

Green Advertising Appeal and Consumer Purchase Intention

(*Rayuan Pengiklanan Hijau dan Niat Pembelian Pengguna*)

Siohong Tih
Kuan-Thye Chan
Amin Ansary
Ali Ahmed

(UKM-Graduate School of Business, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influences of various types of green message (self-benefit and other-benefit appeals) on consumers' green purchase intentions among Malaysians and Iranians. In particular, this study examines whether the type of appeal affects consumers' purchase intentions differently, and whether this effect is moderated by the consumer's home country. A sample of 117 postgraduate students was exposed to one of two printed hypothetical green messages promoting either self-benefit or other-benefit appeals. The results reveal that other-benefit appeal influences purchase intentions more than self-benefit appeal. Furthermore, green product purchase intention among Malaysian postgraduate participants is higher as compared to that of the Iranians. However, home country does not moderate the relationship between appeal type and purchase intentions. Both theoretical and practical contributions are discussed.

Keywords: Advertising; green message; self-benefit appeal; other-benefit appeal; home country; purchase intention

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini mengkaji pengaruh jenis mesej hijau (rayuan manfaat-diri and rayuan manfaat-lain) kepada niat pembelian produk hijau di kalangan pengguna Malaysia dan Iran. Khususnya, kajian ini meneliti sama ada jenis rayuan memberi kesan yang berlainan kepada niat pembelian pengguna, dan sama ada kesan ini dipengaruhi oleh faktor negara asal seseorang pengguna. Sampel kajian terdiri daripada 117 pelajar pasca siswazah yang didedahkan kepada salah satu daripada dua cetakan mesej hijau hipotetikal yang menonjolkan rayuan sama ada manfaat-diri atau manfaat-lain. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa pengaruh rayuan manfaat-lain memberi kesan yang lebih ketara berbanding dengan rayuan manfaat-diri. Tambahan pula, niat pembelian produk hijau di kalangan peserta pasca siswazah Malaysia adalah lebih tinggi berbanding Iran. Walau bagaimanapun, faktor negara asal tidak mempengaruhi hubungan antara jenis rayuan dan niat pembelian. Kedua-dua sumbangan teori dan praktikal juga turut dibincangkan.

Kata kunci: Pengiklanan; mesej hijau; rayuan manfaat-diri; rayuan manfaat-lain; negara asal; niat pembelian

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the issue of environmental sustainability has become a concern for consumers, profit and not-for-profit organisations, governments and nongovernmental organisations (Jamian & Tih 2016; Varadarajan 2014). Malaysia has been involved in environmental management and implemented a voluntary type of environmental labelling (Rashid 2009). In a survey of 625 consumers in shopping malls, 50% of the respondents had consumed the environmental-labelled products (Abu Dardak et al. 2009). Furthermore, the key factors that encourage consumers to consume green or organic products are safety and health issues (Ahmad & Juhdi 2010; Chong 2013). Responding to this environmental issue, firms have started developing products that are less harmful to the environment (Schuhwerk & Lefkoff-Hagius 1995). In order to encourage consumers to buy green products, every year companies tend to spend more on advertising (Putte 2009). Despite this effort, one of the biggest challenges faced today is still of how to promote and encourage

people to adopt environmental sustainable behaviours (White & Simpson 2013).

Previous research on environmental sustainability had highlighted on the importance of using green advertising to promote green consumption. Green advertising is defined by Zinkhan and Carlson (1995) as ecological, environmental sustainability, or nature-friendly messages that target the needs and desires of environmentally concerned stakeholders. Yet an area that has continuously frustrated advertisers of green products is the scepticism among consumers and the attitude – behaviour gap among would-be green consumers (see Sheehan & Atkinson 2012; Zinkhan & Carlson 1995).

In order to maximise the effectiveness of advertising campaigns, scholars and marketers have attempted to understand the relationship between consumers' attitudes towards an advertisement and how these advertisements influence purchase intention (Lafferty et al. 2002). Therefore, different types of green advertising appeals had been used in prior research. One of the type of appeals focuses on product characteristics that protect

the environment (other-benefits) and another brings self-benefits to consumers (e.g. financial benefits) (Schuhwerk & Lefkoff-Hagius 1995). Accordingly, marketers use communication strategies that emphasise one or the other (Green & Peloza 2014).

Prior studies on these two advertising appeals had produced mixed results. For example, Hutton and Markley (1991) found that promoting financial benefits would encourage conversion into environmental friendly practices. On the contrary, Davis (1994) encouraged firms to communicate specific environmental claims and benefits. Yet not much is known about how persuasive these two types of appeals are for different consumers in different settings or contexts. Thus, research that investigates these advertising appeals is necessary, and will be valuable because it might help to better understand the outcome of various appeals (Bickart & Ruth 2012; White & Simpson 2013). Moreover, the majority of environmental friendly consumption research has been done in Western countries, while green research in Asia is still emerging. Asian countries are also facing environmental challenges. Not many studies have been conducted to understand Malaysians and Iranians in terms of green perception, intention and lifestyle (Abd Rahim et al. 2012; Eze & Ndubisi 2013).

Referring to the value of reaction towards advertising appeal, research that examines the effectiveness of the different appeal types and considers the role of cultural context is highly needed. It will be useful in encouraging environmental behaviours, which in turn will benefit many environmental stakeholders (e.g. firms, consumers and society). Thus, our research objective is to narrow the gaps in green advertising research in general and cultural context differences in particular (i.e. Malaysian and Iranian consumers). Since cultural factor is a broad concept, at this early stage of the investigation, we suggest examining the home country variable as a moderating factor. We empirically investigate how consumers who are from different countries respond to the two types of green appeals (other-benefits versus self-benefits appeals) and how these responses affect their purchase intentions of green products.

