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Advertising Effect on Consumer Emotions, Judgements, and Purchase Intent

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Abstract

Advertising has been found to induce consumer reactions, including emotions and judgements, which in turn are believed to relate to important outcomes, such as purchase intents. Marketing researches seek to understand these consumer reactions and their decision-making processes to influence purchase intents. This study focuses on the information role of emotion in understanding advertising effects and influencing consumer choices. Individuals use affective responses to evaluate information and to form judgements, which are critical in the decision-making process. This research further expands the Informative Strategy Model by adding judgement as a mediator. The results of a multiple mediation analysis provide support that consumers' positive emotions directly influence their purchase intent, while consumer judgements partially mediate the effect of individuals' emotions on purchase intents. Research findings benefit marketing and advertising professionals by providing empirical evidence for the effect of advertising, including controversial advertising on consumer purchase intent. The challenge with controversial advertising is that if individuals experience negative emotions and judgements, advertisers may have limited or potentially negative influence on consumer purchase intents.

Keywords: *Advertising, Airline, Emotions, Judgements, Purchase Intent*

Introduction

Advertising is a form of marketing communication defined by the goal to promote or sell something, usually a business product or service. Companies spend millions of dollars on advertising to gain consumer attention, awareness, and action as well as increase sales and profits. Advertising, when executed effectively, has the potential to generate consumer reactions, including emotions and judgements, which in turn are believed to affect consumer purchase intents and decisions. Traditional advertising is characterized by informational elements and delivers a persuasive message by highlighting the key benefits of a product or service in order to positively influence the consumer purchase decision (Kerin and Hartley 2014). Elements of the message are usually presented in the form of an appeal to consumer needs and desires. The effect of the message is frequently intensified with an appeal to consumers' emotions and judgements. These appeals may incorporate controversial, emotional messages that include provocative content related to sex, humor, fear, and disgust. For example, Benetton's advertising campaign in the late 1980s was defined by provocative advertising messages. The company introduced images, unrelated to the brand, of a black woman breast feeding a white baby, a priest in black kissing a nun in white, and other shocking images to raise awareness of its "United Colors of Benetton" clothing line. These messages resulted in strong emotional responses and judgements of the brand and the ads.

Broadbent (1977) found that emotions are linked to the way people attend to and handle information. For example, individuals filter information and respond differently to advertisements that display images or words with emotional appeals versus messages which do not have any emotional appeal. On the one hand, events and messages that have emotional relevance for an individual are more likely to be remembered than events without any emotional attachment (Kensinger 2004). On the other hand, individuals judgements—are linked to the evaluation of evidence and estimation of different outcomes (Blanchette and Richards 2010), including purchase intent. The emotion-judgement relationship is complex, and emotions influence the way individuals perceive and judge information.

This study investigates the effect of controversial advertisements on individuals' emotions, judgements, and their effect on consumer purchase intents. Results of this study can benefit marketing and advertising professionals by shedding light on the process by which controversial advertising messages effect consumer purchase intents.

The Role of Emotions

Marketing researchers try to understand and influence the complex decision-making process of consumers, because this process leads to consumers' intents to purchase products and services (Kerin and Hartley 2014). The process involved in the purchase decision comprises several stages, including problem recognition, information search, alternative option evaluation, and finally purchase decision. During this process, consumers can be influenced by a number of factors, including emotions and judgement.

Research suggests that individuals' emotions and judgement can be provoked by advertisements. Few studies have attempted to analyze the relationships among consumers' intentions, behavior, and/or cognitive and affective variables simultaneously (Martines-Ruiz et al. 2017). Eisend and Tarrahi (2016) researched the degree of advertising effectiveness by analyzing 324 meta-analytic effect sizes taken from 44 meta-analyses. They found quantitative evidence for the effectiveness of advertising and major advertising tools. Bennett (2015) investigated to identify the type of person most likely to experience mixed emotions when observing an emotional advertisement, and the consequences of mixed emotions for a person's attitude towards the advertisement. Studies grounded in social cognitive theory have studied the relationship between emotions and the judgement related to advertisements (Edell and Burke 1987). While emotions are considered to be the property of individuals, including how an ad makes people feel, judgements related to advertisements are considered to be the property of the advertisement (Edell and Burke 1987). Researchers found that both, positive and negative emotions, as well as emotions-based responses do account for some of the previously unexplained variance related to the impact of advertisements. Advertising messages can range from information-centered content to highly emotional appeals. People tune to advertisements that trigger their emotions. These appeals intend to arouse emotions such as fear, humor, happiness, disgust, sexual arousal, or others (Vezina and Paul 1997). Bower and Cohen (1982) present evidence that a person's emotions act like a selective filter. While emotional reactions are supposed to increase consumer awareness and attention, research demonstrates that some advertisements miss their purpose, irritate the audience, and result in a negative reaction and response (Waller 2005).

