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A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF ADVERTISING CREATIVITY DIMENSIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON SALES PERFORMANCE AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY


Nuraina Nadiah Rosli^{1*}, Nur Fathia Saleh², Nor Razuana Amram³, Muhammad Asyraaf Hashim⁴, Qatrunnisa Shariff⁵, Nazirul Mubin Awang Besar⁶

¹ Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kedah Branch, Sungai Petani Campus, 08400 Merbok, Kedah, Malaysia

 nrainarosli@uitm.edu.my


 <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-4355-7474>

² Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kedah Branch, Sungai Petani Campus, 08400 Merbok, Kedah, Malaysia

 nfathia@uitm.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-3771-1916>

³ Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kedah Branch, Sungai Petani Campus, 08400 Merbok, Kedah, Malaysia

 razuana@uitm.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-4258-9250>

⁴ Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kedah Branch, Sungai Petani Campus, 08400 Merbok, Kedah, Malaysia

 asyraafhashim@uitm.edu.my


 <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-0673-4651>

⁵ Faculty of Arts and Design, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kedah Branch, Sungai Petani Campus, 08400 Merbok, Kedah, Malaysia

 qatrunnisa@uitm.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-7159-3655>

⁶ Faculty of Arts and Design, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kedah Branch, Sungai Petani Campus, 08400 Merbok, Kedah, Malaysia

 nazirulab@uitm.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-8396-1760>

*Corresponding Author

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Abstract:

In the fast-paced fashion industry, a great advertisement must do more than just turn heads, it has to move the needle on sales and build lasting customer relationships. While the importance of creativity is well-recognized, there is still a missing link in understanding how originality, visual style, emotion, and clarity work together to impact a company's bottom line. This study bridges that gap by developing a framework that

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treats creative advertising as a powerful spark for consumer connection. By blending the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model with Brand Equity Theory, the research shows how specific creative triggers shift a consumer's mindset. When the right mix of aesthetic and emotional elements hits home, it builds the kind of brand equity that translates into higher purchase rates and genuine brand loyalty. Beyond the theory, this framework serves as a practical blueprint for marketers. It helps teams balance the "art" of a campaign with the "message," ensuring every creative choice serves a strategic business goal. By connecting creative stimuli directly to firm-level outcomes, the study invites future exploration into how these pillars hold up across the ever-evolving digital and traditional media landscapes.

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Introduction

In an era defined by digital transformation and information overload, creative advertising has emerged as a pivotal strategic tool for brands aiming to cut through the noise. While current literature acknowledges that advertisements must captivate attention and evoke emotional resonance to be effective, the academic discourse remains significantly fragmented. Most studies tend to treat creative dimensions such as originality, visual appeal, and message clarity as isolated variables (Paredes & Dui, 2025). This "siloed" approach fails to account for the synergistic way these elements work together to influence a consumer's journey, leaving a gap in our understanding of how a holistic creative strategy functions in a competitive marketplace. Furthermore, a persistent "black box" exists between creative execution and a firm's actual bottom line. Much of the existing research stops at measuring intermediate "mindset" shifts, such as brand attitude or message recall, rather than tangible performance indicators (Gulati & Grover, 2026). While emotional appeals are known to create meaningful consumer-brand connections (Vrtana & Krizanova, 2023), there is a striking lack of empirical and theoretical evidence linking these internal consumer responses to aggregate firm-level outcomes like sales performance and long-term customer loyalty. This disconnect is significant, without linking creative stimuli to measurable organizational results, marketing managers lack a clear roadmap for how creative investments translate into sustainable brand equity.

To address these gaps, this study moves beyond traditional, narrow measures of advertising effectiveness. By integrating the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework with Brand Equity Theory, the research proposes a unified model that connects the dots between creative stimuli and organizational performance. It theorizes that advertising creativity is not merely an aesthetic choice, but a multidimensional force that reshapes consumer internal states to drive purchase behavior. By synthesizing insights from consumer psychology and advertising effectiveness, this framework provides a necessary bridge between the "art" of advertising and the "science" of business outcomes, offering a structured lens for both scholars and practitioners to optimize creative strategies.