Overall, our research addresses the following questions: (i) Do the two types of green advertisement appeals (other-benefits versus self-benefits) influence purchase intention of green products? If so, to what extent is this influence different between the advertisement appeals? (ii) Would consumers' home country change the relationship between the two advertisement appeals and green purchase intentions? In the following sections, we provide a literature review of this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The social exchange theory, initially introduced by Homans (1958), is a social psychological and sociological

perspective that clarifies social exchange and solidity as a process of negotiated exchanges between parties. According to this theory, individuals engage in relationships and calculate the costs and benefits they gain from the relationships (Blau 1964). Indeed, social exchange theory is based on human associations and utilises a subjective cost-benefit to analyse and compare alternatives. In fact, this theory presumes that self-interested actors transact with other self-interested actors to achieve personal objectives that they may not attain alone (Lawler 1999).

Social exchange theory is considered as one of the most influential theories that explains behaviours in organisations (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005). Recently, Bagger and Li (2014) used social exchange theory to illustrate the link between supervisors' support towards employees' families, employees' job satisfaction, and turnover. Regarding marketing domain, it has been decades since Bagozzi (1975) explained the usefulness of social exchange theory in marketing. He pointed out that any human transactions can be recognised as a type of market exchange. Related to our research, White and Peloza (2009) used social exchange theory to explain the effectiveness of self-benefit appeal versus other-benefit appeal in generating charitable support. They argued that in a situation where consumers perceive that benefits outweigh costs, self-benefit appeal is more likely to be effective than other-benefit appeal. To summarise, past studies had shown the efficacy of social exchange in illuminating market exchange in general and appeal type in particular. Next, the self-construal theory is discussed.

In the wake of criticisms about Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions (see McSweeney 2002), Markus and Kitayama (1991) proposed two divergent self-views – the *independent self-construal* and the *interdependent self-construal*, which are better predictors of individuals' behaviour, namely the self-construal theory. The independent self-construal is influenced by the individualistic culture in the West and sees the self as a separate entity. The individuals who are well-developed in their independent self-construal behave in ways that express or assert their personal attributes (Markus & Kitayama 1991). The interdependent self-construal is influenced by the collectivist culture in Asia and views the self as being part of a larger social environment. In summary, for interdependent self-construal individuals, social relationships and 'others' are considered important; whereas for independent self-construal individuals, 'self' benefits take priority (Markus & Kitayama 1991).

Previous research showed empirically that independent self-construal and interdependent self-construal can predict green attitudes and purchase intentions (White & Simpson 2013). In particular, Kalafatis et al. (1999) conducted several studies aiming to examine the effectiveness of the self-construal theory in predicting attitudes and purchase intentions for organic food. Their findings demonstrate that the self-construal theory can offer a very good explanation for the relationship between advertising appeals and purchase

intentions. For example, Kareklas et al. (2014) found that combining self-benefit and other-benefits appeals in an advertisement positively predicted purchase intentions of organic food brands in particular. Furthermore, self-construal theory has been used to explain the relationship between advertising appeals and purchase intentions in the context of cross-cultural advertising (e.g. Chang 2006; Polyorat & Alden 2005).

In addition, the theory of planned behaviour and prospect theory are also used by researchers to explain green consumption. The theory of planned behaviour proposes that attitude towards behaviour; subjective norm and perceived behavioural control can predict behavioural intention and consequently behaviour (Ajzen 1991; Choshaly & Tih 2015). This theory is also used to explain green and organic food consumption (Huque, Hafeez & Shariff 2014). For example, Huque et al. (2014) found that attitude and subjective norm have a positive effect on organic food buying intention. Prospect theory reflects an individual decision making under risk, considers available choices and analyses the risk of each option before making decision (Kahneman & Tversky 1979; Schwartz, Goldberg & Hazen 2008). In relation to this research, using prospect theory, an individual exposed to advertisements might have a preliminary analysis of the advertisements; then the advertisements are evaluated. Advertisements with the highest value attract attention and, subsequently, the offers in the advertisements are chosen. The decision frame or choices adopted by individuals might be associated with norms, habits and personal characteristics (Tversky & Kahneman 1981).

Thus, in this research, social exchange theory, the theory of self-construal, the theory of planned behaviour and prospect theory might explain why types of appeal influence consumers' purchase intentions. We argue that consumers are expected to respond with higher purchase intention to the advertising appeal (i.e. self-benefit and other-benefit appeals), which is more beneficial based on their point of views (i.e. cost-benefit analysing or environmental benefit). Under social exchange and the influence of subjective norms, other-benefit appeals would have a higher impact on interdependent self-construal individuals. Independent self-construal individuals consider decision risk and self-benefits and would respond towards the self-benefit appeal advertisement.

RESEARCH ON ADVERTISING APPEAL AND PURCHASE INTENTION

Recently, factors that might influence consumers to engage in environmental behaviours have been given more attention. For example, Olson (2013) used conjoint analysis to investigate the trade-off that consumers engage in when purchasing green or non-green products (cars and TVs). The findings showed that consumers prefer green products when the trade-off is not obvious.

However, consumers shifted to less green products when the trade-off is obvious, in particular when it is related to conventional features of products (such as price or quality). Tucker et al. (2012) showed that individual characteristics influence consumers' responses towards environmental products. Consumers with positive attitudes towards protecting the environment are more likely to respond positively to environmental products.

Regarding green advertising, Zinkhan and Carlson (1995) defined this as ecological, environmental, sustainable or nature-friendly messages. Obermiller's (1995) study found that for environmental issues with a high level of importance, a loss appeal could cause a 'boomerang effect', suggesting that the implementation of an environmental friendly consumption appeal is critical. Kronrod et al. (2012) investigated consumers' responses to two types of languages that are used in green communications (assertive versus non-assertive). They found that the effectiveness of assertive messages depends on the consumers' perception regarding the importance of the issue; when the issue is important, assertive commands are more effective than non-assertive, and vice versa.

In relation to other-benefit appeals and self-benefit appeals, Schuhwerk and Lefkoff-Hagius (1995) examined the way consumers respond to different advertisement appeals (environmental benefit versus cost-saving benefit) related to green laundry detergent. The findings revealed that consumers who are concerned about the environment are more likely to purchase green products regardless of the kind of appeal. However, consumers with less concern for the environment respond better to green appeals rather than financial appeals.