The study of human emotion is rooted in psychology. Bagozzi et al. (1999) defined emotions as "mental states of readiness that arise from appraisals of events or one's own thoughts" (p. 184). Emotion theory (Angie et al. 2011; Watson and Tellegen 1985) suggests that emotional experiences are comprised of *arousal and valence*, which are linked to cognition and behavioral outcomes. While arousal is associated with whether an event is exciting and agitating or calming and soothing, valence refers to how positive or negative the event is perceived (Kensinger 2004). Arousal and valence can affect neural process during stimulus exposure. Emotions help focus attention, awareness, and motivate action. In everyday life, people are bombarded with large amounts of information; more information than can be processed simultaneously. Therefore, our brain must select only the relevant information, which we are able to attend to and process. Emotions are considered to be short-lived, intense, and to have specific, cognitive content (Ange et al. 2011; Clore et al. 1994). Kensinger (2004) stated that effects of emotional arousal are in direct relation to our attention related to specific events. This means that our attention will be triggered by emotionally arousing stimuli, which is also important for remembering information. In addition, emotions are linked to the psychological process and may result in responses and reactions to cope with the stimuli. As such, marketers are trying to develop more persuasive advertising messages, which affect consumer emotions (Ray and Batra 1982).

Positive and negative emotions both impact decision making and behavior. People can have different emotional reactions or no reactions at all to the same event. The literature distinguishes two points of views regarding emotions (Angie et al. 2011).

The first view examines emotions as discrete categories (Frijda 1986; Lazarus 2001). This view analyses different emotional states, including positive versus negative and the underlying dimensions that differentiate them, such as responsibility and control. Researchers investigated different underlying dimensions and their effect on people's judgement. For example, Tiedens and Linton (2001) found that messages appealing to emotions related to certainty, such as anger or contentment, can persuade people more so than messages appealing to emotions related to uncertainty, such as worry and surprise (Angie et al. 2011). On the one hand, positive emotions such as happiness, satisfaction, and joy, can be linked to higher levels of psychological arousal and recall, expanded attention, and increased optimism. This can also be associated with goal attainment (Bagozzi et al. 1999). On the other hand, negative emotions such as depression, disgust, offence, and sadness can create a dissonance and result in failure to achieve a desired goal or outcome.

The second view investigates the underlying dimensions of emotions, such as direction and intensity, and characterizes them in terms of a motivational system that is linked to individual actions (Cacioppo and Gardner 1999). This view suggests that emotions are either connected to the decreased levels of activation, no change, or increased levels of activation. Higher intensity of emotions leads to higher levels of activation. They motivate preference and action. This in turn impacts outcomes to a greater degree than emotions with less intensity (Waples and Connelly 2008).

Groppel-Klein suggested (2014) different states of emotions. Appraisal theories suggest that emotions can result from cognitive appraisal or the comparison between a desirable or undesirable goal and the degree of goal attainment. On the one hand, positive emotions, including happiness or joy, are associated with the attainment of a goal and usually lead to consumer decisions favorable for marketers. On the other hand, negative emotions, such as frustration, anxiety, or disappointment can result in the failure to achieve the desired goals. Ullah et al. (2016) analyzed the emotional content of a large number of online product reviews and found that there is a difference in the emotional content of reviews across search and experience goods in the early stages of product launch. Biological theories suggest that emotions can occur automatically and unconsciously in sub-cortical areas of the brain. The Constructivist Perspective suggests that a set of interacting brain regions can be active during emotional experiences. As such, we often process experiences innately first. Then, we interpret what it might mean. At this stage, psychological operations of both, emotions and cognition, are involved.

