

THE EFFECTS OF SOUNDS IN ADVERTISING TOWARD CONSUMERS' EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

**Maria Stefany
Gunawan Jiwanto**

International Business Management Program
Faculty of Economics
University of Atma Jaya Yogyakarta
Jalan Babarsari 43-44, Yogyakarta

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of sounds in advertising toward consumers' emotional response. The purpose of this study is to get better understanding about the role of emotions which come from the hearing of sounds, in marketing. Therefore, this study analyzed the relationships between consumers' emotional response, familiarity, interest, and attention. The variables were examined by developing some hypotheses predicting emotional reaction and empirically test the hypotheses using data from 156 participants in computer laboratory. During the research, participants were asked to listen to 20 different sounds and answer questions regarding their emotional response towards each one. The results of this study show that emotional response to sounds is predicted by the level of interest generated and how well the sound captured the participant's attention.

Keyword: Sounds, Emotional Response, Advertisement, Marketing, Emotion

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In this era, where people are constantly bombarded by sounds, marketers must be aware of the powerful effects of sounds. Music and sounds have become important parts of the marketing tool, especially in advertising. With the intensifying usage of TV and radio which enable sounds feature, music and sounds are often used in advertising. In term of marketing practices, music and sounds have important role to increase the attractiveness of the ads. They can be used to capture consumers' attention (Allan, 2006), convey meaning (Scott, 1990), contribute to the message (Hung, 2000), make the message easier to remember (Yalch, 1991), and so on.

Only by hearing the Coke's 5-note melody, audiences can recognize it as the jingle of Coca-Cola. It shows that music works effectively towards consumers' response. Dolby Atmos has created Dolby Digital True HD-Spheres video which contains "all around you" message. It succeeded to match the sound effects with the message, where people can feel and imagine that the sound is truly around them.

Advertisement has important role in business and organization. When people are going to introduce their product to society, they need to advertise it. It is important to investigate the effects of sounds on emotions and how that corresponds to buying potential. Commercials frequently use background music and strategic human or familiar sounds to influence the consumer's perception of a product.

In order to create effective advertising, the understanding of advertising effects and effectiveness is needed, which also contributes to increase advertising productivity. There are many marketers who spend their efforts to create logical arguments which designed to convince the target audience to consider buying their products. Meanwhile, Hamid Ghanadan stated, "The most effective advertising appeals not to logic, but emotion". "Emotions are permanent... Affects may become separated from content and still remain. We may forget the content of a book, movie, or advertisement, but not the feelings elicited by them" (Chaudhuri, 2006). Consumers can be wrong about their beliefs about a product, but they can have no misconception about their emotional response to a product or advertisement. Emotions are fast, catchy, and memorable. Emotional appeals lead to better attention getting, better processing of information, and better retention in memory (Ray & Batra, 1983).

Lindstrom (2010) feels that the human sense of hearing is just as powerful tool as that of sight. He further suggests that consumers have a direct emotional response to common sounds heard in the environment. Advertisers are underutilizing the sensory emotions associated with sounds; however, in order to utilize them to their fullest potential, it would be advantageous to marketers to discover which sounds are most appealing to the human ear.

The purpose of this study is to get better understanding about the role of emotions which come from the hearing of sounds, in marketing. It is very difficult to switch hearing off. People can spit out food if they do not like the taste, hold their nose if they do not like the smell, close their eyes if they do not like what they see, but they will not completely shut out sound even they covering their ears since sound ventures far. Therefore, understanding the impact of sound towards consumers' emotional response could lead to some interesting.

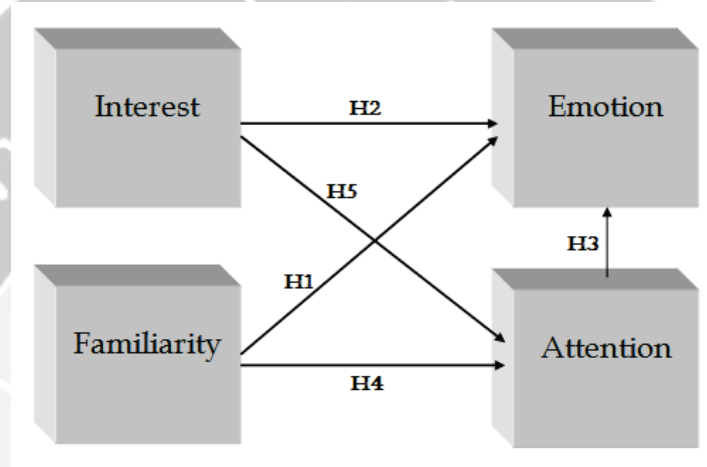
RESEARCH PROBLEMS

From the exposure of research background and research scope above, there are some problems which need to be examined, including:

1. What influences emotional response to sounds in advertising?
2. What specific sounds in advertising create the most emotion in consumers?