Hutton and Markley (1991) demonstrated that financial incentive programmes changed participants' behaviours from using their own cars to taking public transport, which is less harmful to environment than private cars. Royme et al. (2012) investigated the effectiveness of environmental versus personal benefit appeals and .99 versus .00 price endings for two environmental products. The results showed that consumers perceived products that were advertised using environmental appeals to be more costly but not of less quality compared to products that were advertised using personal benefits.

Moreover, Hsinhui (2012) studied consumers' responses to advertisement appeals (self-benefit and nature-related benefit) in the hotel industry. The findings showed that self-benefit predicts consumers' responses more than nature or other benefits. White and Simpson (2013) explored the effect of appeal type. They found that the effectiveness of appeal type depends on whether the individual or collective level of one's self is salient. When the collective level of self is activated, appeals that highlight what one should do and what others are doing are more effective, whereas appeals that highlight self-benefits will be less effective. In contrast, when the individual level of self is activated, self-benefit and descriptive appeals are more effective than appeals that highlight what others think one

should do. This indicates the influence of self-construal theory, that people can view themselves as independent (individualistic) or interdependent (collectivistic) (Singelis 1994).

Research also examined consumer context and moderating factors. White and Peloza (2009) conducted a study predicting donations support, and they found that when consumers' responses are private, self-benefit appeals are more effective than other-benefits appeals. However, when consumers' responses are publicly accountable, other-benefit appeals are more effective. Related to green products, Kareklas et al. (2012) examined the moderating effect of regulatory focus and self-construal (self-dependent versus self-interdependent) on consumers' attitudes towards a green product across two different types of advertisement appeals; and they found that environmental appeals are more effective for consumers who are self-dependent. Recently, Green and Peloza (2014) investigated the role of decision-making and the type of setting context have on the effectiveness of both self-benefit and other-benefit appeals. The findings showed that when consumers experience a context that emphasises on public accountability, they respond more to other-benefit appeals than to self-benefit appeals. However, in private settings, self-benefit appeals are more effective than other-benefit appeals. Kareklas et al. (2014) showed that advertisement appeals that combine both self- and other-benefits are the most effective in promoting organic food brands and green products.

In investigating comparative advertising, Polyorat and Alden (2005) suggested that for consumers (who are low independent self-construal) with a low need for cognition, comparative advertisements are more persuasive. Hence, the need for cognition moderates the relationship between self-construal and advertising effectiveness. Chang (2006) found that advertisement self-congruency positively predicts purchase intentions in a cross-cultural study in the United States and Taiwan. In other words, the more related (congruent) the advertisement appeal is to a consumer's self-view, the more positively it predicts purchase intentions.

Overall, despite the efforts in promoting green behaviours, consumers' actual purchasing of environmental products is still not encouraging (Royne et al. 2012). Varadarajan (2014) highlighted that a quality and quantity gap in public goods such as public transportation can encourage consumers to own private cars, which can be harmful to the environment. Thus, governments need to upgrade services both in quantity and quality to encourage green behaviours. In fact, more research is needed. This is because without conducting research to discover what actually encourages or facilitates the consumption of green products, it is unlikely that these kinds of products will be successful (Olson 2013).

This study focuses on other-benefit and self-benefit appeals of advertising and their impact on purchase intentions. Although these two advertisement appeals

have been studied in previous research, to date, their effectiveness has shown conflicting results; while some studies recommend the use of self-benefit appeals, others suggest other-benefit appeals or combination of appeals (Green & Peloza 2014; Kareklas et al. 2014). This study investigates how consumers respond to the two types of green appeals (other-benefits versus self-benefits appeals) and how two different nationalities – Malaysian and Iranian (home country – have different buying intentions for green products. In doing so, this study is expected to have both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it will extend previous research in green advertising by considering the role of home country (i.e. nationality) and the moderating effect of home country on type of advertising appeal and purchase intentions. Practically, this study might help marketers and pro-environment advocates understanding some of the boundaries in using other-benefits versus self-benefits appeals and develop green communication strategies that encourage environmental friendly consumption, in particular when products are distributed in different countries.

HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH MODEL

Green advertising, defined as ecological, environmentally sustainable or nature-friendly messages (Zinkhan & Carlson 1995), aims to encourage the purchases of environmental products, which in turn contribute to sustainable development. The World Commission on Environment and Development refers sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (cited in Varadarajan 2014). After analysing 95 television and 173 printed green advertisements, Banerjee et al. (1995) classified green advertisement into three categories: sponsor type (whether the sponsor is a for-profit or non-profit organisation), advertisement focus (is it focused on the advertiser or the consumer) and the depth of the advertisement, such as which environmental information has been focused on and to what extent (shallow, moderate or deep). According to Banarjee and McKeage (1994), green advertising usually includes one of these three elements: clearly highlighting the relationship between products and the biophysical environment, encouraging a green lifestyle and promoting environmental responsibility.

OTHER-BENEFIT APPEALS AND SELF-BENEFIT APPEALS

In environmental or other-benefit appeals, the focus is often on environmental characteristics of the product; whereas in self-benefit appeals, although they contain environmental aspects, the emphasis is on other aspects of the product (e.g. cost savings) (Schuhwerk & Lefkoff-Hagius 1995). Likewise, Green and Peloza (2014)

considered self-benefit appeals as those that emphasise on product attributes that benefit the consumers themselves, such as cost savings, and other-benefit appeals as those that focus on product attributes that benefit others or the society, such as lower emissions. It is important to mention that self-benefit appeals are sometimes obvious (e.g. tax reduction) but sometimes are not obvious (e.g. feeling good about oneself) (White & Peloza 2009).

This study investigates other-benefit appeals in terms of appeals that encourage protecting the environment and self-benefit appeals in terms of promoting one's own health. The advertising message is associated with eco-soap that represents the green product (refer to Appendix 1). The advertising appeal was measured by four statements adopted from Green and Peloza (2014). The four statements are (i) to what degree is this message focused on helping others?; (ii) to what degree is this appeal associated with looking out for the interests of others?; (iii) to what degree is this message focused on helping individuals themselves?; and (iv) to what degree is this appeal associated with looking out for individual self-interests? A 7-point rating scale was used, with 1 indicating 'not at all' to 7 indicating 'very much' associated with the appeal.

