

## The Impact of Shock Advertising on Donation Intention

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Received: 23 April 2019

Accepted: 24 July 2019

**Keywords:** shock advertising, non-profit organisations, donation intention

### ABSTRACT

Organisations use advertisements to convey a preferred image to their target markets, to persuade them to perform an action which is beneficial to them. Non-profit organisations (NPOs) use advertisements to implement certain feelings, perceptions, and emotions in the minds of the targets so that it would cause them to contribute to the organisation for the cause. One of the many ways through which advertisements inflict emotions, attitudes, and actions is shock advertising. This research aims to investigate whether the shock appeal in shock advertising by NPOs would affect the donation intention. To explore this, a qualitative research through interview was conducted. The key findings indicated that the shock adverts of the non-profit organisations have an impact on the level of awareness and comprehension of the respondents on the issues highlighted in the shock adverts. However, the shock adverts do not have an obvious impact on the donation intention. The respondents indicated that they need more information about the non-profit organisations before donating. Some of them said that the financial capability is the main factor affecting their donation intention.

### INTRODUCTION

Advertisements can be defined as "paid form of non-personal communications about a product, service or a brand by an identified sponsor" (Belch & Belch, 2009). Organisations use advertisements to convey a preferred

certain image to their target markets, to persuade them, to perform a certain action which is beneficial for them (Karimova, 2014). Statistics show that estimated spending on advertising globally is almost five hundred billion USD which is estimated to be around £350bn in 2017 (Statista, 2018). In Malaysia, advertising revenue is projected to experience stable growth at CAGR of 4.0% over the 2014-2019 period, with limited changes in the share of total advertising expenditure (PwC, 2015).

In Malaysia, as at April 2011, there were about 64,136 NPOs registered with the Registrar of Societies (ROS) (Hasnan, Zainal Abidin, Mohamad, & Kamarudin, 2012). Traditionally, the main financial supports of non-profit organisations (NPOs) have been derived through government funding and voluntary donations (Roslan, Arshad, & Mohd Pauzi, 2017). NPOs in Malaysia experienced reduction in the traditional sources of funding which lead to increasing competition among NPOs for these limited resources during the current economic environment (Roslan, Arshad, & Mohd Pauzi, 2017). NPOs have started to adopt business-like techniques used in the for-profit sector (Goerke, 2003, cited in Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009). This is because they are becoming increasingly confronted with market pressures typical of for-profit organisations, like competition for funding and the need to earn money to fulfil their mission (Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009). An important role for marketing in non-profit (NPOs) organisations is the generation of funds from donors and donor organisations (Anon, n.d.). NPOs use advertisements to implement certain feelings, perceptions, and emotions in the minds of the targets so that it would cause them to contribute to the organisation for the cause (Martinez, 2014).

One of the many ways through which advertisements inflict emotions, attitudes, and actions is shock advertising. Shock advertising is a "deliberate attempt of startling the audiences of the advert" which might offend

or shock them to hopefully heighten their moral senses by inducing emotions such as empathy, disgust sadness, horror, and so on (Dahl, Frankenberger, & Manchanda, 2003; Pickton & Broderick, 2005). Organisations utilise shocking advertisements to leave an impression in the minds of the target audience, despite the outcomes which could be positive or negative (Dahl, Frankenberger, & Manchanda, 2003; Urwin & Venter, 1994). Shocking advertisements have been especially successful in social advertising, where consumers accept them with more tolerance than in commercial advertising (Banyte, Paskeviciute, & Rutelione, 2014). With the reduction on the traditional sources of funding, NPOs are left with limited financial resources. This sometimes results in charitable advertising that tries to shock viewers into paying attention (CBC, 2014).