The Role of Judgement

Judgement can be defined as “the process by which individuals consider and evaluate evidence and estimate the likelihood of occurrence of different outcomes” (Blanchette and Richards 2010). Judgement can be understood as a person's reasoning process, which allows an individual to analyze outcomes of current and future events. It represents an integral part of the decision-making process (Blanchette and Richards 2010). Kadić-Maglajlić et al. (2017) researched how ethical judgement and religious commitment shape controversial advert perceptions leading to attitudes towards the advert, brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Two types of judgements have been identified: *stimulus-based* judgement and *memory-based* judgement (Lynch and Srull 1982; Riemer and Viswanathan 2013). While stimulus-based judgement relies on

information directly presented at the time of judgement, memory-based judgement relies on information encoded in memory. Researchers found that if information is viewed as positive, then it will lead to more favorable judgement, while information that is viewed as negative might lead to unfavorable judgement (Riemer and Viswanathan 2013). The difference between judgements and emotions is that judgements comprise a process of interpreting information whereas emotions represent quick and often short-lived responses to stimuli (Blanchette and Richards 2010). Judgement process allows individuals to think about different outcomes, such as positives and negatives reactions. In addition, judgement is linked to interpretation and estimation of the likelihood of events, which in turn is related to the decision-making process.

Research on judgement investigates how people estimate the likelihood of different outcomes, while research on decision-making investigates how individuals actually choose between different options (Blanchette and Richards 2010). An important question is whether decision-making is hindered or improved by individuals' reactions in response to emotional states and judgement (Blanchette and Richards 2010). Blanchette and Richards (2010) suggested that emotions can either hinder or promote normative thinking and reasoning. Pfister (2008) identified four main functions of emotions in the decision-making process. The first function is to provide information about pleasure or pain for preference construction. The second function is to facilitate rapid response under time pressure. The third function is to guide attention to relevant elements of the problem and decision, and the fourth function is to generate commitment related to morally and socially relevant decisions (Pfister 2008).

Advertising

The purpose of advertisement is to captivate the attention of the audience, demonstrate product and service properties, and engage consumers in a decision-making process. This decision-making process intends to convince consumers to purchase products or services. According to Vaughn (1980), all advertising models can be divided into four major groups:

1. Traditional Advertising theories which were prevalent in the 1950s including economic theory, responsive theory, psychological theory, and social theory.
2. Consumer Behavior Models in the 1960s. Most of those models were patterned after Lavidge and Steiner's *Hierarchy of Effects* model.
3. Recent Development in high/low involvement and right/left brain theories include consumer involvement and brain specialization.
4. FCB Model (Foote, Cone & Belding) which organizes advertising effectiveness for strategic planning.

FCB is a model for advertising effectiveness, which helps in strategic planning, response measurement, and sales prediction (Vaughn 1980, 1986). Advertising is a one-way communication that often uses rational and emotional devices to have an effect. After viewing the ad, individuals noticed, accepted, rejected, remembered, or forgot the product. Therefore, Vaughn suggested exploring individuals' feeling, thinking, and behavior towards products and services. His FCB grid model is a combination of

traditional theories and learn-feel-do hierarchy models with consumer involvement and brain specialization theories (Vaughn 1980).

Consumer's engagement with the product or service will be determined by information (*Learn*), attitude (*Feel*), and behavior (*Do*). According to the FCB model, the advertising planning can be presented in four quadrants. High versus low involvement products or services require predominantly thinking (left brain) and feeling (right brain). The learning part came if a brand has distinct features. Feeling includes intangible and emotional features leading to an image in consumer's minds. Four dimensions include match between think and feel product types and from high to low involvement. Choi et al. (2012) stated that the think dimension, which is cognitively based, is related to the utilitarian function. The feel dimension, which is affectively based, is related to the value expressive function. The FCB model predicts that consumers buy think category products because they are motivated by the utilitarian attributes of products and feel category products because they are motivated by the value expressive product functions (Choi et al. 2012). According to the FCB grid, four planning strategies are proposed:

1. Informative strategy is proposed for highly involving products/services where thinking and economic considerations are important. The suggested sequence of events is awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase. This strategy is abbreviated as *Learn-Feel-Do*. Examples include purchase of cars, appliances, and insurances.
2. Affective strategy is proposed for highly involving and feeling purchases. These psychological products fulfill self-esteem and ego-related or (*Feel-Learn-Do*). Examples include fashion items, jewelry, and cosmetics.
3. Habitual strategy is proposed for low involvement products with routine purchase. (*Do-Learn-Feel*). Examples include household items and gasoline.
4. Satisfaction strategy is proposed is for low involvement and low feeling products (*Do-Feel-Learn*). Examples are candies and cigarettes.

The role of advertising is to give the right communication experience with the right message. The goal of strategic planning is to identify information that trigger specific emotions, which persuade individuals to achieve the desired results such as sale. As such, organizations become very creative in delivering advertising messages that trigger consumer's thinking and feeling, hopefully acting on the received information.

