



Available Online

Journal of Education and Social Studies

ISSN: 2789-8075 (Online), 2789-8067 (Print)

<https://www.scienceimpactpub.com/jess>

THE EFFECT OF CONGRUENCY BETWEEN SOCIAL ISSUE-PRODUCT, SOCIAL ISSUE-ENDORSER AND MESSAGE

Sidra Ghazanfar, Sana Mukhtar, Muhammad Abdullah *, Jumana Maryam and Hessian Rasheed

Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Pakistan's agriculture industry is vital to the country's economy since it has confined exportation goods and markets and struggles with a lingering trade imbalance. This study shed light on the modern economic notion of competitiveness by attempting to assess and pinpoint factors affecting citrus exports, which account for 2.48% of the agricultural GDP. In trade theory, competitive edge is a better phrase to use instead of "competitive profit." Panel data and time series data were also employed in this study. The UN-FAO, AMIS, WDI, and WITS were the primary sites from which the secondary sources of data were gathered. The factors that generated an estimate of exports among Pakistan and other nations were identified using a gravity model. The export number, the variables that varied between Pakistan and its top exporters included the value of exports and exporting price examined in this study. RCA indices and their expansions were used in conjunction with suitable statistical techniques to examine the collected data. The study's conclusions were anticipated to be useful in formulating some plans to boost Pakistan's citrus exports. The nominal GDP of Pakistan and the importing nations, their exchange rate, and the region under evaluation for citrus were important drivers. The findings of this study demonstrated that while Pakistan's citrus output is fairly steady, much more work is required to guarantee and optimize gains in the export of citrus crop types.

Keywords: Advertising; Femvertising; Brand equity; Message acceptance; Social issue; Word of mouth.

** Email: dr.abdullah@kfueit.edu.pk*

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<https://doi.org/10.52223/jess.2024.5309>

Received: March 28, 2024; Revised: August 19, 2024; Accepted: August 28, 2024

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, we are influenced by 'Advertisement.' Almost every act of consumer is guided and decided by advertisements, from buying groceries to children's study materials, from finding a vacation spot to watching a movie, from choosing a restaurant to booking a banquet hall for the events, and from searching educational institutions to hunting for a company to find jobs. Advertising is a form of paid-mediated communication that is initiated by a recognizable brand with the goal of convincing the customer to make a behavioral change, either now or in the future (Kerr & Richards, 2021). Dahlen and Rosengren (2016) define advertising that it is "brand-initiated communication intended to impact people." One of the most influential definers of advertising practice is the history of advertising. Digitalization-related developments include (a) new media channels, (b) changing consumer behavior, and (c) extending the advertising effect (Dahlen & Rosengren, 2016).

"Femvertising" is one of the emerging issues which is needed to be discussed in conventional societies, particularly in under developing and developing countries where women are struggling for their rights. Femvertising is defined as "publicizing that employs favorable female ability, messages, and symbolism to help ladies and young girls," and is one of the most visible definitions of modern and traditional

civilizations (Skey, 2015). A lot of studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of advertising but femvertising is a new approach that marketers can adopt to attract consumers. As femvertising is a need to study how it can effectively influence the consumers. Its development seemingly mirrors a few advances for Western ladies, for example, their higher enlistment in postsecondary training, rising purchaser force, and commitments to governmental issues, sports, and business. The main cause of increased colossal notoriety by embeddings in promotions of individualistic and feel-smart thoughts about reclassifying ladies' magnificence (Don, 2017). By 2015, femvertising had become so compelling that SHE Media dispatched a yearly challenge named Femvertising Awards (Monllos, 2015).