However, attitudes to usage of shock appeals in advertising and their impact on consumers are diverse (Banyte, Paskeviciute, & Rutelione, 2014), which stimulates constant discussion among scientists and practitioners. The majority of studies performed until now have focused on the causes of shock and the impact of shock advertising on consumers; however, there is a lack of scientific work that would confirm the dependence of consumer response to shock advertising on the context (Banyte, Paskeviciute, & Rutelione, 2014). This research aims of this study are to examine the reactions of consumers to shocking adverts used by NPOs and to analyse to what extent shock advertising can affect and influence consumers to make contributions to the NPOs. DAGMAR model by Colley (1961) is used to guide the analysis.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Shocking Advertising

According to Castellon (2006), shocking advertising can be defined as the usage of "controversial, attention grabbing

and offensive advertising methods used intentionally” to popularise a campaign or an idea and to sell it to the public (Pickton & Broderick, 2005). Dahl, Frankenberger, and Manchanda (2003) stated that there are seven kinds of shocking appeals that marketers may use to shock the viewer: (1) Disgusting images including scenes containing orifices, body parts, blood, gore, disease, death or bodily harm and parasites, (2) Sexual references to sexual acts, nudity, or masturbation, (3) Obscenity and profanity by making use of rude gestures, racial epithets or swears words, (4) Vulgarity which applies to crude, lacking sophistication and distasteful scenes or images e.g. nose picking or farting, (5) Indecency and impropriety which are, in other words, violations of etiquette and social decency, (6) Moral offensiveness caused by images and scenes depicting innocent animals and people being harmed, uncalled-for violence or sex, using figures to provoke violence such as Hitler or Stalin, unfair behaviours or usage of children in uncomfortable settings such as sexual contexts, (7) Cultural and religious taboos where cultural spiritual and religious symbols or people are used inappropriately or made fun of.

The effectiveness of a shocking advert can be influenced by many variables, which include levels of shock, norm violations, and memory recall (Urwin, 2014). According to Urwin (2014), levels of shock can be measured in a basis of high and low on a scale. Huhmann and Mott-Stenerson (2008) described that a controversially framed advertisement would normally have very low level in gotten shock value or offence is not likely to be efficient and sufficient to help in engaging the viewer’s attention to influence their actions. On the contrary, a shocking advertising with high perceived shock values and offences can make the viewer feel or be emotionally upset and may be disgusted with the brand or the campaign (Klara, 2012). This would in turn push the consumers away from the action to action in an attempt to ignore the advert and its

information to reduce the feeling of discomfort. Thus, the viewer becomes detracted from the campaign and its cause (Andersson, Hedelin, Nilsson, & Welander, 2004).

Norm violation is defined as the “breach of shared expectations” that people would have been embedded with within the society with social learning (Dahl, Frankenberger, & Manchanda, 2003). In a social environment, humans will be defined and shaped by the normal acceptable and unacceptable behaviours (Baron & Byrne, 1977). Shock Advertising may violate the societal norms to be attention-seeking and would be borderlining on the offensive material if the ad contents break the acceptable norms of decency and good taste (Day, 1991; Dahl, Frankenberger, & Manchanda, 2003)

Memory recall is another part of shock advertising and Bagozzi and Silk (1983) defined it as “mental reproduction of a target object, item, or advertisement that a consumer has previously seen or experienced”. For an advertisement to be effective, the viewers should remember the campaign or the cause as well as the messages and the information (Bushman, Baumeister, & Phillips, 2001). Memory is one of the crucial components in determining the responses of the audience to the adverts, including whether the final action would be made (Bushman & Bonacci, 2002).

Dahl, Frankenberger, and Manchanda (2003) found that shock adverts could increase the attention of the viewers and create memory recall and may or may not influence the behaviour for HIV and AID campaigns. Also, Randle, Miller, Stirling, and Dolnicar (2016) found that shock may not necessarily help in some donations such as high cognitive elaboration donation. The appeals carried out in the research include sadness appeal, negative appeal, shock appeal and many more. It was found that the action of a viewer is predominantly affected by one’s pre-existent viewpoints and behaviour