PURCHASE INTENTION

Chen and Chang (2012: 507) defined green purchase intention as 'the likelihood that a consumer would buy a particular product resulting from his or her environmental needs.' Purchase intention might be a prior state of mind before an actual purchase. Namias (1959) compared purchase intentions with actual purchases of household durable goods. The findings show that consumers who did not plan to buy a product stayed consistent in their attitudes by not buying the product. Furthermore, Porto et al. (2011) examined whether consumers actually buy the quantity of goods that they plan to buy. The result demonstrated that the amount of goods consumers buy is related to what they had planned to buy. In this study we examine purchase intention because purchase intention is more likely to predict actual purchase. The measurement scales of purchase intention were sourced from Mohr and Webb (2005). There are three statements: (i) would you purchase this eco-soap (very unlikely - very likely); (ii) would it be possible for you to buy this eco-soap (impossible - very possible); and (iii) what is the chance that you buy this eco-soap (no chance - certain). Similarly a 7-point rating scale was used: from 1 indicating very unlikely, impossible or no chance to 7 indicating very likely, very possible or certain.

APPEALS TYPES (SELF-BENEFIT AND OTHER-BENEFIT) AND CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION

Self-construal theory suggests that self-view is a strong predictor of behavioural intention (Markus & Kitayama 1991). This might suggest that a consumer who has independent self-construal will exhibit positive purchase

intention in response to the self-benefit appeals. Likewise, a consumer with interdependent self-construal might be positively influenced by the other-benefit appeals to exhibit green purchase intention. Self-benefit appeals have been found to encourage individuals to engage in environmental consumption. For example, Hsinhui (2012) and Schuhwerk and Lefkoff-Hagius (1995) argued that individuals often develop personal positive attitudes towards a product that benefits themselves. Response to other or environmental appeals usually can be achieved based on social norms (Huque et al. 2014; White & Simpson 2013). Therefore, it is expected that individuals are likely to engage in behaviours that are congruent with their views of self. Furthermore, based on the regulatory focus theory, people tend to achieve goals that bring positive outcomes and aspirations to themselves (see Bickart & Ruth 2012). More recently, Kareklas et al. (2014) suggested that self-benefit and other-benefit appeals simultaneously predict consumers' organic purchase intentions. Therefore, based on the literature, it is hypothesised that different advertising appeals would have different effects on green purchase intentions.

H₁ Different advertising appeals will have different effects on green purchase intentions.

HOME COUNTRY AND CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION

Differences in culture are crucial for the effectiveness of international advertising. Culture is defined by Hofstede as 'the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influences a group's response to its environment,' or the 'collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from those of another' (Hofstede 1980, 1991; Zhang & Gelb 1996).

The question regarding whether advertisers should use the same message (standardised) to promote their products across countries or to use different messages for each country (adaptation) has a long history. For example, Green et al. (1975) conducted a cross-cultural study that examined whether consumers from the United States and three other countries use the same criteria when evaluating a product. Their underlying assumption was that if consumers use the same criteria in evaluating products, then it might be advisable to use a standardised approach in advertising, otherwise adapted messages should be recommended. Their findings revealed that consumers across countries use different criteria in evaluating products, which suggests that cross-cultural differences require the use of different message appeals for each country. Likewise, Zhang and Gelb (1996) investigated the efficacy of appeal types in two different cultures (individualism versus collectivism) – emphasising on the importance of adapting advertising. Furthermore, on the basis of the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model, Kim et al. (2013) found that national culture explains differences in online purchase intentions. Hence, we hypothesise that Malaysian and

Iranian consumers have different levels of purchase intentions in regard to green products.

H₂ There is a significant difference between Malaysians and Iranians in their green purchase intentions.

Besides the expected effect of home country on purchase intentions, Hofstede (1991) suggested that national differences exist along five dimensions. One of the key methods of measuring national cultural differences is along the individualism-collectivism continuum. Sabiote et al. (2013) found significant moderating effects of individualism/collectivism in the formation of overall perceived value and for online purchase of tourism services. Darrat (2011) proposed that individualism could moderate the relationship between brand perception and purchasing intention among Middle Eastern consumers. Furthermore, Chen (2013) suggested that the collectivism-individualism aspect is the key to studying green purchase intentions in a multicultural context.

In light of this, it is expected that individualism/collectivism would affect the relationship between appeal types and purchase intentions. Iranian consumers, who are presumably more individualistic (see Table 1), in seeing an advertisement promoting self-benefit would exhibit higher purchase intentions compared to Malaysian consumers seeing the same advertisement (see also Aaker & Lee 2001).

TABLE 1. Selected Hofstede's cultural dimension indices for Iran and Malaysia

| Home country | Power Distance | Individualism | Masculinity | Uncertainty Avoidance |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Iran | 58 | 41 | 43 | 59 |
| Malaysia | 104 | 36 | 26 | 50 |

Sources: Hofstede, G. 1991. *Cultures and Organizations: Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival – Software of the Mind*. Harper Collins, London.

In contrast, Zhang (2009) found that salient self-construal can shift in response to advertisements among bicultural groups. Other studies have shown that bicultural and recent immigrants are able to temporarily access the independent self when exposed to self-appeals, similarly, for the interdependent culture when exposed to other-appeals (Jimenez et al. 2013; Lau-Gesk2003). In other words, it would be interesting to study whether the salient self-construal for both nationalities could shift in response to the advertising appeal types as exhibited through their purchase intentions. Therefore, we hypothesise that the home country would moderate the effect of appeal types on green purchase intentions.

H₃ The home country moderates the effect of appeal types on green purchase intentions.

The research model is presented in Figure 1. The next section will explain the research method.

