

Islam as Moderating Variable between Celebrity Endorsement Influence on Attitude towards Advertisements and Purchase Intention

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Abstract

Celebrity endorsement has become a common advertising strategy adopted by many companies to attain their marketing objectives. Advertisers often select endorsers as a promotional strategy to communicate the attributes of their products or services to their target audience in order to create a positive impression about the brand. Today, celebrities are endorsing various types of women attire particularly the hijab. While they were more popular in the social media yet, we are also seeing the likes of Dato Siti Nurhahiza, Yuna and Neelofa appearing on television programs donning the hijab as endorsers of various brands. Such activities were categorized as product placement and it is an increasingly popular type of advertisements. Celebrity endorser has the advantage of creating positive impression about the brand and hence creates positive attitudes towards the brand due to the likeability and trustworthiness of the endorser. With the current situation where we are seeing intimidation and assault targeting hijab-wearing women across the globe, it becomes important to focus on such study. Therefore, the aim of this research is to examine the impact of using celebrity endorsement in hijab ads on attitudes towards ads and purchase intentions. The study will also be conducted to examine the followings; i) attitude towards ads ii) attitude toward celebrity endorser iii) attitude toward brand iv) relationship between attitude toward brand and attitude toward ad vi) relationship between attitude toward celebrity endorser and purchase intention vii) relationship between religion, celebrity endorser and purchase intention. An experiment will be conducted on a sample of 200 Muslim women. They will be exposed to hijab advertisements and later will be required to answer a set of questionnaires. The Elaboration likelihood model that was developed by Richard E. Petty and John Cacioppo in 1986 will be applied in the study to explain the different ways hijab wearing women process the endorsement of their favourite celebrities in hijab ads, it will be interesting to examine their involvement in their decision-making process to purchase and also the importance of using Islamic cues in the advertisements.

Keyword: *Islam, celebrity endorsement, influence, attitude, advertisements, purchase intention*

Introduction

It is widely accepted that attitudes and behaviors are greatly influenced by religion-rooted aspects of culture. A review of published literature on religion and advertising led to the identification of various studies on the influence of religion on attitude and lifestyle. The influence of religious mindset of audiences on information processing is one of the most significant dimensions of which have been modestly studied. Religion refer to our belief in God or gods to be worshipped, usually expressed in conduct and ritual or any specific system of belief, worship, religion often involving a code of ethics. Over 90% of the world's population practice some forms of religion. Islam is the second largest religion in the world. The religion of Islam, teaches that in order to achieve true peace of mind, one must submit to God and live according to his divinely revealed Laws. Islam is the code of life and it gives details and mentions about each and every aspect of life. Therefore, by following the instructions of Islam, one can live the worldly life in the best manner (Desilver and Masci 2017, Rudgard 2017).The purpose of this review is to illustrate Islam as a way of life, hijab advertisements and the application of Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM).

Problem statement

Celebrity endorsement has become a common advertising strategy adopted by many companies to attain their marketing objectives. Advertisers often select endorsers as a promotional strategy to communicate the attributes of their products or services to their target audience in order to create a positive impression about the brand. Today, celebrities are endorsing various types of women attire particularly the hijab. While they were more popular in the social media yet, we are also seeing the likes of Dato Siti Nurhahiza, Yuna and Neelofa appearing on television programs donning the hijab as endorsers of various brands. Such activities were categorized as product placement and it is an increasingly popular type of advertisements. Celebrity endorser has the advantage of creating positive impression about the brand and hence creates positive attitudes towards the brand due to the likeability and trustworthiness of the endorser. However, with the current situation where we are seeing intimidation and assault targeting hijab-wearing women across the globe, it becomes important to focus on such study. Besides, while a review of published literature on religion and advertising led to the identification of a number of studies on the effect of religion on attitude and lifestyle, the influence of religious mindset of audiences on information processing is one of the most significant dimensions of which have only been modestly studied. Also, there is limited theory-grounded research to understand how Islam may influence the target audience attitude towards the endorser and their buying intention. The limited theory-grounded research conducted in celebrity endorsement literature shows a limited theoretical in-depth understanding of consumers' attitude towards celebrity endorsement (Düsenberg, Almeida and Amorim, 2016). This indicates the need for further studies that would shed more light on the attitudes of Muslim women towards celebrity endorsers and its effect on their buying decisions of hijab. To fill this research gap, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion that was developed by Richard E. Petty and John Cacioppo in 1986 (Arie and Paul, 2012) will be applied in the study to explain the different ways hijab wearing women process the endorsement of their favourite celebrities in hijab ads. This is because it will be interesting to examine the role of celebrity endorsers in hijab wearing women involvement in decision-making process to purchase and also the importance of using Islamic cues in the advertisements. Therefore, the study attempts to answer the following general research question: What is the role of Islam in the relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention of hijab?