towards the campaign. Other appeals do not affect much unless the advertisement can change that pre dominant attitudes and behaviours. In the literatures, there is an obvious gap on shocking adverts for charity. Most authors talked about different appeals that an advert may induce but do not focus on shocking or gruesome advertisements and campaigns. Not much findings is also on the donation intention and whether it is affected by shocking and gruesome images. Most authors would talk about the final action which is the result of the campaign. However, they do not focus specifically on shock appeals and whether donation may or may not increase due to it. Therefore, it is apparent that within the existing literature lastingness of the effects of shock advertising is unclear; Dahl, Frankenberger, and Manchanda (2003) quoting "it remained unclear how shock advertising contents will impact the subsequent behaviours." Furthermore, many existing literatures mainly focus on the erotic/sexual part of the shock advertising mainly in fashion industry. Therefore, majority of the existing literature has missed out on the gruesome or shocking appeal of shock advertising focusing on the industry of non-profit charities (Mulcahy & Vaiciulyte, 2014). This literature gap has been pointed out by many authors such as Dahl, Frankenberger, and Manchanda (2003), Satas (2014), Mulcahy and Vaiciulyte (2014), etc. With the research gap in mind, this research will discuss the objectives which are to find the effects of shock appeal in charity advertisements on reactions, perceptions, and awareness and donation intention on the viewers.

### Reactions of Consumers

In a marketing campaign, NPOs usually seek two actions from their targeted audiences, which are the acts of volunteering and donating money (List, 2011). The latter action is deemed more important by managers and directors in NPOs (Charity Science Foundation, 2015). This is because without monetary

resources, volunteerism might be inefficient and ineffective as other resources are needed to fulfil the charitable objectives (Smedley, 2014). However ultimately, every charity advertising campaign will tend to create, seek, or influence awareness of the viewers. This is because there should be an awareness of the need in order to support the need (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2007).

The word "awareness" means to have knowledge or a perception towards something (Cambridge University Press, 2018). Similarly, Merriam-Webster dictionary defined "awareness" as: (1) The knowledge on the existent of a fact/situation/context, (2) Having a feeling, an experience and a notice towards something and 3) To know and to understand (Merriam-Webster, 2018). In marketing terms, awareness is the stage of when the marketing campaigns increases and affects the audience awareness on the message of the campaign (Wijaya, 2012). In many advertising models, awareness is usually the first stage and is an important step in many hierarchy-of-effects models such as that of Lavidge and Steiner (1961) as well as the DAGMAR model of Colley (1961). In the model of DAGMAR, awareness is cognizance (Hill & Thompson-Hayes, 2017). Audience's attention must be caught, and the audience must be informed with the message to make an advertisement convincing and persuasive. With these, the conviction stage in the DARMAR model will be reached, which will then lead to the final action stage that advertisers want (Mackay, 2005). In this research study, it would be assumed that the final action stage advertisers wish to achieve is monetary donation.

According to Pauli, O'Reilly, Yarkoni, and Wager (2016), intention can be defined as "a cognitive representation of a person ready to perform a behaviour and is preceded by the attitude to the behaviour, which refers to the degree to which a person has formed an assessment of favourable or unfavourable behaviour". Motivation (the intention) and

the skill (the control of behaviour) are the foundation to behaviour. Understanding of beliefs and attitudes is important in trying to increase the public's willingness to give to charity (Kopfman & Smith, 1996). In a research conducted by Morgan and Miller (2002) on donation of organ, those who were influenced to sign for a donor card usually have greater knowledge about it, positive mindset towards it, more altruism, and more enthusiastic in the social normative support for the cause of the campaign. On a separate note, Chan and Lau (2002) had the notion that, in collective cultures, the intention for monetary donations may be influenced by the norms of the society. This notion has been supported by Kashif, Sarifuddin, and Hassan, (2015). In their research findings, Kashif, Sarifuddin, and Hassan, (2015) stated that Malaysia is a "collectivist society" with individuals being in a social circuit and take responsibilities for the behaviours of a whole social circuit. Reference groups can play a role of influence on actions and intention of individuals (Yun & Park, 2010).