Literature Review

Advertising Creativity

Advertising creativity refers to the degree to which an advertisement is perceived as novel, original, and divergent from conventional messaging, enabling brands to stand out in crowded media environments. Recent literature highlights creativity as a key driver of consumer attention, emotional engagement, and brand differentiation, though its direct link to firm outcomes such as sales performance remains underexplored (Paredes & Dui, 2025). Creative ads enhance recall and deeper cognitive processing, which may facilitate consumer behavioral responses such as purchase intent and subsequent brand loyalty (Lucero & Dui, 2025). While creative advertising has been shown to strengthen brand image and perceived quality factors related to customer loyalty empirical investigations isolating creativity's direct effect on sales performance and loyalty are still limited, pointing to a need for integrated frameworks that account for multiple creative dimensions and performance outcomes (Bostancı & Dursun, 2024; Paredes & Dui, 2025).

Visual Appeal

Visual appeal constitutes the perceptual attractiveness of advertisement elements such as imagery, graphics, layout, and color schemes, which influence how consumers attend to and interpret advertising content. Recent studies show that visually appealing advertisements significantly influence attitudes and engagement by capturing attention and improving the processing of marketing messages, suggesting that visual appeal strengthens consumer brand interaction and engagement outcomes (Ramish et al., 2023; Kusumasondjaja, 2021). Visual appeal has also been found to moderate the relationship between advertising attitudes and brand loyalty or attachment, indicating that engaging visual elements can enhance the effect of favorable advertising perceptions on longer-term brand outcomes (Ramish et al., 2023). Furthermore, visual elements have been linked to emotional responses, suggesting a synergistic role in driving consumer behavior beyond mere attention capture (Riswanto et al., 2024).

Emotional Appeal

Emotional appeal in advertising refers to the use of affective cues such as joy, fear, nostalgia, or aspiration to elicit emotional responses from audiences that can influence attitudes and behaviors. Literature shows that emotional advertising enhances the depth of consumer engagement and can significantly affect purchasing intentions, affective brand evaluations, and consumer-brand relationships by forging stronger emotional connections and commitments (Mancham et al., 2025; Gasca Sanchez, 2025). Emotional appeals have been linked to increased

consumer responsiveness and irrational or intuitive decision-making processes in modern advertising environments, where emotions can influence both immediate purchase behavior and longer-term loyalty by strengthening affective bonds between consumers and brands (Gasca Sanchez, 2025; Tambunan et al., 2025). However, research also notes variations in the effect of emotional appeals across demographic groups, suggesting that consumer characteristics may moderate these relationships.

Message Clarity

Message clarity refers to the explicitness and comprehensibility of the main communication in an advertisement, which ensures that target audiences understand key brand propositions without ambiguity. Effective message clarity increases advertising persuasiveness by reducing cognitive load, enhancing trust, and strengthening consumer confidence in brand offerings, which are critical determinants of advertising success (Mushtaq & Wei, 2025; Riva et al., 2024). Clear messaging contributes to the establishment of consistent brand meaning and reduces consumer uncertainty, thereby enhancing the likelihood that advertising stimuli translate into desired consumer behaviors such as purchase and advocacy. In digital and integrated advertising environments, message clarity also interacts with creativity and visual design to optimize consumer attention and engagement outcomes.

Sales Performance

Sales performance represents tangible market outcomes attributable to marketing efforts, including revenue growth, conversion rates, and purchase frequency. Although broader marketing literature shows positive associations between effective advertising and sales metrics, advertising research suggests that creative factors such as originality and message effectiveness are among the strongest predictors of incremental sales growth (Circana, 2023). Studies demonstrate that compelling advertising content especially when enhanced by creativity and emotional resonance can translate into measurable commercial outcomes, especially when combined with digital targeting strategies (Circana, 2023). However, much of the empirical research on sales performance focuses on mediating variables such as purchase intention or engagement rather than direct links from creative advertising constructs, highlighting a gap in understanding specific mechanisms connecting advertising creativity dimensions to firm sales outcomes.