A large selection of competitive products combined with the large amount of advertising made it extremely difficult for products and services to create customer awareness (Koszembar-Wiklik 2016). As a result, manipulation became one of the elements of communication strategy (Koszembar-Wiklik 2016). Controversial or provocative advertising became a popular choice for marketers to gain individuals' attention and awareness. Controversial advertising is defined as "provocative images, words, or situations that utilize or refer to taboo subjects (e.g. violence, sex/erotica, death, indecent/vulgar body parts or functions and political/racial issues) or that violate societal norms or values" (Huhmann and Mott-Stenerson 2008, p. 294). The intent of controversial advertising is to shock, offend, or surprise consumers (Ilicic and Blakemore 2015). Advertising is a mirror that reflects reality and at the same time can also shape the reality (Koszembar-Wiklik 2016). According to Waller (2006), controversial advertising "can elicit reactions of embarrassment, distaste, disgust,

offence, or outrage...” (p. 7), ultimately deterring consumer from purchasing the product or service. Advertisements which feature mild indecent language can result in more positive advertisement attitudes, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions compared when decent language is used (Ilicic and Blakemore 2015). At the same time, young adult consumers display a greater likelihood of purchase if they perceive the advertisement to be congruent with their existing schema. There is a fine line between what people find acceptable and humorous and what is considered to be offensive (Curtis et al. 2015). As a result, marketers should be very careful when they use provocative appeals, such as messages with sexual content and meaning, in advertising because it might be interpreted as offensive, discriminating, promoting gender inequality, and objectifying women as sexual toys (Chan et al. 2007). There is no single solution to avoid these undesirable outcomes. Therefore, Edell and Burke (1987) suggested that it is important to conduct research not only related to how consumers describe the advertising, but also how advertising makes them feel.

Airline advertising tends to reflect the natural progression in culture, social norms, values and traditions. In the 1920s, the goal of airline advertisements was to inform and educate public about air travel. In the 1960s, this original information-centered focus changed dramatically. Airline advertising began to emphasize female sexuality of flight attendants and portrayed them as prototypical "Playboy Bunnies" (Lyth 2009). The Stewardesses for Women's Rights (SFWR) group was formed in 1972 to address discrimination of flight attendants, raise public awareness about airline companies' sexist advertisements, and airline health and safety hazards directly affecting women. Today, the majority of airline advertisements highlight the safety and comfort of air travel rather than focusing on the sex appeal of flight attendants. However, some companies, including the U.S.-based Spirit Airlines, chose a more controversial way of advertising flights with provocative advertisements of highly sexual and in some cases offensive content as demeaning toward women and violating social norms. The question for marketers to address is how individuals' emotions and judgement affect consumer desire to engage in the transaction with the company.

Research Propositions

Under conditions of stimuli of advertising messages, individuals experience emotions and engage in judgements of the ads, which directly impact individuals' attitudes, decisions, and behaviors. Blanchette and Richards (2010) stated that it is important to examine the process of how emotional states influence people's interpretations of information and interactions with the world, especially in situations of ambiguity and uncertainly. For example, when consumers are presented with controversial or provocative advertising messages, the stimulus can be considered ambiguous and may induce negative or positive emotions. Judgement or interpretation of provided information is directly related to the ambiguity and complexity of the stimulus. One of the challenging tasks for researchers is to identify the source of consumer emotions, the affect of individual emotions on judgement, and the overall affect on the purchase decision. Therefore, it is critical for marketers to manage the stimulus which affect the emotions. Emotions can vary between people and might be affected by diverse factors, such as the familiarity with other advertisements in the campaign, characteristics of the viewers, characteristics of the environment, etc.

While literature review addresses the role of emotions and judgement as separate entities on the repurchase intent, this study further extends the research on controversial advertising and consumer behavior. The main question is how emotions or individual responses to stimuli, and judgement, which is the interpretation of information, influence intent to purchase again. Will consumer decisions be affected by the advertising message more than by the quality and characteristics of the product and service itself?

This study focuses on the information role of emotion, which serves to guide different consumer choices. Individuals use affective responses to evaluate information and to form judgement, both of which are critical in the decision-making process. This research will further expand the FCB model Informative strategy “Learn-Feel-Do” by adding judgement as a mediator to the mode. The research model is presented in Figure 1.