Despite the fact that the working class in femvertising promotions challenge just generalizations about feminine practices instead of intensity elements at the cultural level, femvertising still appears to be profoundly reformist the rights of women contrasted with the advertisements of the previous century. The portrayals of women in promotions throughout the twentieth century have been influenced by social and economic factors (Spears & Amos, 2014), the emphasis has been on females' sexual and bodily freedoms rather than their financial status. Obviously, many consumers have expressed dissatisfaction with the inadequate representations of women in advertising. (Ford et al., 1991). While femvertising is going to be broadly tested probably, not many scholastic examinations have researched how crowds see and use femvertising (Drake, 2017). In the previous many years, organizations have utilized femvertising to sell anything (Sternadori & Abitbol, 2019). At first, Davidson (2015) defined femvertising as a marketing approach used by female-oriented corporations such as Dove, Always, and Pantene to objectify women by examining the idea of beauty. Dove's true beauty campaign was one of the most influential. Unilever, Dove's parent company, saw a 3% increase in sales after the campaign launched (Castillo, 2014).

Following the achievement of advancements for the firms selling sexual orientation-explicit items, different organizations, including some connected to impartial products (for example Verizon and Google) or male-arranged items (for example Smash trucks), likewise started utilizing femvertising in their informing techniques. The underlying outcomes seem positive: every one of these organizations has asserted a useful effect on reality temporarily and proof of continued development in the long haul (Davidson, 2015). Notwithstanding expanded deals (Castillo, 2014), femvertising has additionally evoked an uplifting mentality toward products. In an investigation, Drake (2017) found that US ladies who saw strengthening promotions had more uplifting perspectives on the publicized product and higher buy expectations. Previous studies show that a significant relationship is present between attitude towards femvertising, gender, consumer evaluation of presented femvertising messages, attitude and company and brand (Sternadori & Abitbol, 2019). However, no research has been conducted to study the importance of congruence between endorsers, products, and social issue. The goal of this study is to evaluate the factors that influence the effectiveness of female empowerment marketing ads by examining the impact of congruence between "endorser and social issue," "product and social issue," and "consistency in marketing message" on positive word of mouth, attitude toward message acceptance, and brand equity.

The study aims to assess the factors that affect the effectiveness of female empowerment marketing ads by examining the impact of congruence between "endorser and social issue", "product and social issue" and "consistency in marketing message" on positive word of mouth, attitude towards message acceptance and brand equity.

Conceptual Frame Work

Utilizing celebrities in promoting to sell an item has made famous in numerous advertisement crusades (Slinker, 1984). More than 10 years back, one of every three TV advertisements utilized celebrity support, and this promoting procedure seems, on the expansion (Sherman, 1985). Advertisers use endorser support to build the proposal of the promoting messages. The reason is that endorsers are accepted to improve the mindfulness of the advertisement, make the duplicate more critical, trustworthy, and alluring & successfully glamorize the product (Spielman, 1981). Regardless, utilizing a celebrity doesn't normally

guarantee a convincing advertisement. Effectiveness is attached to how well the personality of the endorser fixes the marketing idea (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Spielman, 1981).

The current examination found that both endorser-brand congruence and positive exposure emphatically impacted attitude toward the celebrity and brand. Although previous researchers have discovered positive image toward the endorser will make the brand more appealing to the consumers (Thwaites et al., 2012), the effect of celebrity-brand congruence assumed a more significant function in foreseeing mentality toward the brand than that of exposure in this study. Customers' mentality toward the endorser and brand emphatically affected their purchasing intention fundamentally, however, the effect of attitude toward the brand is seen to be significantly more than that toward the celebrity in creating purchasing intention (Jae et al., 2019). Despite the fact that there is an uncertainty that congruence between product and endorser can improve the acceptability of an advertisement (Erdogan, 1999). Sirgy (1982) studied self-image and brand equity and found that the congruence between self-image and brand equity is significantly related to attitudes toward purchase intentions (Paul & Bhakar, 2018). Mishra et al. (2015) found that there is an impact of congruence on endorser credibility, which in turn, significantly affects the ads.

Based on the previous studies, this study expected the congruence between endorsers and social issues applicable to advertising. This study predicted that congruence between endorsers and social issues might yield a positive effect on word of mouth, message acceptance and brand equity. Based on the assumptions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1. Congruence between “endorser and social issue” has a positive effect on word of mouth.