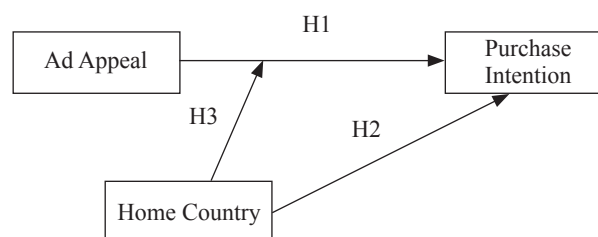


FIGURE 1. Research model

RESEARCH METHOD

This is a comparative paper, and the study adopts a method from previous relevant research (i.e. Green & Peloza 2014; Royne et al. 2012). We used two appeal types (i.e., environmental benefits and health benefits) and home countries (Malaysia and Iran). Indeed, we made two fictitious print advertisements of eco-soap, in which one reflected an other-benefit appeal, the environmental friendly aspect (i.e. save the environment), while the other promoted a self-benefit appeal (i.e. keep your skin healthy). The advertisements included a simple picture of an eco-soap along with a message. We named the self-benefit message as message 1, and the other-benefit message as message 2. Message 1 was 'Keep your skin healthy' and message 2 was 'save the environment'. An example of the advertisement appears in Appendix 1.

PROCEDURE

We collected the data using a structured survey questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered to individuals whose home countries were of Malaysia or Iran, based on a convenience sampling method. Respondents were initially given one type of advertisement (i.e. keep your skin healthy or save the environment). Respondents were asked to rate their perceptions on the types of benefit (whether they feel that the message was more about self-benefit or other-benefit) based upon the given advertisement. A 7-point Likert scale of measurement was used for rating purposes. The participants provided us with demographic information (i.e. education level and home country) in the last section of the questionnaire.

Bentler and Chou (1987) proposed that a sample size could be as low as a ratio of 5:1 between the number of respondents and items in the questionnaire. There are ten items in the questionnaire, thus a minimum of 50 responses is required. Accordingly, we administered 120 questionnaires among individuals, from which 117 responses were received with response rate of usable questionnaires of 97%. Among the respondents, 60 were Malaysians and 57 were Iranians, 59 males and 58 females, and all participants were postgraduate

students. Postgraduate instead of undergraduate students were recruited because they possess higher education background and better purchasing power to comprehend green advertising appeal. Thirty out of 60 Malaysian respondents filled out the questionnaire based on the self-benefit appeal message and 30 of them filled out the questionnaire based on the other-benefit appeal message. For Iranian respondents, 28 of them filled out the questionnaire based on the self-benefit appeal message and 29 of them filled out the questionnaire based on the other-benefit appeal message. Malaysians (representing collectivism) and Iranians (representing individualism) were invited to represent national cultural differences in terms of individualism-collectivism, a factor that might influence purchase intentions when exposed to different advertisement appeals (Aaker & Lee 2001; Hofstede 1991; Jimenez et al. 2013; Lau-Gesk 2003).

MEASURES

All items in the questionnaire except for demographic information were measured based on a 7-point Likert scale. The participants were asked to indicate their opinion (anchored by 1 = 'not at all' to 7 = 'very much' for the appeal types, and anchored by 1 = 'very unlikely' to 7 = 'very likely' for the purchase intention) about the advertisement they had been given. For appeal types, we adopted four items from White and Peloza (2009). As for the purchase intention, we adopted three measurement items from Mohr and Webb (2005). Home country was classified into two groups, Malaysia and Iran. To assess internal consistency of purchase intention, we used the coefficient Cronbach's alpha. The purchase intention variable has a coefficient Cronbach's alpha of 0.84, which demonstrates adequate internal consistency (Nunnally 1978).

MANIPULATION CHECK

In the message regarding self-benefit (i.e. keep your skin healthy), participants rated self-benefit ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.09$) higher than other-benefit ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.29$), $F(1,115) = 1.06$, $P < .05$. Likewise, in the message regarding other-benefit, respondents rated other-benefit

($M = 4.45$, $SD = 1.28$) higher than self-benefit ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.16$), $F(1,115) = 1.13$, $P < .05$. The results show that the manipulation of advertising messages appeal are appropriate for the conducted research, thus further analyses and hypotheses testings are possible. Research findings and discussion will be presented in the next section.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To test the hypotheses, we performed a two-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) that represents the two advertisement appeals (environmental benefits and health benefits) and home country (Malaysia and Iran) on the dependent variable, purchase intention. As indicated in Table 2, types of messages (i.e., self-benefit and other-benefit appeals) have a significant effect on purchase intention ($F = 4.16$, $P < 0.05$). In this sense, as shown in Table 3, the advertisements that are based on other-benefit ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.32$) stimulated higher purchase intention as compared to advertisements with self-benefit ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.22$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported: different advertising appeals would have different effects on green purchase intention. Other-benefit appeals advertising messages would stimulate a higher intention to purchase green products (Figure 2a).

Results in Table 2 show that home country also has a significant effect on green purchase intention ($F = 9.32$, $P < .05$). With reference to Table 3, Malaysian participants ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.45$) had significantly higher intention to purchase the green product than Iranian participants ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .98$) (Figure 2b). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported: there is a significant difference between Malaysians and Iranians in their green purchase intentions. The moderation analysis was performed by examining the interaction effect of a two-way ANOVA test. However, the interaction effect was not significant. Home country did not moderate the effect of appeal type on green purchase intention ($F = 1.22$, $P = .272$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. It is important to note that this study is more of a comparative study instead of an experimental study with treatment.

TABLE 2. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
| Corrected Model | 21.50a | 3 | 7.17 | 4.81 | .003 |
| Intercept | 1980.85 | 1 | 1980.86 | 1328.63 | .000 |
| Appeal Type | 6.20 | 1 | 6.20 | 4.16 | .044 |
| Home Country | 13.90 | 1 | 13.90 | 9.32 | .003 |
| Appeal type * Home Country | 1.82 | 1 | 1.82 | 1.22 | .272 |
| Error | 168.47 | 113 | 1.49 | | |
| Total | 2183.89 | 117 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 189.97 | 116 | | | |

Note: Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention; R-Squared = .113 (Adjusted R-Squared = .090)

TABLE 3. Descriptive statistics

| | | Mean | Std. Deviation | n |
|--------------|------------------------------|------|----------------|----|
| Appeal type | Self-benefits | 3.90 | 1.22 | 58 |
| | Other-benefits | 4.35 | 1.32 | 59 |
| Home country | Malaysia | 4.47 | 1.45 | 60 |
| | Student Participants | | | |
| | Iranian Student Participants | 3.78 | 0.98 | 57 |