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is conceptualized as a long-term commitment to repurchase a brand and maintain a positive preference over competitors. Recent reviews emphasize the multifaceted nature of loyalty, including attitudinal and behavioral components strengthened through positive customer experiences, emotional attachment, and consistent brand engagement (Pereira, 2025). In the context of advertising, emotional and creative elements can reinforce loyalty by building stronger affective ties and enhancing brand relational value, especially in digital environments where content quality influences sustained engagement (Zhang & Abdullah, 2025). While customer loyalty has traditionally been studied as a consequence of overall brand experience, emerging research underscores the role of high-quality advertising stimuli in creating lasting consumer–brand relationships, suggesting that creative, emotionally appealing, and clearly communicated advertisements may contribute indirectly to loyalty through enhanced brand attitudes and satisfaction.

Theoretical Foundation

Stimulus Organism Response Theory

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Theory offers a foundational psychological lens for understanding how external marketing stimuli lead to internal consumer responses and subsequent behaviors. Originally articulated by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), the S-O-R framework posits that environmental stimuli (S) influence internal cognitive and affective processes (O), which in turn shape behavioral responses (R) such as purchase or loyalty behaviors. In advertising research, stimuli include creative and sensory cues embedded in advertising content such as visual appeal, emotional messaging, and clarity of communication that interact with consumers' internal psychological states (Pfiffelmann et al., 2025; Tan, 2019). Contemporary applications of the model show its effectiveness in explaining consumer reactions to advertising and digital media stimuli, where internal responses like attitudes and emotional engagement mediate the effects on behavioral outcomes (Supotthamjaree & Srinaruewan, 2018; Ul Islam & Rahman, 2017; Cao et al., 2023). Because the S-O-R framework explicitly maps the process from stimulus design to consumer outcomes, it provides a robust theoretical basis for conceptualizing how creative advertising dimensions influence both consumer psychological reactions and broader outcomes such as sales performance and customer loyalty.

Brand Equity Theory

Brand Equity Theory explains how a brand's value is embedded in consumer perceptions and how these perceptions translate into competitive advantage, financial performance, and long-term loyalty. In marketing literature, brand equity is conceptualized as the added value a brand name confers on a product or service, rooted in consumer awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and loyalty (Keller, 1993). Strong brand equity influences consumer preferences, enabling firms to command premium pricing, enhance sales performance, and cultivate enduring customer loyalty (Troiville, 2024; Gutiérrez, 2024). Recent studies emphasize the role of brand equity as a mediating construct that links marketing efforts such as creative advertising to customer outcomes, including word-of-mouth communication and loyalty intentions (Troiville, 2024). By shaping cognitive and emotional responses to advertisements, positive brand equity reinforces consumers' favorable attitudes and loyalty behavior, thereby strengthening the association between advertising creativity and business performance outcomes. In this way, Brand Equity Theory complements the S-O-R framework by highlighting why the internal interpretations of stimuli (advertising) matter for long-term commercial success and loyalty formation.