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The research model and some hypotheses have been developed in this study. Since this research is a replication of the study by Lewis et al. (2012), this study also uses the same research model and hypotheses.



This model include some hypotheses which are going to be empirically tested:

- H1: Familiarity with a sound will increase the level of emotion felt toward that particular sound.
- H2: Interest in a sound will increase the level of emotion felt toward that particular sound.
- H3: Attention will increase the level of emotion felt toward a particular sound.
- H4: Familiarity with a sound will increase the level of attention felt toward that particular sound.
- H5: Interest in a sound will increase the level of attention felt toward that particular sound.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Voluntary participants were recruited from University of Atma Jaya Yogyakarta (UAJY) students. Since the research was conducted by using computer laboratory which located in the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, 156 participants were taken from some lab classes in this faculty.

Before conducting research, the author asked for permission to some UAJY's lecturers who held lab work in their lectures. The laboratory-based survey was conducted in five classes after the author dealt with the lecturers. This survey was used to determine emotional reactions and associated with various sounds. This study use

the same sound clips from the previous study (Lewis, Fretwell, & Ryan, 2012). However, there are some sounds that have been replaced in order to adapt with Indonesian population which will be explained more in the research modifications section.

Based on the previous study, 20 sound clips proved to be adequate in keeping the survey to less than 30 minutes. This time frame was sought to reduce subject fatigue. See Appendix A for a list of the sound clips used in the study.

A computer-based questionnaire was used to assess the variables familiarity, emotion, interest, and attention levels. This study used Google Forms to design the questionnaire (<http://goo.gl/OdwwQX>). The first part of the questionnaire was to collect general personal data from the respondents. For instance, gender, age, educational level, occupation, and so on which would be useful to data demographics.

After all general personal questions already fulfilled, the respondents were asked to move to the next section of the questionnaire. The rest twenty sections have the same 4-question, and each section has different sound. Each participant used headphone while listening to the sound clips. In each section, the respondents were asked to listen to a sound, and then follow the instruction of each question. Here, the descriptions of four questions that are met in section 1 until section 20:

1. Question 1 was designed to assess the respondents' emotional level towards the sound. The 4-point Likert scale (*not felt, low, moderate, or high*) was used in this question. They were asked to assess each sound based on 20 different emotions. They only need to determine the intensity of the emotion(s) they felt after listened to the sound by *low, moderate, or high*. The respondents could choose one or more than one emotion. Each emotion that did not be determined, automatically will be determined as *not felt*. The list of emotions was created based on the Geneva Emotion Wheel (Baenziger, Tran, & Scherer, 2005). However, this research also use the list that has been modified in the previous study in order to eliminate certain less recognizable terms.
2. In question 2, the participants' familiarity with the sound was measured to determine their prior experience with or exposure to the sound. The participants were asked to determine the intensity of their familiarity with the sound by rating on a 7-point Likert scale. They were asked to rate their familiarity between *not familiar to very familiar*.
3. To measure interest, participants were asked to rate their interest level on a 7-point Likert scale. Ratings ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* were used when asked if they agreed with the statements, "The sound was interesting."
4. To measure attention, participants were asked to rate their attention level on a 7-point Likert scale. Ratings ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*

were used when asked if they agreed with the statements, “The sound captured my attention.”

The questionnaire used in this study is shown in Appendix B. The respondents’ answers were collected and transformed into data which required to process the hypothesis testing. The hypotheses were tested by using linear regression in SPSS 23 for windows.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

From 5 hypotheses, only one hypothesis which was not supported, that is the hypothesis 1. This study found that more familiar sounds did not create more emotional response. Then, it was found, as suggested in hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3, that a sound capturing the interest and attention of its listener is associated with more emotional response to that sound. Hypotheses 4 and 5 suggested relationships with attention as the dependent variable. Although hypothesis 4 and hypothesis 5 did not give direct influence to consumers’ emotional response, the more attention captured that influenced by interest and familiarity, the more emotional response will be produced. The summary of the results is shown in table below.