Research objectives

1. To establish the correlation between consumers' attitude towards celebrity endorsers and purchase intention of hijab.
2. To identify the correlation between attitude towards the brand and consumer purchase intention of hijab.
3. To identify how Islam mediate the correlation between consumers' attitude towards the celebrity endorser and purchase intention of hijab.
4. To identify weather there is a correlation between celebrity characteristics and consumers purchase of hijab.

Literature review

Islam as a way of life

Islam is a complete way of life leading to a balanced way of living. Islam integrates all domains of human life, just as the different systems in the human body unite to make a complete human being; if one system dysfunction, it will affect the whole body. Likewise, Islam establishes systems of laws that integrate all parts of human society to bring happiness and peace to all its members. Islam is a social, economic and political guide for individuals and communities. The Islamic principles and system of worship, civil rights, code of behavior, dress code, diet, laws of marriage, divorce, inheritance, war, peace, economics, and trades provide realistic, fair, and objective solutions to the individual, family, social, and international problems. Islam clearly establishes Muslims duties and rights with God, self, children, relatives, neighbor, guest, environment, and everybody else. Islam is an important aspect of the Muslim society. It influences every aspect of the lifestyle of all Muslims. This is because Islam always helps to define what is proper and fitting for the Muslim society (Mok 2014).

It is widely accepted that attitudes and behaviors are greatly influenced by religion. Islam influences the attitudes and lifestyle of its followers including their dressing style. This is because the Qur'an reconnects its followers to their fitrah (intrinsic human nature) and thus they become conscious of how they dress in public (Farooqi, 2012). A review of published literature on religion and advertising led to the identification of various studies on the influence of religion on advertising. The findings of Naseri and Tamam, (2012) showed that the presence of Islamic values in advertising generates a favorable attitude toward advertisement among Muslims.

This indicates that when an ad contains religious values such as hijab, it will create a favourable attitude and this will enhance the consumers' buying intention of the advertised product. This is because the Holy Quran states that it is mandatory for a Muslim woman – as ordained by God—to cover herself from strangers and distant relatives with the veil or hijab. With Islam as the official religion of Malaysia, majority of Muslim women are required to use the hijab to cover their heads. Since Islam influences how people perceive and respond to ads, it is imperative for the advertisers to include religious cues in their ads so as to enhance the effectiveness. This is because cues and symbols are effective instruments to remind the consumers of their religious values' affiliations. Therefore, advertising appeals that depict value orientations consistent with the intended audience is likely to be more persuasive than advertisements that depict inconsistent value (Leach & Liu, 1998), a fact that advertisers should take into account when creating their messages. As a result, utilizing these Islamic symbols of hijab by celebrity endorsers during advertisement might unconsciously enhance the process of information processing and consequently generate a favorable feeling and influence potential buying intention.

Hijab advertisement

Celebrity endorsement has become a common advertising strategy adopted by many companies to attain their marketing objectives. Advertisers often select endorsers as a promotional strategy to communicate the attributes of their products or services to their target audience in order to create a positive impression about the brand. Today, celebrities are endorsing various types of women attire particularly the hijab. While they were more popular in the social media yet, we are also seeing the likes of Dato Siti Nurhahiza, Yuna and Neelofa appearing on television programs donning the hijab as endorsers of various brands. Such activities were categorized as product placement and it is an increasingly popular type of advertisements. Celebrity endorser has the advantage of creating positive impression about the brand and hence creates positive attitudes towards the brand due to the likeability and trustworthiness of the endorser. However, with the current situation where we are seeing intimidation and assault targeting hijab-wearing women across the globe, it becomes important to focus on such study (Muda, Musaa, Mohamed and Borhanb, 2014).

