b-regression between expertise and attitude toward social media advertising

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.277[a]	.077	.072	.65297

a. Predictors: (Constant), Expertise

Table 1.7: ANOVA b-regression between expertise and attitude toward social media advertising

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.014	1	7.014	16.452	.000[b]
	Residual	84.420	198	.426		
	Total	91.435	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude toward social media advertising
b. Predictors: (Constant), Expertise

Table 1.8: Coefficients b-regression between expertise and attitude toward social media advertising

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.429	.267		9.089	.000
	Expertise	.298	.073	.277	4.056	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude toward social media advertising

Table 1.6 to 1.8 shows the results of regression analysis. The model summary table (table 1.6) shows that the value of R^2 is 0.077. This means that 7.7 of the variance in the dependent variable (attitude toward social media advertising) can be explained by the independent variable (expertise). In addition, based on the ANOVA table (table 1.7), the regression result (F-value = 16.452, p-value = 0.000) can be conclude that the regression fit is good. Based on the coefficients results (table 1.8), expertise is significant (t-value = 4.056, p-value = 0.000).

Trustworthiness positively related to attitude toward social media advertising

Linear regression analysis was used to analyze the relationship between trustworthiness as independent variable and attitude toward social media advertising as independent variable.

Table 1.9: Model summary b-regression between trustworthiness and attitude toward social media advertising

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.328[a]	.108	.103	.64195

a. Predictors: (Constant), Trustworthiness

Table 1.10: ANOVA b-regression between trustworthiness and attitude toward social media advertising

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	9.839	1	9.839	23.877	.000[b]
1	Residual	81.595	198	.412		
	Total	91.435	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude toward social media advertising
b. Predictors: (Constant), Trustworthiness

Table 1.11: Coefficients b-regression between trustworthiness and attitude toward social media advertising

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.478	.213		11.626	.000
	Trustworthiness	.290	.059	.328	4.886	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude toward social media advertising

Table 1.9 to 1.11 shows the results of regression analysis. The model summary table (table 1.9) shows that the value of R^2 is 0.108. This means that 10.8% of the variance in the dependent variable (attitude toward social media advertising) can be explained by the independent variable (trustworthiness). In addition, based on the ANOVA table (table 1.10), the regression result (F-value = 23.877, p-value = 0.000) can be conclude that the regression fit is good. Based on the coefficients results (table 1.11), trustworthiness is significant (t-value = 4.886, p-value = 0.000).

DISCUSSION AND RECCOMENDATION

The present study is to identify the relationship between endorser credibility and attitude toward social media advertising among social networking site's users in Malaysia. This study was a hypothesis testing study and data from 200 respondents were collected through a standardized questionnaire distributed to all respondents in Klang valley area. SPSS version 20.0 was used to collect the data. Reliability were tested for the questionnaire. Frequencies and percentage were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Results show that the data is reliable for further analysis.

For hypothesis testing, linear regression was used as statistical tools. Endorser credibility that holds three dimensions which are attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness, is found to be significantly linked to attitude toward social media advertising in this study. Eventhough the impact is low, because of the low R squared value, it can be said that credible source of endorser that employs three dimensions which are attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness in social media will make the online consumers have the favorable attitude toward social media advertising. This findings is in line with the previous studies especially in traditional media as discussed in the earlier chapter.

From the previous analysis, it appears that some areas need further research in the future. First, it is suggested that future research could be done on other variables, such as corporate credibility, rather than solely focus on endorser credibility, in order to determine the direct or indirect influence on the attitude toward social media advertising. The role of corporate credibility cannot be ignored as it may affect the effectiveness of the advertising in Internet especially in social networking site advertising to build trust with the viewers.

In terms of methodology, particularly the sample used in the study, the researcher can conduct a similar study but covers all state in Malaysia including urban and rural area. So that the findings can show the better result of endorser credibility and attitude toward social media advertising to represent Malaysian.

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