H2. Congruence between “endorser and social issue” has a positive effect on attitude towards message acceptance.

H3. Congruence between “endorser and social issue” has a positive effect on Brand Equity.

Although social issues have been a major concern across the whole nation, so companies have participated in social activities, such as joining social movements and launching eco-friendly products (Lunati, 2013). Bamberg and Möser (2007) identified an increase in the published articles addressing social issues. Advertising is used by businesses to improve their image, which can be related to social issues. Every represented behavior contributes to the formation of the image (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001). When a firm is in a reputational crisis, a positive image is critical (Coombs & Holladay, 2006). Social issues can elicit a more critical situation for the firm (Sohn & Lariscy, 2014). According to Arias-Bolzmann et al. (2000), product perception is a factor that influences advertising.

The researcher's attention to social issues has increased. The majority of studies have concentrated on the factors that influence the effectiveness of the advertisement (Chan et al., 2006). These studies concentrated on consumer and advertising characteristics. However, research on the impact of social issues on advertising effectiveness is rare. Most of the studies about advertising explain that congruence creates significant outcomes in terms of effectiveness. The congruence in advertising causes the transfer of product image to the customers therefore eliciting favorable attitudes toward the products (Rifon et al., 2004). Congruence in advertising could lead to a positive attitude towards advertisements (Moorman et al., 2002), and brand equity (Carrillat et al., 2013). A soap advertisement showing a water pollution issue is an example of high congruence between a social issue and a product, whereas a soap advertisement highlighting the wildlife protection issue could have low congruence.

This study expected the congruence between product and social issues applicable to advertising. This study predicted that congruence between product and social issues might yield a positive effect on word of mouth, message acceptance and brand equity. Based on the assumptions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4. Congruence between “product and social issue” has a positive effect on word of mouth.

H5. Congruence between “product and social issue” has a positive effect on attitude towards message acceptance.

H6. Congruence between “product and social issue” has a positive effect on brand equity.

This study looks at the effect of consistency in marketing messages on consumers. The impression of a consistent message and image through various communication instruments is the essential standard of marketing communication. In spite of the fact that writing proposes that consistency in messages may have an effect on consumers. Results are built up with the goal of the research. Findings uncover that consistency in the message has a solid direct effect on brand equity. Despite the fact that its effect on the brand is discovered to be good, it isn't measurably huge.

This study investigates the effects of message consistency on brand equity. The study makes an original contribution to the research, showing the interaction between branding strategy and consistency in the messages received by the customers. (Castañeda-García et al., 2020). Consistency in marketing messages is the base of marketing communication. Kitchen and Proctor (2015) state that marketing uses different media for the consistency of the potential relationships with customers. The consistency in marketing messages and their influence on brands has become important. The influence of consistency in messages on customers represents a timely research topic. This study aims to contribute to the consistency of messages as a trendsetter of customer relationships. The aim is to look at how customers perceive consistency across different marketing messages and how it influences their interactions with brands. In marketing communications, message consistency is referred to in a number of ways by the academic literature, with terms including one voice (Porcu et al., 2012); common communication message (Low, 2000); communications for the consistent message (Lee & Park, 2007); strategic consistency (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997); communication mix integration (Pickton, 2004); and message consistency itself (Porcu et al., 2017).

Based on the previous studies, this study expected consistency in marketing messages applicable to advertising. This study predicted that consistency in marketing messages might yield a positive effect on word of mouth, message acceptance, and brand equity. Based on the assumptions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H7. Consistency in marketing messages has a positive effect on word of mouth.

H8. Consistency in marketing messages has a positive effect on attitude towards message acceptance.

H9. Consistency in marketing messages has a positive effect on brand equity.