Note: Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

The significant results are further visualised in Figure 2. Figure 2a shows the different effects between the two types of advertisement appeals, and Figure 2b illustrates the purchase intention of Malaysian and Iranian participants who were postgraduate students studying in Malaysia.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to test the hypotheses that different advertisement appeal types and nationalities (home country) would show different green purchase intentions, and we also investigated the moderating effects of home country (specifically Malaysia and Iran) on the relationship between advertisement appeal types and purchase intention. One hundred and seventeen postgraduates of both nationalities currently located in Malaysia were recruited to participate in this comparative study. Postgraduate instead of undergraduate students were recruited because they have higher education background and the purchasing power to comprehend green advertising appeal. The results support our assumptions that different advertisement appeal types and nationalities (home country) exhibit different green purchase intentions. Other-benefit appeals generated

higher purchase intentions, and this can be explained by the fact that the subjects are relatively collectivists; hence, the other-benefit appeal type would be more congruent with their interdependent self-construals. Alluding to the findings of Chang (2006), higher ad-self congruency has been shown to translate into higher purchase intentions. This suggests that ad-self congruency is an important feature in green advertising message design.

We noted that the relationship between nationalities (home country) and green purchase intention is significant in this data; Malaysian participants particularly showed significantly higher green purchase intentions than the Iranian participants. Hence, providing support for another useful application of Hofstede's national cultural dimensions in green advertising. Among others, Hofstede (1991) identified that Malaysians and Iranians differ along the dimension of individualism/collectivism. Indeed, Amirkhiz et al. (2013) found that Malaysians are more collectivist than Iranians, although they are grouped as collectivist. The higher purchase intentions among Malaysian participants could possibly be explained by the nature of a collectivist culture (e.g. De Run et al. 2010). Social norms from the community to buy green products and the desire to achieve the common goals of their community may be some of the factors that motivate their higher green purchase intentions (Huque et al. 2014). In other words, Malaysian participants have a higher tendency to follow the current societal trend of going green, and this is shown in their higher scores of purchase intentions for the eco-soap product. Iranian participants, relatively, recorded lower scores in green purchase intentions. One plausible explanation is the lower collectivism score as indicated by Hofstede's (1991) suggestion. However, there might be other factors that are outside the scope of this study and would therefore need further in-depth research. It could be that the students' purchasing power also influences the green purchase intention since green products are perceived as more expensive.

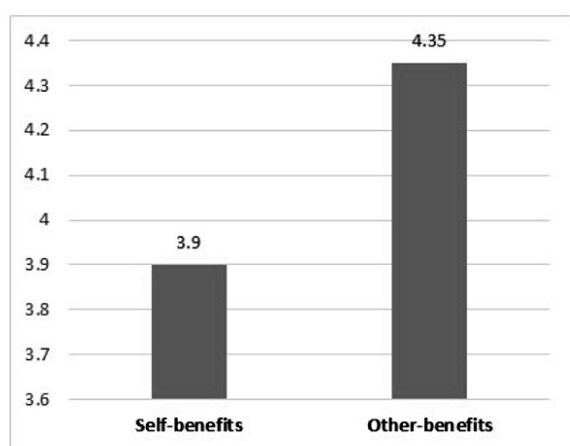


FIGURE 2a.

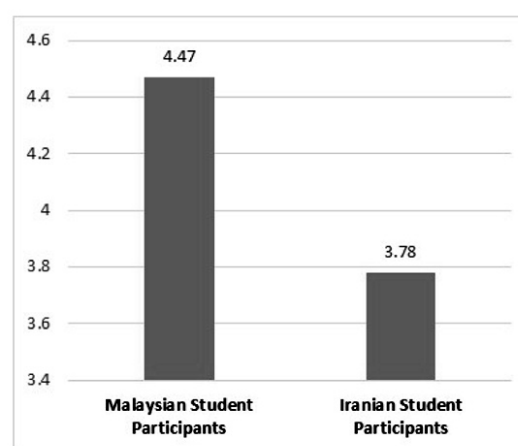


FIGURE 2b.

FIGURE 2. Green purchase intention by (a) advertisement appeal and (b) home country

Nevertheless, we found no evidence of the moderating effects of home country on the relationship between advertisement appeal types and purchase intention. Extending the finding of H₂, which supports the significant relationship between home country and green purchase intention, it seems that the direct effect is significant rather than the interactive effect. The next section is research conclusion.

CONCLUSION

This study results in several important conclusions. First, our results support the link between advertisement appeal type and purchase intention. Indeed, different types of advertisement appeal have different effects on green purchase intention. The results show that advertisement that emphasises on other-benefits has more effect on green purchase intention from the consumers' perspectives. Second, although advertisement appeal type has a significant effect on purchase intention, home country does not significantly moderate this relationship. Instead, the results indicated that home country significantly and directly influences green purchase intention.

This study has its theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by offering a model for green purchase intention that examines direct and contingent relationships. Indeed, we examined the effect of advertisement appeal (i.e., self-benefit versus other-benefit) in the advertising of environmental-friendly products on green purchase intention. We believe that better insightful information to understand green purchase intention can be obtained when the effect of advertisement appeal on green purchase intention along with home country is considered. As a result, this study broadens the conceptualisation of the impact of advertisement appeal on green purchase intention. Concerning practical implications, this study highlights the importance of advertisement appeal in green purchase intention for current businesses. In this sense, marketers and managers should be aware that consumers are more concern about other-benefits than self-benefits for green products. They should consider advertising their green products based on other-benefits. For instance, marketers, in their advertisements, should highlight on the role of green products in protecting the environment from pollution. In addition, since green purchase intention among Malaysian and Iranian participants is different, future research might want to explore possible factors that cause the differences.