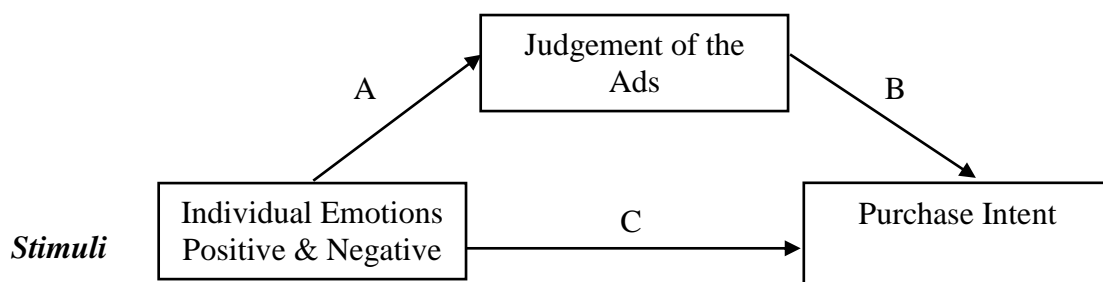


Figure 1: The Research Model

Individuals’ emotions under the condition of stimuli affect purchase intents. As such, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1a: Those individuals who experience positive emotions as a result of watching the Spirit Advertisement are more likely to demonstrate the intent to purchase Spirit Airlines’ tickets.*
- H1b: Those individuals who experience negative emotions as a result of watching the Spirit Advertisement are less likely to demonstrate the intent to purchase Spirit Airlines’ tickets.*

Judgement under the condition of stimuli mediates the relation between individuals’ emotions and purchase intent. The mediation model is presented in Figure 2.

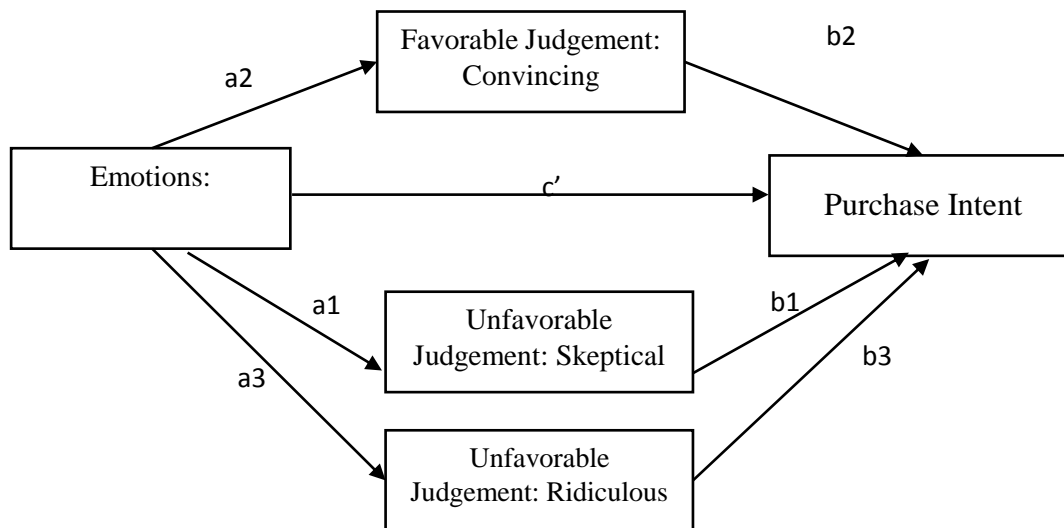


Figure 2: Judgement Mediates the Relationship between Emotions and Purchase Intent

As such, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2a: Individuals' judgements of Spirit Airlines Advertisements will mediate the relation between individual's positive emotions and purchase intentions such that favorable judgements will display a positive relation with purchase intentions.

H2b: Individuals' judgements of Spirit Airlines Advertisements will mediate the relation between individual's negative emotions and purchase intentions such that unfavorable judgements will display a negative relation with purchase intentions.

Methodology

The research sample was collected at a private university in the southeastern part of the United States. The survey instrument was sent out to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) first. After obtaining the IRB approval, the survey was sent to the leaders of local community groups and clubs who conducted their meetings at the university. Convenience sampling method was used. In addition to local community, undergraduate and graduate students, staff, and faculty were asked to complete surveys. Respondents included members of local non-profit organizations, university students, faculty, and staff. The response rate was 95% with a total of 234 participants. The sample consisted of 53% male and 47% female participants. The age of the participants fell between 19 and 65 years. The respondents were asked to complete a 25-minute survey consisting of demographic information either at the beginning or the end of the survey. In order to obtain short live responses or emotions from the sample and to form judgement, the respondents were asked to watch an 8-minute combination of official Spirit Airlines printed ads and internet advertising videos. Spirit Airlines is a US-based low-cost airline and is famous for its racy advertisements. Examples of ads include "Check out the Oil on our Beaches", "Many Unbelievable Fantastic Fares – MUFF", "Bang Buck", "The Weiner Sale", "Improve your Travel Performance", "No Smoking Sign is Off (in Colorado)", and "Go South". After watching ads, the respondents were asked to answer questions including what