Research Methodology

The survey was conducted on 300 university students. Respondents were shown a Dove advertisement and afterwards, they were asked to fill out the given questionnaire. Five points Likert scale was used to collect responses from respondents, in which 5 represent strongly agree and 1 strongly disagree. The Items to measure message consistency were taken from Lee and Park, 2007 in which we measure the extent you perceive that the product/company has delivered a consistent brand image through its messages. The items “similarity”, “logical choice” and “Appropriate” for endorser and brand congruence were taken from Choi and Rifon (2012). The items of word of mouth “talk”, recommend” and “storytelling” was taken from Gilal et al. (2018). The items “trust”, “superior quality”, “brand loyalty”, “brand presence” and “good image” for brand equity were adopted from Huang and Tsai (2013). The items of message acceptance “motivation”, “ease of understanding”, “strength of reasons”, “clarity”, “truthfulness”, “accuracy” and “credibility” were adopted from Smith and Vogt (1995) and Cheung et al. (2009).

The study used SPSS to study reliability and validity and used Structural Equation modeling to study path analysis in AMOS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographics data of age, gender and education has been shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics.

Demographics		Frequency
Gender	Male	45.2 %
	Female	54.8 %
Education	Undergraduate	51.6 %
	Master	39.2 %
	PhD	9.2 %
Age	18 or below	38.4 %
	19-25	38 %
	26-35	9.6 %
	36-45	4.4 %
	46 +	9.6 %

In the case of gender, male respondents were 45.2% of the total respondent while 54.8% respondents were female. With respect to education, our respondents 51.6% were undergraduates while masters and Ph.D. were 39.2 and 9.2 percent respectively. However, the age of the respondents divided the respondents into five segments that are below 18 years, 19-25, 26-35, 36-45, and 46-onwards. All variables used for research have the value of Cronbach’s alpha significantly higher than the threshold level of 0.70 which confirms the construct reliability (Wong et al., 2015), which has been shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Factor loadings and Cronbach’s alpha values.

Variable	Cronbach’s alpha	Items	Factor loading
BE	0.78	BE1	.663
		BE2	.609
		BE3	.679
		BE4	.603
		BE5	.641
WOM	0.77	WOM1	.855
		WOM2	.824
		WOM3	.758
MA	0.71	MA1	.663
		MA2	.609
		MA3	.679
		MA4	.603
		MA5	.641
		MA6	.612
		MA7	.622
ESI	0.873	ESI1	.855
		ESI2	.844
		ESI3	.894
PSI	0.842	PSI1	.841
		PSI2	.844
		PSI3	.894

BE=brand equity; WOM=word of mouth; MA=message acceptance; ESI= endorser-social issue congruence; PSI=product-social issue congruence

The result showed that 29.565 of the variances are explained, confirming the absence of CMB (Hew et al., 2017).

Measurement Model Table 3 shows the values of average variance extracted (AVE). All the AVE values are larger than the threshold level of 0.50 and composite reliability which are larger than 0.70. Results show

that the model measures 45%, 4.2%, and 41% of the variance in BE, WOM and MA. The minimum R2 value reflects the low number of independent variables. The values of discriminant validity, convergent validity, and R-square for dependent variables BE, WOM and MA have been shown in table-3, 4 and 5 respectively.

Table 3. Discriminant validity, Convergent validity, and R-square of BE.

	BE	ESI	PSI	AVE	CR	R
BE	.825			.681	.687	.451
ESI	.370	.846		.747	.898	
PSI	.264	.020	.859	.739	.894	

Diagonal values are the sq-root of AVE; BE=brand equity; ESI= endorser-social issue congruence; PSI=product-social issue congruence; AVE= average variance explained; CR= composite reliability.

Table 4: Discriminant validity, Convergent validity, and R-square of WOM

	WOM	ESI	PSI	AVE	CR	R
WOM	.813			.669	.858	.420
ESI	.013	.846		.747	.898	
PSI	.203	.020	.859	.739	.894	

Diagonal values are the sq-root of AVE; WOM=word of mouth; ESI= endorser-social issue congruence; PSI=product-social issue congruence; AVE= average variance explained; CR= composite reliability.

Table 5. Discriminant validity, convergent validity, and R-square of MA.