According to Basil, Ridgeway, and Basil (2008), the behaviour of donating is a type of pro-social behaviour. Many authors stated that the audiences usually feel more willing to donate with presence of sufferers relating to the campaign in the advertisements (Basil, Ridgeway, & Basil, 2008; Bell, Cholerton, Fraczek, & Rohlf, 1994). Other authors such as Bagozzi and Moore (1994), Homer and Yoon (1992), Huhmann and Brotherton (1997) assumed that negative appeals in advertisements are more convincing and attention-getting than positive appeals, especially when the audiences process the adverts systematically. According to Chang and Lee (2009), the effectiveness of negative appeals is more to the fact that they go against the audiences' expectations by creating more than adverts that are positively framed, thus generating greater focus scrutiny from the audience (Levin, Schneider, & Gaeth, 1998). Furthermore, Chouliarakis (2010) state negative appeals makes the audiences feel as if they have witnessed the horrors of suffering.

Though negative appeals are useful in many types of advertising campaigns, critics has been emerging against the usage of negative appeals (Cohen, 2001). The main point of these criticisms is based on the argument that the images used in adverts may dehumanise the sufferers and are responsible for the result of compassion fatigue in the mind of the targeted (Moeller, 1999). Despite the criticisms against negative adverts framing, findings show that it is still one of the most effective and efficient appealing for imperative actions. Hence, negative appeals and messages have a strong existence in the advertising for the sufferings (Chang & Lee, 2009).

Homer and Barta (1994) stated that adverts with positive messages are much more effective as it would usually result in the audience feeling sympathetic and favourable towards the sufferers. Furthermore, positively framed advertisements include positive information and images that offers the donors the chance to see the results of their goodhearted actions. Predicting their actions might actually help induce substantial changes in the lives of the needy, audiences are highly motivated to undertake the actions as wanted by the charity campaigns (Shiv, Edell, & Payne, 1997). However, positive appeals are not always positive and beneficial. Positive adverts are criticised for inducing compassion fatigue (Small, 1997). Showing perfect images of happy faces of families and kids in the positive adverts might create an impression that "everything is fine, and they have been taken care". Ultimately it may lead towards inaction of the audience assuming that these sufferers are not in a very bad condition therefore not really in need (Cohen, 2001).

### **DAGMAR Model**

DAGMAR model, developed by Colley (1961), is a marketing approach model that is used in measuring the advertising results. The acronym of DAGMAR stands for "defining advertising goals for measured advertising results". The

model focuses on the levels of understanding that customers might go through when being exposed to stimulus of adverts (Mackay, 2005).

According to MacKay (2005), the main conclusions on the DAGMAR theory were expressed in the following quotation: *"All commercial communications that weigh on the ultimate objective of a sale must carry a prospect through four levels of understanding.*

1. *The prospect must first be aware of the existence of a brand or organisation*
2. *He must have a comprehension of what the product is and what it will do for him*
3. *He must arrive at a mental suspicion or conviction to buy the product*
4. *Finally he must stir himself to action."*

Wijaya (2012) states that DAGMAR incorporated elements of Unawareness/Awareness, Comprehension, Conviction and Actions, as stages of the influence of advertising message on consumer behaviour. Awareness is the stage where advertising can raise audience awareness on advertising message. Comprehension is the stage where consumer audience understands the core message of an advertisement. Conviction is the stage where audience believes the genuineness of the message that is delivered through advertising. Lastly, Action is where the consumer audience follow up his belief in the advertising message through his action.

The DAGMAR approach influences the setting of objectives in the advertising planning process and many planners use this model as their base in the process (Karlsson, 2007). However, it is criticised by Belch & Belch (1995) that the model is too focused on the different strategies and does not state on how exactly advertisements may affect the viewer in their decision-making process.

In this research study, DARMAR model is used to guide the analysis of reactions of audiences towards shocking advertising. The

focus of this study is the awareness creation which will then lead to donation intention.

## METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research methodology was used in this research study and primary data was collected through interviews.