emotions they experienced, how the advisements made them feel, how they judged the advertisements and finally, and whether the content of the advertisements affected their intent to purchase Spirit Airlines tickets. To assess emotions and judgements, adapted versions of the Edell and Burke (1987) scales were used. The Edell and Burke scales were developed from two pilot studies. A factor analysis was conducted to measure how an ad made people feel. The items scoring greater than 0.5 on each factor were used to form feeling and judgement scales. The high coefficient alphas were high indicate that the internal consistency and reliability of the scales were acceptable. For emotions, questions consisted of two groups, positive emotions and negative emotions. Positive emotions include feeling alive, amused, attractive, carefree, cheerful, delighted, elated, energetic, happy, humorous, inspired, interested, joyous, lighthearted, playful, pleased, satisfied, stimulated, and strong. Negative emotions include feeling depressed, disgusted, disinterested, dubious, dull, lonely, offended, regretful, and sad. Judgement questions were divided into three groups: skeptical, convincing, and ridiculous. Convincing judgements are favorable. They show that an ad is believable and convincing to a person. Skeptical judgements are unfavorable. They show that an ad triggers skepticism and suspicion. Ridiculous judgements are unfavorable too. They show that an ad seems ridiculous and terrible to a person. The research model represents a parallel multiple mediator model with three types of judgements as mediators (Hayes 2013). The effect of positive and negative emotions, identified by the variable X, was analyzed separately. Although some researchers proposed that several Xs can simultaneously transmit their effects on the same outcome, Y, through the same mediators (Hayes 2013, p. 193), the danger is that such model can have highly correlated Xs that can cancel out each other's effects. The model with one X variable displayed a direct and/or indirect effect on Y through M, but in the case of multiple Xs, it might appear that there are no effects at all. The bootstrapping technique was utilized to analyze the hypothesized relationships (Hayes 2013; Preacher and Haynes 2008).

Data Analysis

Results of the analysis are summarized in Tables I-III.

Table I: Means, Standard Deviations, Scale Reliabilities, and Correlations Among Variables

| <i>Conditions</i> | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|------------------------|------|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Positive Emotions | 2.51 | 1.02 | (.96) | | | | | |
| Negative Emotions | 3.70 | .92 | -.51** | (.89) | | | | |
| Judgement - Convincing | 3.45 | 1.14 | .63** | -.31** | (.91) | | | |
| Judgement - Skeptical | 2.53 | 1.08 | -.34** | .55** | -.34** | (.89) | | |
| Judgement - Ridiculous | 2.64 | 1.11 | .47** | .46** | -.42** | .51** | (.81) | |
| Purchase Intentions | 2.17 | 1.13 | .43** | -.27** | .46** | -.26** | -.43** | (.92) |

N= 234. **p<.01. *p<.05.

Table I depicts the means, standard deviations, scale reliabilities, and correlations among the study variables. A multiple mediation analysis was conducted using ordinary least square path analysis to investigate the advertising effect of consumer emotions on purchase intent mediated by consumers' judgements of the advertisements. Those results are depicted in Tables II and III.

Table II: Regression Coefficients, Standard Errors, and Model Summary for Positive Emotions and Judgements Influences on Purchase Intent (Parallel Multiple Mediator Model)

| Antecedent | M ₁ (Skeptical) | | | | M ₂ (Convincing) | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|------|-----|-------|---|------|------|-------|
| | Coeff | SE | p | | Coeff | SE | p | |
| X (Positive Emotions) | a1 | -.47 | .08 | <.001 | a2 | .59 | .046 | <.001 |
| M ₁ (Skeptical) | | | | | | | | |
| M ₂ (Convincing) | | | | | | | | |
| M ₃ (Ridiculous) | | | | | | | | |
| Constant | <i>i</i> _{M1} | 4.07 | .22 | <.001 | <i>i</i> _{M1} | .51 | .12 | .001 |
| | R ² =.1250 F(1,240)=34.29, p<.001 | | | | R ² =.4090 F(1,240)=166.08,p<.001 | | | |
| Antecedent | M ₃ (Ridiculous) | | | | Y (Purchase Intent) | | | |
| | Coeff | SE | p | | Coeff | SE | p | |
| X (Positive Emotions) | a3 | -.51 | .06 | <.001 | c' | .19 | .08 | .02 |
| M ₁ (Skeptical) | | | | | b1 | .02 | .05 | 0.72 |
| M ₂ (Convincing) | | | | | b2 | .27 | .09 | .002 |
| M ₃ (Ridiculous) | | | | | b3 | -.29 | .07 | .001 |
| Constant | <i>i</i> _{M1} | 4.63 | .17 | <.001 | <i>i</i> _y | 2.07 | .36 | <.001 |
| | R ² =.2241 F(1,240)=69.33, p<.001 | | | | R ² =.2859 F(4,237)=23.72, p<.001 | | | |