	MA	ESI	PSI	AVE	CR	R
MA	.967			.936	.687	.414
ESI	.302	.846		.746	.897	
PSI	.154	.020	.859	.739	.894	

Diagonal values are the sq-root of AVE; MA=message acceptance; ESI= endorser- social issue congruence; PSI=product-social issue congruence; AVE= average variance explained; CR= composite reliability.

SEM was used to analyze path relationships. The value of CMIN/DF is 1.930, CFI is 0.946, NFI= 0.903, and RMSEA is 0.061 showing the good fitness of the structural model. Table 6 shows the path analysis.

Table 6. Path analysis.

Sr.		Hypothesis		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
H1	WOM	<---	ESI	.015	.075	.201	.841
H2	MA	<---	ESI	.288	.050	5.751	***
H3	BE	<---	ESI	.327	.051	6.467	***
H4	WOM	<---	PSI	.274	.084	3.270	.001
H5	MA	<---	PSI	.112	.056	2.006	.045
H6	BE	<---	PSI	.273	.056	4.848	***
H7	WOM	<---	MC	.027	.048	-.555	.579
H8	MA	<---	MC	.031	.032	.985	.325
H9	BE	<---	MC	.017	.032	.531	.595

Note: *** significant at 0.000; CMIN/DF = 2.789; CFI = 1.930; NFI = 0.903; RMSEA = 0.061; Pclose = 0.309

The results show MC has an insignificant impact on MA, BE and WOM. Hence, hypotheses H7, H8, H9 have been disapproved.

ESI has a significant positive impact on BE and MA ($\beta=.327, p=0.00$; $\beta=.288, p=0.00$ respectively). Hence H2 and H3 have been approved. While ES was found to have an insignificant impact on WOM. PSI has a significant positive impact on MA, BE, and WOM ($\beta=.112, p=0.05$; $\beta=.273, p=0.00$; $\beta=.274, p=0.01$ respectively). Hence, hypotheses H4, H5, H6 have been approved.

Discussion

The control variable “gender” was found to be significant with message acceptance because in our sample the percentage of females was more than males i.e. 54.8% are females and our topic is addressing the issue faced by women in society. Therefore, females were found to be more active in message acceptance. “Age” was also found to be significant in message acceptance. Most of our respondents were young, as young are educated, non-rigid, and open-minded so they more often are found to break stereotypes. As we are studying anti-stereotype behaviors in our research, the young were found to be more inclined toward the message. Congruence between endorsers and social issues was found to be insignificant with the dependent variable “word of mouth” because of male dominant society people do not like to discuss the issues related to females. They dislike to conversate on feminism. Even they criticize on the endorser and the company that pays intention and promote the issues related feminism and problem faced by females. That is why the efforts of endorser and the brand for the issues related to females and feminism goes ineffective. Even in some conservative societies it is considered a taboo to be discussed. Evans (2013) discovered that endorsers who were beyond the social issues could indirectly impair consumers’ perceived images, causing ultimate negative words of mouth. Paul and Bhakar (2018) also studied the celebrity and social issue congruence and provide the same results that congruence of social issues and endorser are not strong predictor for “word of mouth”.

However, we saw that congruence between “product and social issue” was found to be significant with “word of mouth”. People discuss companies and their promoted messages only, if they come with a solution because people believe that companies who are verbally addressing a social issue are trying to manipulate the emotion of people while companies who address a social issue with their population are trying rationally to educate people. So, the companies who address the issues with their offerings, people tend to discuss it more rather than those who use femvertising approach only to create an emotional appeal. These results are consistent with studies of McCormick (2016).

Congruence between “endorser and social issue” was found to be significant with “message acceptance” because if the issue is promoted by a person who is facing the same issue or the one who has expertise in the same field, then consumer feel a sense of relevance and tend to peruse the message. When the endorser belongs to the same class and gender that faced the problem, then society accepts the message more effectively. As shown in the “Dove” advertisement they endorse from the public that faced the same problem related to the beauty criteria of the society. These results go in favor of the findings of Phua (2018). They investigate the social causes and endorsers with different degrees of congruence and message acceptance.