Religion influences the attitudes and lifestyle of people including their dressing style. A review of published literature on religion and advertising led to the identification of various studies on the influence of religion on advertising. The findings of Naseri and Tamam, (2012) showed that the presence of religious values like hijab in advertising generates a favorable attitude toward advertisement among Muslims. Similarly, Ezzi, Teal and Izzo (2015) found that hijab as a significant religious cue might peripherally generates a favorable attitude toward advertisement among Muslims. This indicates that when an ad contains religious values such as hijab, it will create a favourable attitude and this will enhance the consumers' buying intention of the advertised product. Since religion influences how people perceive and respond to ads, it is imperative for the advertisers to include religious cues in their ads so as to enhance the effectiveness. This is because cues and symbols are effective instruments to remind the consumers of their religious values' affiliations. Driven by this, a growing number of fashion and sportswear organizations are engaging in commercials featuring models, musicians and athletes in hijab. H&M launched its first advert showing a Muslim model in a hijab. The world's second largest global retailer features 23-year-old Muslim model Mariah Idrissi in its latest advert. In the ad, the endorser wears a patterned hijab – an Islamic headscarf - with large sunglasses and a coat. Although women who wear hijab are often ignored when it comes to fashion, H&M has recognized the way Muslim women wear hijab in its advertisement. This is because hijab fashion has boomed in the last few years (Sanghani 2015).

Also, a recent advertisement by Nike Inc. engaged in commercial that features women athletes in hijabs. The new hijab ad went viral on the internet due to Nike's commitment to inclusivity following its equality initiative. The powerful new commercial made for Nike Middle East, prominently featured Arab and Muslim women athletes exercising and competing. The ad clip opened with a woman running in a hijab as pedestrians stare at her. The rest of the footage shows women in the suburbs of Dubai running, skateboarding, fencing, boxing, and ice skating bolstered a narrator who says, "what will they say about you? Maybe they'll say you exceeded all expectations." The ad touches on an issue that many women in the Middle East face daily while trying engage in an active and healthy lifestyle, and it even got a shout-out from Sara al-Zawqari, a spokeswoman for the International Red Cross in Iraq, who took to her Twitter to voice her support of the clip. Although Nike's ad is being praised in some corners by the Red Cross in Iraq, many others thought the ad was a willful misrepresentation of their way of life (Lang 2017). Similarly, a shampoo ad developed by Escarves and Mr. The All Shared Production decided to create brand awareness for Escarves.

The ad featured a Muslim woman putting shampoo on her hijab in order to show that Escarves' hijabs are really comfy. The ad showed that headscarves are as comfy as how the users' hair would feel after shampooing. However, the ad drew a lot of criticisms and mockery on the idea of a Muslim woman putting shampoo on her hijab instead of applying shampoo on the real hair. This is because many consider the idea of rubbing shampoo over a hijab as silly (Jawed 2017, Tham2017).

Theoretical framework

The ELM is one of the most widely used psychological theories to account for how advertising information is processed. Since first formulated in 1979 in the field of psychology and applied to consumer behaviour study in 1983, the ELM has been the subject of numerous studies, and it has been used in wide-ranging areas of persuasive communication from marketing to health communication (SanJose-Cabezudo et al., 2009). The ELM developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), views persuasion primarily as a cognitive event, meaning that the targets of persuasive messages use mental processes of motivation and reasoning (or a lack thereof) to accept or reject persuasive messages. The central processing route makes use of cognitive resources to understand and elaborate a message's argument (Tillard, 2000).