$$M_1 = 4.07 - 0.47X$$

$$M_2 = 0.51 + 0.59X$$

$$M_3 = 4.63 - 0.51X$$

$$Y = 2.07 + 0.19X + 0.02M_1 + 0.27M_2 - 0.29M_3$$

Table III: Regression Coefficients, Standard Errors, and Model Summary for Negative Emotions and Judgements Influences on Purchase Intent (Parallel Multiple Mediator Model)

| Antecedent | M ₁ (Skeptical) | | | | M ₂ (Convincing) | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|------|------|-------|---|-------|------|-------|
| | Coeff. | SE | p | | Coeff. | SE | p | |
| X (Negative Emotions) | a1 | .84 | .08 | <.001 | a2 | -.33 | .06 | <.001 |
| M ₁ (Skeptical) | | | | | | | | |
| M ₂ (Convincing) | | | | | | | | |
| M ₃ (Ridiculous) | | | | | | | | |
| Constant | i _{M1} | 1.01 | .19 | <.001 | i _{M2} | 2.73 | .15 | <.001 |
| | R ² =.3252 F(1,248)=119.53, p<.001 | | | | R ² =.1046 F(1,248)=28.9818, p<.001 | | | |
| | M ₃ (Ridiculous) | | | | Y (Purchase Intent) | | | |
| Antecedent | Coeff. | SE | p | | Coeff. | SE | p | |
| X (Negative Emotions) | a3 | .56 | .068 | <.001 | c' | -.06 | .08 | .45 |
| M ₁ (Skeptical) | | | | | b1 | .0094 | .05 | .87 |
| M ₂ (Convincing) | | | | | b2 | .39 | .073 | <.001 |
| M ₃ (Ridiculous) | | | | | b3 | -.28 | .07 | .001 |
| Constant | i _{M3} | 2.08 | .17 | <.001 | i _y | 2.45 | .32 | <.001 |
| | R ² =0.2172 F(1,248)=68.81, p<.001 | | | | R ² =.2793 F(4,245)=23.74, p<.001 | | | |

$$M_1 = 1.01 + 0.84X$$

$$M_2 = 2.73 - 0.33X$$

$$M_3 = 2.08 + 0.56X$$

$$Y = 2.45 - 0.06X + 0.0094M_1 + 0.39M_2 - 0.28M_3$$

Supporting Hypothesis 1a, consumers' positive emotions directly influenced purchase intent, independent of its effect on judgement ($c' = 0.19$, $p < 0.05$). A bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect based on 1,000 bootstrap samples was entirely above zero (0.0267 to 0.3541). Hypotheses 1b was not supported for the consumers' negative emotions. Although negative consumer emotions display a negative relation with purchase intent, this relation was not significant ($c' = -0.06$, $p = 0.45$). A bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect based on 1,000 bootstrap samples included zero (-0.2270 to 0.1005). With regards to Hypothesis 2a, there is support for mediation. When controlling for positive emotions, favorable judgements (convincing) predict purchase intent and this relation is positive ($b_2 = 0.27$, $p < 0.05$). It is noteworthy that, when controlling for positive emotions, also unfavorable judgements (ridiculous) are negatively related to purchase intent ($b_3 = -0.29$, $p < 0.05$). With regards to Hypothesis 2b, there is partial support for mediation. When controlling for negative emotions, unfavorable judgements (ridiculous) are negatively related to purchase intent ($b_3 = -0.28$, $p < 0.05$). However, even though unfavorable judgements (skeptical) demonstrated positive relations with purchase intent while controlling for negative emotions, this relationship is not significant ($b_1 = 0.0009$, $p = 0.87$). This provides partial support for Hypothesis 2b. The results

indicated that judgement partially mediates the effect of consumer's emotions on purchase intent.