The Summary of Hypotheses Result

Hypotheses	Results
H1: Familiarity with a sound will increase the level of emotion felt toward that particular sound.	Not Supported
H2: Interest in a sound will increase the level of emotion felt toward that particular sound.	Supported
H3: Attention will increase the level of emotion felt toward a particular sound.	Supported
H4: Familiarity with a sound will increase the level of attention felt toward that particular sound.	Supported
H5: Interest in a sound will increase the level of attention felt toward that particular sound.	Supported

Although not specifically hypothesized, this study also analyzed the specific emotions associated with each sound. It can be useful for marketers who are trying to figure out what sounds that are suitable for their ads. For instance, when the marketers want to create the emotions of happiness and pleasure, they can use baby laughing sound. If they want to create a sense of surprise, they can use woman scream sound. Then, when they want to create a negative sense of emotions, based on the results of this study, car horn generated the emotion of anger, while police siren generated the emotion of fear. Last, not only an emotion of disgust, a sense of relief also generated by toilet flush sound.

CONCLUSION

This study is a replication study from the existing journal article of Carmen Lewis, Cherie Fretwell, & Jim Ryan (2012) which titled as “An Empirical Study of Emotional Response to Sounds in Advertising.” However, this study made some modification in terms of variable measurement, statistical significance testing, and some replaced sounds.

This research was done to analyze what influences emotional response to sounds in advertising. It also examined what specific sounds in advertising which create the most emotion in consumers. In order to fulfill the objective of the research, some hypotheses were developed and the results are:

1. Familiarity with a sound does not give any significant effect to the level of emotion felt toward that particular sound.
2. Interest in a sound increases the level of emotion felt toward that particular sound.
3. Attention increases the level of emotion felt toward a particular sound.
4. Familiarity with a sound increases the level of attention felt toward that particular sound.
5. Interest in a sound increases the level of attention felt toward that particular sound.

This study found that emotional response to sounds is predicted by the level of interest generated by the sounds and how well the sounds captured the participants’ attention. Familiarity and interest to the sounds that increase participants’ attention also produce more emotional response. Surprisingly, more familiar sounds did not create more emotional response.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There are some suggestions to be concerned for future research. First of all, a wider sample can be used for future studies. Then, it would be better to use the same duration to each sound. Moreover, as suggested by Lewis et al. (2012), several new research questions and directions for future research should be explored to create a better understanding of the use of sounds in advertising. For instance, sounds may elicit emotional memories of a product (e.g., the sound of opening a can of cola) predisposing consumers to recall reminiscences of using the advertised brand (O’ Shaughnessy & O’ Shaughnessy, 2003). Furthermore, future research can develop the study by implementing fMRI and galvanic skin to measure the changes of blood flow and oxygenation in the brain in response to advertisement stimuli and record the electrical currents that pass through the skin in response to emotion.

REFERENCES

- Allan, D. (2006). Effects of Popular Music in ADvertising on Attention and Memory. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 434-444.
- Baenziger, T., Tran, V., & Scherer, K. R. (2005). The Emotional Wheel. A Tool for the Verbal Report of Emotional Reactions. *International Society of Research on Emotion*. Bari, Italy.
- Bagozzi, R. P., Gopinath, M., & Nyer, P. U. (1999). The Role of Emotions in Marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 27 (2), 35-43.
- Chaudhuri, A. (2006). *Emotion and Reason in Consumer Behavior*. Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Gregory, R. L. (1970). *The Intelligent Eye*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Hung, K. (2000). Narrative Music in Congruent and Incongruent TV Advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 29, 1, 25-34.
- Lewis, C., Fretwell, C., & Ryan, J. (n.d.). An Empirical Study of Emotional Response to Sounds in Advertising. *American Journal of Management* vol. 12(1), 80-91.
- Schmitt, B. (1999). Experiential Marketing. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 15, (1-3), 53-67.
- Scott, L. M. (1990). Understanding Jingles and Needledrop: A Rhetorical Approach to Music. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 223-236.