As with any other research, this study has its limitations. First, the scope of our study is limited to only two types of advertising appeals. Therefore, future studies could address the relationship between advertisement appeal type and purchase intention by including more types of advertising appeals, such as the combination of self-and other-benefits appeal. Second, we only use advertisement appeal framing without treatment on

cultural effect. Further study might want to consider the cultural effect, which is individualistic versus collectivist, and frame it in the advertisement, and this can be the treatment of experimental design. For example, for the individualistic culture the advertisement emphasizes on the using of 'You', and in the collectivist culture, 'You and others/family/friends'. This framing and the blending with other appeals such as environment and cost, for example, would provide more comprehensive results.

REFERENCES

- Aaker, J.L., & Lee, A.Y. 2001. 'I' seek pleasures and 'We' avoid pains: the role of self-regulatory goals in information processing and persuasion. *Journal of Consumer Research* 28: 33-49.
- Abd Rahim, Mohd Helmi, Ros Zayanah Johari Ahmad Zukni, Fauziah Ahmad & Novel Lyndon. 2012. Green advertising and environmentally responsible consumer behavior: The level of awareness and perception of Malaysian youth. *Asian Social Science* 8(5): 46-54.
- Abu Dardak, R., Zainol Abidin, A.Z. & Ali, A.K. 2009. Consumers' perceptions, consumption and preference on organic product: Malaysian perspective. *Economic and Technology Management Review* 4: 95-107.
- Ajzen, I. 1991. The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Process* 50(2): 179-211.
- Ahmad, S.N.B. & Juhdi, N. 2010. Organic food: A study on demographic characteristics and factors influencing purchase intentions among consumers in Klang Valley, Malaysia. *International Journal of Business & Management* 5(2): 105-118.
- Amirkhiz, S.Y.Y., Bakar, K.A., Samad, A.A., Baki, R. & Mahmoudi, L. 2013. Teachers' experiential reflections on Iranian and Malaysian students' collaborative orientations. *Asian Social Science* 9(1): 271-277.
- Bagger, J. & Li, A. 2014. How does supervisory family support influence employees' attitudes and behaviors? A social exchange perspective. *Journal of Management* 40(4): 1123-1150.
- Bagozzi, R.P. 1975. Marketing as exchange. *The Journal of Marketing* 39(4): 32-39.
- Banarjee, B. & McKeage, K. 1994. How green is my value: Exploring the relationship between environmentalism and materialism. *Advances in Consumer Research* 21: 147-152.
- Banerjee, S., Gulas, C.S. & Iyer, E. 1995. Shades of green: A multidimensional analysis of environmental advertising. *Journal of Advertising* 24(2): 21-31.
- Bentler, P.M. & Chou, C.-P. 1987. Practical issues in structural modeling. *Sociological Methods and Research* 16(1): 78-117.
- Bickart, B.A. & Ruth, J.A. 2012. Green eco-seals and advertising persuasion. *Journal of Advertising* 41(4): 51-67.
- Blau, P.M. 1964. *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. Transaction Publishers.
- Chang, C.C. 2006. Seeing the small picture: ad-self versus ad-culture congruency in International advertising. *Journal of Business and Psychology* 20(3): 445-465.
- Chen, L. 2013. A study of green purchase intention comparing with collectivistic (Chinese) and individualistic (American) consumers in Shanghai, China. *Information Management and Business Review* 5(7): 342-346.