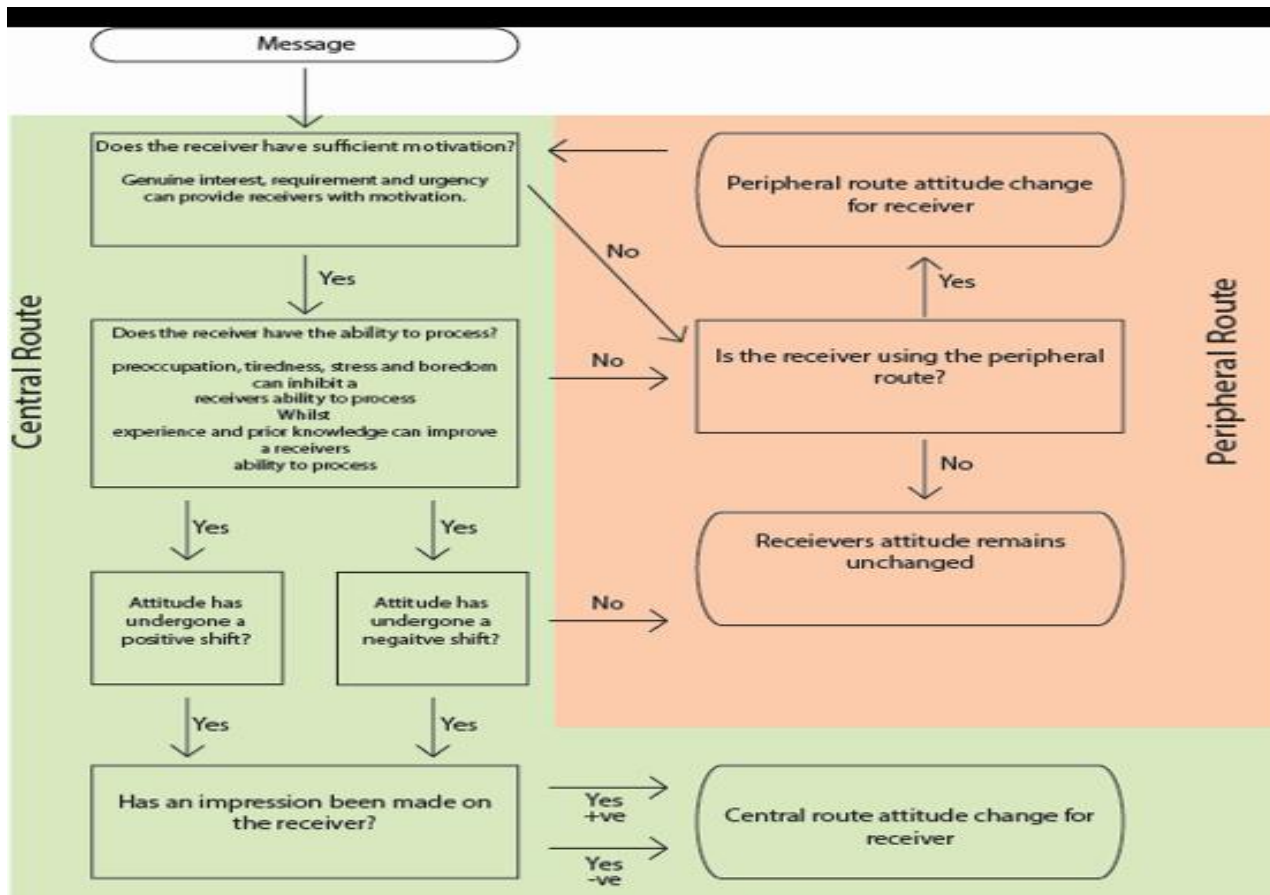
The ELM provides an integrative framework for understanding the antecedents and consequences of attitude change and specifies the various processes by which source, message, recipient, channel, and context variables have an impact on attitudes (Petty et al., 2009). A key postulate in the ELM is that attitude change can result from relatively thoughtful (central route) or non-thoughtful (peripheral route) processes. ELM's explanation to this different effect relies on various elaborations of messages among respondents. ELM posits that the impact of messages cues like attractiveness or favourability of spokesperson changes according to receiver's elaboration. This ability to elucidate inconsistent findings from different studies put the ELM as a pioneer and most influential theory in persuasion research (O'Keefe, 2002).

ELM posits two possible routes or methods of influence: centrally routed messages and peripherally routed messages. Attitude changed via the central route tend to be based on active thought process resulting in a well-integrated cognitive structure, but attitudes changed via the peripheral route are based more on passive acceptance or rejection of simple cues and have a less well-articulated foundation (Petty et al., 2009). The peripheral route uses fewer or no cognitive resources and allows a range of automatic mechanisms to be activated and to affect the hearer's attitudes (Tillard, 2000).