Conclusion

Understanding the consumer decision-making process is very important but also very complex. It is critical for companies to understand how individuals select the course of action among different product and service alternatives and how advertising triggers individuals' emotions and judgements. The results of this study show that the consumer purchase decision is influenced by many factors in addition to how advertisements make us feel. While a number of researchers investigated relations between consumer emotional reactions and their purchase intent, this study added an additional components, such as consumer judgement as a mediator variable. The results of the study confirmed that judgement partially mediates the relationship between individuals' emotions and purchase intent, and that positive emotional reactions are directly and positively related to purchase intent. These research findings are important for advertising managers. Advertising effectiveness evaluations and return on advertising investment are critical issues for companies in today's business environment. Measurement of consumer reaction to advertising is an important component of any advertising campaign. Controversial and provocative advertising is becoming a popular tool for attracting consumer attention and creating product or service recognition. As such, this should translate to consumer purchase intent and ultimately the purchase. However, if individuals experience discomfort from watching advertisements and as a result evaluate the company and the product negatively, the advertisement may have a negative impact on their intent to purchase the product or service. Then the ultimate goal of the advertisement will fail despite an increase in consumer attention.

Limitations

There are several limitations. The respondents' answers were reported dependent on the researcher's interpretation skills. Although participants represent individuals from diverse backgrounds and include local community members, students, and employees across a wide age range, common method variance still exists as a potential concern. The results were entirely based on self-reports. Respondents may not adequately identify their judgements and emotions. Different environment as well as respondents' moods at the time of the survey might produce different results. Regardless of the significant evidence, which supports the validity of self-reports in general, researchers need to be aware that self-reports are vulnerable to social desirable responding.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

It is important to understand the role of advertising in creating consumer awareness and in influencing the decision making process. Individuals have a choice whether to tune in or to ignore advertising messages. This choice is likely related to the emotional appeal of the message and the influence this has on consumers' judgements of the message. Advertising can trigger both, positive and negative emotions. It is not only important for marketers to understand what kind of emotions advertising messages elicit, but also how emotional reactions of consumers affect their intent to

purchase a product or service. Several researchers provided support that different emotions can have different effects on decision-making (Blanchette and Richards 2010; Bechara et al. 1997; Damasio 1995). We looked at effects of positive and negative emotions on purchase intent and how favorable and unfavorable consumer judgements mediate this relation. On the one hand, our findings support the hypothesis that individuals who experienced positive emotions after watching Spirit Airlines provocative ads and liked them because they perceived them to be funny and humorous are more likely to purchase a ticket and fly with Spirit Airlines. On the other hand, individuals who experienced negative emotions from watching those provocative ads, expressed by their offense and disgust of the ads, may or may not intend to purchase a ticket or fly with Spirit. This leaves us with the conclusion that, even though an advertisement may elicit negative emotions, this does not necessarily affect their purchase intent of consumers. A likely explanation for this phenomenon is the fact that a purchase decision is a complex process. Purchase intentions are likely influenced by many other factors in addition to the individual's emotional state. Individuals might not necessarily agree with the company policies, their lack of social responsibility, or provocative advertising, but they may still purchase the company's products or services, because those satisfy their needs or possess superior quality. In the case of air transportation, most of us want to fly safely, on time, and with our luggage, from point A to point B. There is not much differentiation between the domestic US airlines' services. As a result, most of us will be looking to purchase a ticket at the lowest price, as long as the quality of service and safety are comparable, regardless of our attitude towards the airline's advertising. Therefore, based on the results of this study, we cannot conclude that negative consumer emotional reactions will affect the purchase intent to fly with Spirit Airlines. Furthermore, the study investigated the role of individuals' favorable and unfavorable judgements as mediator variables. The results of this study confirmed that individuals who experienced positive emotions also experienced favorable judgements and were convinced by the advertisement, which was positively related to purchase intent. This provides support for the hypothesis that individuals' emotions trigger judgements, or a process of evaluation, and are linked to the decision making process, including purchase intent. On the one hand, individuals who do not perceive the Spirit Airlines ads as offensive most likely will select to fly with Spirit Airlines if their individual preferences will be met. On the other hand, the results of the study also indicated that individuals who experienced some discomfort from watching the ads or negative emotions, and as a result unfavorable judgements, such as finding the message ridiculous, were less likely to purchase a ticket with Spirit Airlines. Overall, it seems that consumer judgements did affect their purchase intent. However, it is noteworthy that consumers who evaluated the advertisement as skeptical did not seem to be affected by this evaluation; it did not affect the purchase intent of these consumers. This further supports the conclusion that consumer decisions are less affected by the advertising message than by the quality and characteristics of the product and service itself.

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