- Chen, Y.-S. & Chang, C.-H. 2012. Enhance green purchase intentions: The roles of green perceived value, green perceived risk, and green trust. *Management Decision* 50(3): 502-520.
- Chong, C. 2013. Factors influencing on purchasing behaviour of organic foods. *Human and Social Science Research* 1(2): 93-104.
- Choshaly, S.H. & Tih, S.H. 2015. Consumer confidence and environmental behavioral science. *Advanced Science Letters* 21(6):1923-1926.
- Cropanzano, R. & Mitchell, M.S. 2005. Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management* 31(6): 874-900.
- Darrat, M. 2011. A conceptual investigation into the effects of cultural animosity on middle eastern consumers' purchase intentions. *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 2(1): 5-13.
- Davis, J.J. 1994. Consumer response to corporate environmental advertising. *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 11(2): 25-37.
- De Run, E.C., Jee, T.W. & Lau, W.M. 2010. *Malaysia*. Wellington: Asia Business Research Corporation Limited.
- Eze, U.C. & Ndubisi, N.O. 2013. Green buyer behavior: Evidence from Asia consumers. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 48(4): 413-426.
- Green, R.T., Cunningham, W.H. & Cunningham, I.C. 1975. The effectiveness of standardized global advertising. *Journal of Advertising* 4(3): 25-29.
- Green, T. & Pelozo, J. 2014. Finding the right shade of green: The effect of advertising appeal type on environmentally friendly consumption. *Journal of Advertising* 43(2): 128-141.
- Hofstede, G. 1980. *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Value*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hofstede, G. 1991. *Cultures and Organizations: Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival – Software of the Mind*. London: HarperCollins.
- Homans, G.C. 1958. Social behavior as exchange. *American Journal of Sociology* 3(6): 597-606.
- Hsinhui, H. 2012. The effectiveness of environmental advertising in the hotel industry. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* 53(2): 154-164.
- Hutton, R.B. & Markley, F. 1991. The effects of incentives on environment-friendly behaviors: A case study. *Advances in Consumer Research* 18(1): 697-702.
- Huque, S.M.R., Hafeez, M.H. & Shariff, M.N.M. 2014. The role of subjective norms in theory of planned behavior in the context of organic food consumption. *British Food Journal* 116(10): 1561-1580.
- Jamian, N.F. & Tih, S.H. 2016. Managing a green campus: Motivation for Student Recycling Behavior. *Journal of Marketing Management and Consumer Behavior* 1(1):62-75.
- Jimenez, F. R., Hadjimarcou, J., Barua, M. E., & Michie, D. A. 2013. A cross-national and cross-generational study of consumer acculturation to advertising appeals. *International Marketing Review* 30(5): 418-439.
- Kahneman, D. & Tversky, A. 1979. Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk. *Econometrica* 47(2): 263-291.
- Kalafatis, S.P., Pollard, M., East, R. & Tsogas, M.H. 1999. Green marketing and Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour: A cross-market examination. *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 16(5): 441-460.
- Kareklas, I., Carlson, J.R. & Muehling, D.D. 2014. I eat organic for my benefit and yours: Egoistic and altruistic considerations for purchasing organic food and their implications for advertising strategists. *Journal of Advertising* 43(1): 18-32.
- Kareklas, I., Carlson, J. R. & Muehling, D. D. 2012. The role of regulatory focus and self-view in "Green" advertising message framing. *Journal of Advertising* 41(4): 25-39.
- Kim, J., Yang, K. & Bu, Y.K. 2013. Online retailer reputation and consumer response: Examining cross cultural differences. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* 41(9): 688-705.
- Kronrod, A., Grinstein, A. & Wathieu, L. 2012. Go Green! Should environmental messages be so assertive? *Journal of Marketing* 76(1): 95-102.
- Lafferty, B.A., Goldsmith, R.E. & Newell, S.J. 2002. The dual credibility model: The influence of corporate and endorser credibility on attitudes and purchase intentions. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice* 10(3): 1-12.
- Lau-Gesk, L.G. 2003. Activating culture through persuasion appeals: an examination of the bicultural consumer. *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 13(3): 301-315.
- Lawler, E.J. 1999. Bringing emotions into social exchange theory. *Annual Review of Sociology* 25: 217-244.
- Markus, H.R. & Kitayama, S. 1991. Culture and the self: implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review* 98(2): 224-253.
- McSweeney, B. 2002. Hofstede's model of national cultural differences and their consequences: A triumph of faith – A failure of analysis. *Human Relations* 55(1): 89-118.
- Mohr, L.A. & Webb, D.J. 2005. The effects of corporate social responsibility and price on consumer responses. *Journal of Consumer Affairs* 39(1): 121-147.
- Namias, J. 1959. Intentions to purchase compared with actual purchases of household durables. *The Journal of Marketing* 24: 26-30.
- Nunnally, J.C. 1978. *Psychometric Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Obermiller, C. 1995. The baby is sick/the baby is well: A test of environmental communication appeals. *Journal of Advertising* 24(2): 55-70.
- Olson, E.L. 2013. It's not easy being Green: The effects of attribute tradeoffs on Green product preference and choice. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 41(2): 171-184.
- Polyorat, K. & Alden, D.L. 2005. Self-construal and need-for-cognition effects on brand attitudes and purchase intentions in response to comparative advertising in Thailand and the United States. *Journal of Advertising* 34(1): 37-48.
- Porto, R.B., Oliveira-Castro, J.M.D. & Seco-Ferreira, D.C. 2011. What consumers say and do: Planned and actual amounts bought in relation to brand benefits. *The Service Industries Journal* 31(15): 2559-2570.
- Putte, B.V. 2009. What matters most in advertising campaigns?: The relative effect of media expenditure and message content strategy. *International Journal of Advertising* 28(4): 669-690.
- Rashid, N.R.N.A. 2009. Awareness of eco-label in Malaysia's green marketing initiative. *International Journal of Business and Management* 4(8): 132-141.
- Royne, M.B., Martinez, J., Oakley, J. & Fox, A.K. 2012. The effectiveness of benefit type and price endings in Green advertising. *Journal of Advertising* 41(4): 85-102.

- Sabiote, C.M., Frías, D.M. & Castañeda, J.A. 2013. The moderating effect of culture on overall perceived value in the online purchasing process. *Service Business* 7(1): 83-102.
- Schuhwerk, M.E. & Lefkoff-Hagius, R. 1995. Green or non-Green? Does type of appeal matter when advertising a Green product? *Journal of Advertising* 24(2): 45-54.
- Schwartz, A., Goldberg, J. & Hazen, G. 2008. Prospect theory, reference points, and health decisions. *Judgement and Decision Making* 3(2): 174-180.
- Sheehan, K. & Atkinson, L. 2012. Revisiting Green advertising and the reluctant consumer. *Journal of Advertising* 41(4): 5-7.
- Singelis, T.M. 1994. The measurement of independent and interdependent self-construals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 20(5): 580-591.
- Tucker, E.M., Rifon, N.J., Lee, E.M. & Reece, B.B. 2012. Consumer receptivity to Green Ads: A test of Green claim types and the role of individual consumer characteristics for Green Ad response. *Journal of Advertising* 41(4): 9-23.
- Tversky, A. & Kahneman, D. 1981. The framing of decisions and the psychology of choice. *Science, New Series* 211(4481): 453-458.
- Varadarajan, R. 2014. Toward sustainability: Public policy, global social innovations for base-of-the-pyramid markets, and demarketing for a better world. *Journal of International Marketing* 22(2): 1-20.
- White, K. & Peloza, J. 2009. Self-benefit versus other-benefit marketing appeals: Their effectiveness in generating charitable support. *Journal of Marketing* 73(4): 109-124.
- White, K. & Simpson, B. 2013. When do (and don't) normative appeals influence sustainable consumer behaviors? *Journal of Marketing* 77(2): 78-95.
- Zhang, J. 2009. The effect of advertising appeals in activating self construals: A case of bicultural Chinese generation X consumers. *Journal of Advertising* 38(1): 63-81.
- Zhang, Y. & Gelb, B.D. 1996. Matching advertising appeals to culture: The influence of products' use conditions. *Journal of Advertising* 25(3): 29-46.
- Zinkhan, G.M. & Carlson, L. 1995. Green advertising and the reluctant consumer. *Journal of Advertising* 24(2): 1-6.
- Siohong Tih (corresponding Author)
UKM-Graduate School of Business
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, MALAYSIA.
E-Mail: sh@ukm.edu.my
- Kuan-Thye Chan
UKM-Graduate School of Business
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, MALAYSIA.
E-Mail: kthyechan@hotmail.com
- Amin Ansary
UKM-Graduate School of Business
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, MALAYSIA.
E-Mail: amin.ansary1358@yahoo.com
- Ali Ahmed
UKM-Graduate School of Business
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, MALAYSIA.
E-Mail: ahelsanosi@yahoo.com

APPENDIX 1



Message 1

Self-benefit appeal



Message 2

Other-benefit appeal