Congruence between “product and social issue” was also found to be significant with “message acceptance”. If a company addresses an issue with its products, then consumers find that issue and the message promoted by that company more appealing. As in our research, respondents were asked to respond about the issue “unconventional beauty criteria” which is promoted by “Dove”. “Dove” claims that there are not any specific beauty criteria. Every type of skin, color and hair has its own beauty. That is why they created their products for all types of skin and hair. Dove soap does not offer for fairness of your skin. But it claims for deep nourishment of your skin. Similarly, it offers variety of shampoos for different hair types. As the consumer feels that the company is promoting an issue that it can address through its products, so he/she accepts the message addressed by the company more openheartedly. These results are consistent in the previous literature with the studies of Shin and Ki (2019) who studied the effect of congruency of “social issue and product” on consumer responses towards advertising. They found high congruence of “social issue and product” generated positive consumer behavior and “message acceptance”.

Congruence between “endorser and social issue” and the congruence between “product and social issue” were also found to be significant with “brand equity”. when a consumer feels that company is trying to promote an issue not only by hiring relevant endorser who has either faced the same challenges or have same characteristics/demographics or have expertise in that issue but also trying to promote through its

product, then consumer appreciate the efforts of the brand, hence the worth of the brand increases in the eye of the customer. These findings are consistent with studies of Sivesan (2013). And Kim and Joi (2021) who also found congruence between “endorser and social issue” and congruence between “product and social issue” are significant with “brand equity”.

“Message consistency” was found to be insignificant with “brand equity”, “word of mouth” and “message acceptance”. As the issue addressed in this research is more conventional, considered as taboo in our society, so there are very few companies who start talking on this issue. So, for a consumer it is not important what company was promoting earlier. Consumers who have interest in this issue consider it as a blessing that companies are now talking about it. That’s why “image consistency” was found to be insignificant with “brand equity”, “word of mouth” and “message acceptance”.

Our results are in line with the findings of Benoit et al. (2011) who also found “message consistency” insignificant with “brand equity” for unfamiliar brands. He suggested that exposing repeatedly is more important than having consistency in the message (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2012).

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This research focuses on an area that has not been much explored by researchers. Femvertising is an unconventional advertising strategy that gained popularity after “Dove”, which promoted unconventional beauty standards. This research will give insight to researchers and marketers who want to promote women's empowerment. The study of the research reveals those social issues like femvertising should be promoted by endorsers who have the same demographics and who have faced the same challenges. Similarly, consumers don't appreciate those companies who only verbally promote these issues rather consumers want a deep stake in a company, instead of only highlighting an issue, they expect companies to come up with solutions/products. This research concludes that the femvertising is an unconventional topic. On which too much discussion has not occurred. If marketers want to promote women's empowerment in their marketing message, then they must hire an endorser who is facing the same issue to pursue the message. so, that consumers feel a sense of relevance. Also if the brands also want to promote issues related to feminism or women empowerment then they must introduce the product or service related to these issues. And promote that product or service with the relevant endorser. In this way, consumers may pay attention to the product and accept the message openly. As a result, the brand equity and the word of mouth of the company will be increased.

The conceptual framework for this study is based on the S-O-R theory from cognitive psychology (Zimmerman & Jonelle, 2012) and the Balance Theory from social psychology (Heider, 1958). The S-O-R theory explains that consumers' behavior is influenced by congruency in advertisements. The balance theory explains the relationships among celebrities, publicity, and consumers' behavior. This research has contributed to the literature in this way that it might help the researchers to understand the factors that enhance the effectiveness of femvertising messages, they will also understand how can we promote gender-specific issues in advertising.

Future Directions

In the future “social issues and self-congruence” can be studied. We have studied the congruency between the “social issue-product congruence” and “social issue-endorser congruence” but we have not studied the “social issue and self-congruence”. So, there is a need to understand the match between consumer self-concept and issues promoted by marketers. So that marketers could design the femvertising campaign according to the behavior of the consumers.

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