### Sample and Sampling Methods

Ten interview sessions lasted 30 minutes or more each session was conducted, and 10 participants being interviewed. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were applied. The participants are existing donor with incomes. The subsequent participants were identified based on recommendation of those being interviewed. 60% of the participants are female, and 40% are male. The age range of the participants is from 20 to 26, and all of them are working with income.

### Shocking Advertisement and Interview Questions

Semi-structured interview was used in the interview session. A set of questions were developed based on the work of Satas (2014) for the interview session. Pilot test was conducted before the actual interview session to test if the questions are suitable to gain wider insights into the participants' feelings and opinions (Connelly, 2008). However, the questions may or may not be asked depending on the participants' answer and the situation. The interview questions were divided into 2 parts, which the first part of the questions was asked before viewing the shocking advertisement, and the second part were asked after viewing the shocking advertisement. Sample of questions asked before viewing the shocking advertisement include "How do you think advertisements affect you?", "Do you know any NPOS using shock adverts?" etc. Sample of questions asked after viewing the shocking advertisement include "Can you tell me what the adverts are about?", "How do you feel after watching the adverts?" etc.

During the interview, three shocking advertisements used by three different NPOs were shown to the participants. The first advertisement is about stopping child abuse. The advertisement contains some violence scenes such as a girl is being hit on the face. The second advertisement is about stopping the acts of obtaining mineral from Congo using uncivilised ways. This advertisement uses blood, gore, sexual and violence elements. The last advertisement is about stopping animal abuse, and it contains morally offensive elements such as harm towards animals and disgusting visuals.

### Ethical Consideration

It is very important to consider the ethical implications in collecting primary as what Wallace and Sheldon (2015) stated: "every single research project comes with at least a bare minimum of ethical implications and risks". Ethical consideration for research projects are usually on consents of participants, safety and well-beings of the participants, anonymity, and privacy (Bryman, 2001). In this study, the related ethical concerns include harm and consent. Harm can come to a participant in physical, emotional, and mental forms (McCosker, Barnard, & Gerber, 2013). This study involves a sensitive context, which is shock advertisements. The advertisements contain some shocking scenes such as animal abuse, violence, and child abuse that might cause discomfort emotionally and mentally to the participants (McCosker, Barnard, & Gerber, 2013). To deal with this, the researcher informed the participants of viewer discretion as well as the freedom to pause or stop the interviewing process in case of serious emotional effects. The researcher made sure the participants participate in the research voluntary and the consent of the participants was obtained before the interview for voice recording as well as the usage of information. To ensure complete anonymity, the personal information of the participants, including their name, would not be disclosed. Before the interview, there was a

short introduction to what the study is about and how the participants come into play in the research, and how their feedback and reactions would conclude the effectiveness of shock advertisements.

### Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed through thematic coding. The actual coding was conducted with the Microsoft Excel software in which colour coding system was used. The coding process was informed by the research aims as well as the existing literature (Parry, Jones, Stern, & Robinson, 2013). In this study, themes are guided by the stages in the DAGMAR model; Unawareness/Awareness, Comprehension, Attitude (Conviction) and Action (See Figure 1).

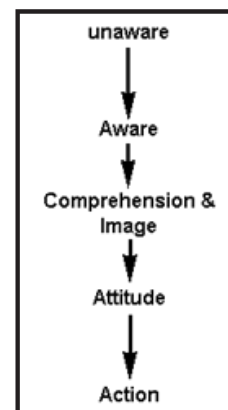


Figure 1 DAGMAR Model (Colley, 1961)

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study were organised based on the themes which were guided by the DAGMAR model.

### Unawareness/Awareness

Wijaya (2012) states that awareness is the stage where advertising can raise audience awareness of advertising messages. In this stage, it is important to move those customers who are unaware of the products through to a stage of awareness (Withey & Lancaster, 2003). Without this, there is no possibility of

moving to the next stages (Withey & Lancaster, 2003). In other words, in order to make sure shock advertising can affect and influence consumers to make contributions to the NPOs, the consumers must be aware of the issues raised in the advertisement.