The rationale behind this attitude formation or change through a peripheral route is that the audience attributes the information to the positive cues in accepting or to the negative cues in rejecting the message (Petty & Brinol, 2008). Instead of doing extensive cognitive work and carefully evaluating the issue – relevant arguments, recipients rely on a variety of cues that allow them to accept the message. An extant literature in communication studies and social psychology illustrates numerous cues peripherally regarded as attributers. When thinking is low, attitudes might be affected by a large number of different low-effort processes such as mere association (Cacioppo et al., 1992) or reliance on simple heuristics (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994). The number of arguments, characteristics of the source (e.g. attractiveness or expertise), the features of the endorser (e.g. race, gender, age and religious beliefs), the situation and context (e.g. music and mood) are some of the peripheral elements which scholars tried to shed the light on their effect on message processing.

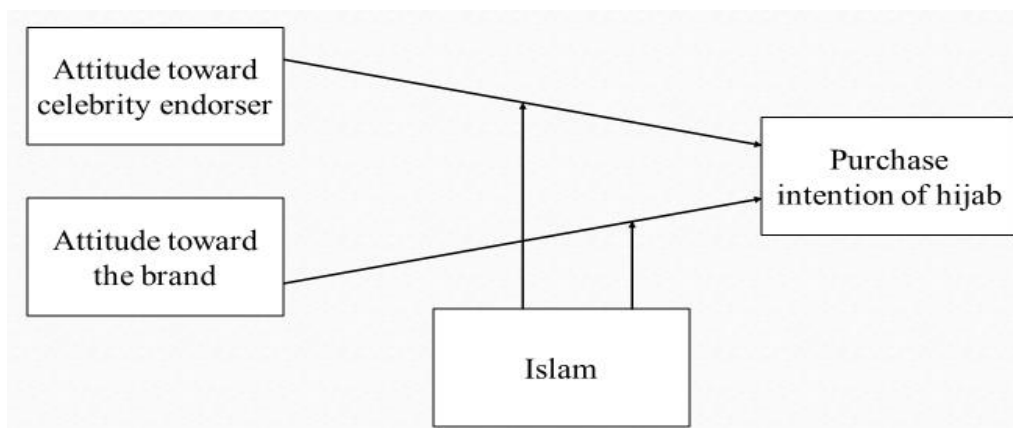
The model aims to explain different ways of processing stimuli, why they are used, and their outcomes on attitude change. The ELM proposes that persuasion occurs through the central route and the peripheral route (Petty 1986; Arie, Lange and Paul 2012). Figure 1 below shows the ELM model. The ELM was applied in the study to explain the different ways hijab wearing women process the endorsement of their favorite celebrities in hijab ads. This is because it will be interesting to examine their involvement in their decision-making process to purchase and also the importance of using Islamic cues in the advertisements. Islam cues in the advertisement are important because Islam influences the attitudes and lifestyle of people including their dressing style. With the current situation where we are seeing intimidation and assault targeting hijab-wearing women across the globe, it becomes important to focus on such study. Therefore, the aim of this research is to examine the impact of using celebrity endorsement in hijab ads on attitudes towards ads and purchase intentions. The study attempts to answer the following general research question: what is the moderating role of Islam on celebrity endorsement influence on attitude towards advertisements and purchase intention of hijab among hijab wearing women.

Figure 1: Elaboration Likelihood Model Diagram



Adapted from Petty (1986); Arie, Lange and Paul (2012)

Conceptual framework



Conclusion

A review of published literature on religion and advertising led to the identification of various studies on the influence of religion on advertising. Majority of the studies indicate that when an ad contains religious values such as hijab, it will create a favourable attitude and this will enhance the consumers’ purchase intention of the advertised product. Since religion influences how people perceive and respond to ads, it is imperative for the advertisers to include religious cues in their ads so as to enhance the effectiveness of the advertisement. This is because Islamic cues and symbols are effective instruments to remind the consumers of their religious values’ affiliations.

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