It was found that the participants have a low pre-awareness level on the NPOs, and the issues raised by the NPOs. They might be aware of the issues (such as child abuse) or they might have heard about the NPOs before, but they failed to relate the issues to the NPOs:

*"...I didn't know they need minerals for the phone and how to say, I didn't know anything that's happening in Congo. I didn't know about the rape..."*  
- Participant B

*"...I think so I have heard Mercy of animals, heard of it but don't really know them..."* - Participant G

*" I think I have seen some of their advertisements. I think on Facebook..."* - Participant J

After the 3 shocking awareness advertisements were shown to the respondents, the awareness level was seemed to be improved:

*"... I didn't realise in order to create a mobile phone, that (rape) has happened..."* -Participant D

*"...The last one is just... I can't believe people actually do that..."* -Participant E

*"...I did not know the fact that the part that really surprises me is that the phone manufacturer company is actually involved in this rape scenario. I never thought of throwing that line in between..."* -Participant I

The changes in the reactions of the respondents indicate that shocking advertising is improving the awareness level of the consumer audience on the issues raised by the NGOs. Hamstig (2005) claims that shock

advertising is a tactic of success for NPOs to create awareness. For those who have had pre-existing awareness, the shock advertising seemed to have heightened and deepen the awareness level and served as a reminder:

*"I think the reality of drug abuse or animal abuse or rape is always there like we know that these things are happening... But this is just like a good enhancement to the depths of how eerie or gross these things are. It serves more like a very difficult reminder..."*  
- Participant A

### Comprehension (and Image)

Comprehension is the stage where the consumer audience understands the core message of an advertisement (Wijaya, 2012). This stage takes place when viewers of advertisements come to understand and think about the features or attributes of the adverts.

When being asked what the adverts were about, all respondents showed a basic understanding of the issues raised in the shocking advertisement:

*"The first one was about drug abuse. The second one is about war and raping and the third one is about animal abuse... yea."* - Participant A

*"...I just know their message and that's about it."* - Participant B

*"...First one was obviously about child abuse...the second one was clearly about rape. And the third was about animals."* - Participant G

However, unclearness in the message or too much message sent in the advertisement made the respondents spending more effort in understanding the issues raised in the shock adverts:

*"... the second one talked about mobile phones and... Like telling something to your manufacturer... Ummm, I don't know what that is about. Like the*



*whole war and raping ... It's visually explained but I don't understand how the mobile phone part relates to it."- Participant A*

Simple and direct shock adverts help in understanding the issues raised by the NPOs.

*"Yea, I think I mentioned that the first one was much better in terms of understanding of what happened because it is quite direct"- Participant A*

*"The first one is obviously child abuse right, it's very straight to the point. It's still shocking especially the part they keep on repeating the move like hitting the kid, it brought the impact. But that one is still okay."- Participant C*

When asked whether the advertisements were shocking, all respondents agreed that the advertisements were shocking to a certain extent and left an image in their mind. This is particularly evident when the participants focused on a particular characteristic of the victims showed in the video, such as young children, women, etc. When asked about the feeling after watching the shocking adverts, some participants felt that the adverts were disgusting and inhumane.

*"...having younger children (in the videos), I'm personally much more sensitive to it. And if it was visually portrayed that something bad happened to the child, I think I would cry."- Participant A*

*"Mainly because it's real, like it's a real video, so that's why and of course I have a soft side for animals"- Participant D*

*"...I feel like a woman, or as a female watching another person getting raped, you somehow feel it."- Participant E*

*"Yeah, it's like 'Oh my God, do they actually do this to the chicken?' it's too much... It just felt very shocking, but I think it's effective..."- Participant F*

Vakratsas and Ambler's (1999) study shows that highly memorable adverts are better in influencing related behaviour and action compared to non-memorable adverts. The findings showed that the shock element in the shocking advertisements can make consumer audiences to remember the content of the adverts better, especially when there is a particular characteristic of the victims showed in the advertisements that caught the audience's attention. Also, negative emotions can help increase the intention of helping (Cockrill & Parsonage, 2016).

### Attitude (or Conviction)

Conviction is the stage where the audience believes the genuineness of the message that is delivered through advertising (Wijaya, 2012). Withey and Lancaster (2003) state that at this stage, the consumer is moving towards preferring the brand.

From the interview, 60% of the respondents claimed that the shock advertisements were effective in making them aware of the issues and the NPOs, and they had a better understanding of the issues raised. They saw these shocking adverts as a source of information about the issues and the NPOs, but the adverts would not change their attitude or the attitude of other viewers.

*"I think every viewer would have the definition of their own shocking part. But I think if this thing was shared on social media, people would just share it and that's it." – Participant B.*

*"I support no animal tests and I thought of like becoming vegan but I think it's too much; it's quite difficult and a lot of inconveniences..." – Participant C*

*"...it raises awareness, it makes you think twice before you do anything. Ummm, but of course you can't solve the problem quickly. I have not changed, because I hate it and I dislike the situation. It has not changed," – Participant D*

*".. But think it's not just shocking appeal, more like empathy for people."  
– Participant F*

Only a minority of the respondents claimed that they would change their attitude towards the issues raised in the shocking adverts:

*"In a way that, for instance, the chicken video, that actually makes me think twice before going to some restaurants... of how has this chicken been processed..." Participant G*

*"...I would want to involve myself in NGOs that actually fight for these rights" – Participant E.*

The findings of this study showed that by just exposing to the shocking adverts is insufficient in changing the attitude of the consumer audiences. Jones (1997) and Randle, Miller, Stirling, & Dolnicar (2016) claimed that changes in attitude depend on the pre-existing personal characteristics and attitude. As what Participant D has claimed, by watching the shocking advert itself will not make a person change.

### Action

Action is where the consumer audience follows up his belief in the advertising message through his action (Wijaya, 2012). In this stage, the customer might take action to purchase the products (Withey & Lancaster, 2003).

When asked whether the respondents will donate to the NPOs, the majority of respondents claimed that they will donate only when more information about the NPOs are available. Some respondents said they will only donate to the NPOs after checking the background and trustworthiness of the NPOs. As Karlan & Wood (2017) have found, most would opt out of donation if there was a lack of trust and creditability of the charity. According to Trussel & Parsons (2008, cited in Roslan, Arshad, & Mohd Pauzia, 2017), the

provision of financial support from the donors and grantors could be highly depending on the information disclosed by NPOs.

*"For my circle for friends and my family, I think we wouldn't usually donate to an organisation that we don't personally volunteer in or don't personally know especially if it's an international body. Because the question will always be like 'Where does the money go?' ... Do they give us the reports on where our money goes and how is it being used..." Participant A*

*"... Sometimes because nowadays it's very hard to trust things that you see online, because it could be a scam, you never know. Maybe that could be a trust issue from them." – Participant B*  
*"...there were very few facts and figure quoted over there... when you want the monetary situation to come out of a person, then you should give a logical and rational reason for a person to spend." – Participant G*

*"I mean for myself, from my perspective, now that they have captured my perspective, I would do more research on them, 'What do they do, What are their objectives, Are they legal... Are they making an actual impact on it? And I see the news for it if it's yes (good) then I would donate.'" Participant I*

*"... people would definitely donate after watching these advertisements...but only if the organization is trustworthy." – Participant J*

A respondent claimed that it depends on personal factors when deciding whether to donate to the NPOs, such as financial capability.

*"Sometimes, for me, it actually depends on what situation you are in now. Like maybe I am going through some financial crisis or ummm... I couldn't even afford to pay for myself then, of course, I would second-think about it... But if I was able, of course, I would." Participant B*

A respondent claimed that there should be further push after watching the shock adverts if action is expected from the viewers. Satas (2014) states that shock is temporary that the viewers might forget what they have watched and therefore there is no action taken.

*"...because it's just out there and you watch it, then after that, there's not really someone to go push you to do it or something then after a while it's possible that it will just go at the back of your head and you will just forget about it."- Participant F*

## CONCLUSION

This research aims are to study the reactions of consumers to shocking adverts used by NPOs and to analyse to what extent shock advertising can affect and influence consumers to make contributions to the NPOs. The DAGMAR model by Colley (1961) is used to guide the analysis. DAGMAR incorporated elements of Unawareness/Awareness, Comprehension, Conviction, and Actions as stages of the influence of advertising messages on consumer behaviour.

Based on the findings, it is concluded that shocking advertising is found to be effective in increasing awareness and comprehension level of the consumer audiences towards the NPOs and the issues raised, but not in changing their attitudes. The findings also showed that shocking advertising alone is insufficient to trigger the donation intention.

The shock elements and the negative emotions used in the advertisement are found to be useful in helping the consumer audiences to recall the content of the advertisement. This is particularly effective if there is a certain set of characteristics of the victims in the advertisement that catch the audiences' attention. According to Vakratsas & Ambler (1999) highly memorable adverts are better in influencing related behaviour and action compared to non-memorable

adverts. Also, it is important to make sure the messages sent in the shock adverts are clear and direct so that the audiences do not need to spend much effort in understanding the issues raised. The shock adverts that contain complicated or confusing messages might make the audiences in losing interest in the adverts.

Consumer audiences might see shocking adverts as a source of information about the issues and the NPOs, but the adverts would not change their attitude or the attitude of other viewers. According to Jones (1997) and Randle, Miller, Stirling, & Dolnicar (2016), changes in attitude depends on the pre-existing personal characteristics and attitude.

Further information on the NPOs, such as their background, trustworthiness, etc., is required for the viewers to contribute to the NPOs. Also, personal factors, such as financial capability, will influence the donation intention. There should be further push after watching the advertisement so that the audiences will not forget the main message of the advertisement.

## Implications

For those NPOs using shock advertising to ask for donations, it is important to take note the shock appeal is insufficient in triggering donation intention. More information about the organisations, the purposes of raising funds, the use of the funds, etc. should be communicated clearly to the consumer audiences. This is to make sure the donors are well-informed, and the money collected is put to good use. The credibility of NPOs is one of the main factors affecting donation intention. This would mean that shock advertisements should not be used solely in asking for a donation, but other marketing or public relation activities should be used hand-in-hand by the NPOs. As one of the respondents stated, further "push" must be followed up after watching the shock adverts so that viewers will take action.

Financial capability is also one of the factors affecting donation intention. It is crucial for the NPOs to decide whom the target audiences are when deciding the media used in showing the shock adverts. Putting the shock adverts in social media might be good in creating awareness and improving the understanding of the issues raised, but not on triggering donation intention. As mentioned by one of the respondents, most of the viewers who viewed the shock adverts will just click "share" after watching them, rather than taking further actions such as donating.

### Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study was done on a small number of participants who are considered homogenous (age range is from 20 to 26). Future research can be done on a more heterogeneous group, including participants from different generations. As financial capability is one of the factors affecting donation intention, the participants should be from different income groups. The current study is conducted in Malaysia. According to Parry, Jones, Stern, and Robinson (2013), factors of socio-demography can influence the reactions to shock advertisements. Therefore, future research can also be conducted in different geographical areas to see how cultural differences affect the reactions of consumer audiences on shocking adverts and their donation intention.

Also, the interview was conducted in English, which is not the first language of the respondents. The respondents might have difficulty in expressing themselves well in English. Therefore, future researchers might consider allowing the respondents to speak in their native language during the interview.

In this study, the DARMAG model is used to guide the analysis. The model is criticised to be too focused on the different strategies and does not state how exactly advertisements may affect the viewers in their decision-making

process (Belch & Belch, 1995). Therefore, future researchers can consider using other models, such as AIDA, in guiding the analysis.

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