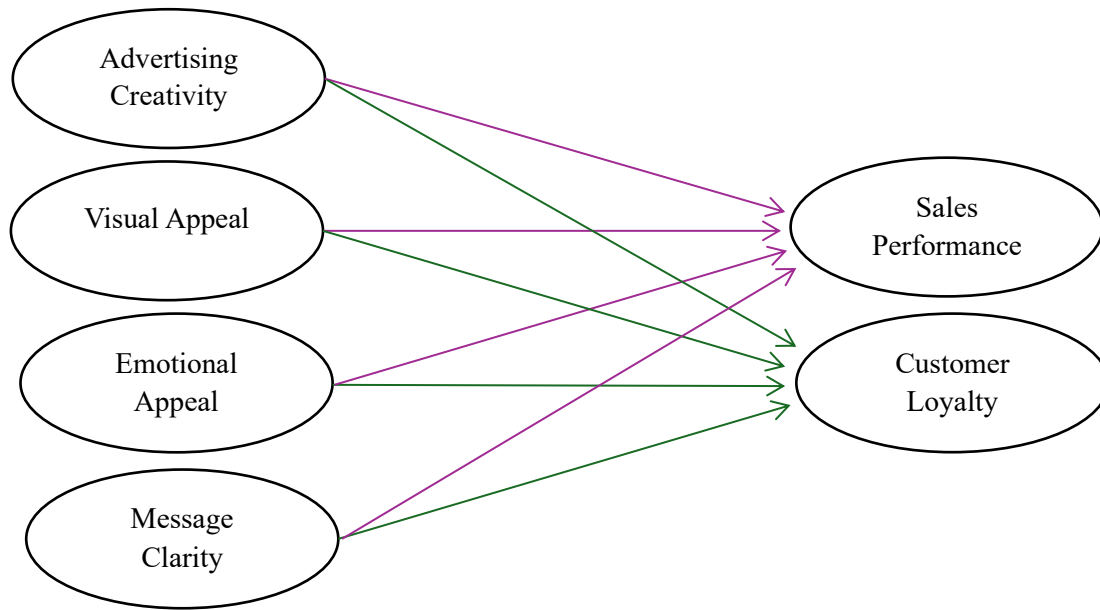


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The development of this conceptual framework begins by identifying advertising creativity, visual appeal, emotional appeal, and message clarity as the primary antecedents driving sales performance and customer loyalty. This study adopts a theory-integration design, utilizing a conceptual framework to serve as an organizing structure that visually and logically portrays the hypothesized relationships between these constructs (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2019). Rooted in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Theory, the framework positions creative advertising dimensions as environmental stimuli that influence internal consumer states (the organism), such as engagement and affective responses. These internal states, in turn, shape behavioral outcomes like purchase frequency and brand devotion (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Pfiffelmann et al., 2025). By further integrating Brand Equity Theory, the study highlights how these creative stimuli build unique, favorable brand associations that enhance long-term competitive advantage (Keller, 1993; Troiville, 2024). This dual-theory approach ensures the framework is both theoretically robust and practically relevant in today’s saturated marketing environment.

In applying these theories, the study moves beyond simple literature synthesis to provide deep theoretical insight into the mechanisms by which creativity impacts performance. The S-O-R model justifies treating advertising dimensions as external stimuli, while Brand Equity Theory explains how these stimuli aggregate into brand value that dictates consumer behavior. Each construct is operationalized through existing scholarship: advertising creativity as originality (Paredes & Dui, 2025), visual appeal as aesthetic attractiveness (Ramish et al., 2023), emotional appeal as affective engagement (Vrtana & Krizanova, 2023), and message clarity as comprehensibility (Mushtaq & Wei, 2025). By synthesizing empirical evidence, the study theorizes that a multidimensional creative stimulus extends its effects beyond mere intermediate attitudes to drive firm-level outcomes (Webster & Watson, 2002; Jaakkola, 2020). This integrative approach bridges the gap between consumer psychology and marketing performance research, providing a holistic view of the advertising-to-sales pipeline (Circana, 2023; Pereira, 2025).

From a practical standpoint, this conceptual framework offers a structured logic for marketers to design and evaluate creative efforts for maximum ROI. By identifying the distinct roles of visual, emotional, and clear communication, practitioners can tailor campaigns that move beyond attention-grabbing to actually strengthening brand equity (Troiville, 2024). The study concludes that this integrative model advances the field by uniting fragmented empirical findings into a single, testable structure. It serves as a foundation for future empirical validation, providing a rigorous roadmap for testing these propositions and contributing to evidence-based marketing. Ultimately, the design of this paper prioritizes theoretical innovation by showing how creativity acts as the primary driver for organizational growth and customer retention in a digital-first world.

Discussion

The discussion interprets the proposed relationships within the conceptual framework, illustrating how advertising creativity dimensions creativity, visual appeal, emotional appeal, and message clarity potentially influence consumer behavior and organizational outcomes. Integrating the Stimulus Organism Response and Brand Equity theories, the framework suggests that creative advertising acts as a stimulus that triggers cognitive and emotional responses in consumers, which subsequently affect purchase behavior, brand loyalty, and sales performance. From a theoretical standpoint, the multidimensional approach to advertising creativity provides a nuanced understanding of how distinct elements interact to shape consumer perceptions, extending prior studies that often treat creativity as a single construct (Gulati & Grover, 2026; Ramish et al., 2023; Troiville, 2024). Practically, the framework offers actionable insights for marketers by emphasizing the importance of balancing originality, visual appeal, emotional resonance, and message clarity to enhance engagement and strengthen brand equity. It highlights that well-crafted advertising not only attracts attention but also reinforces loyalty and drives measurable outcomes, providing a strategic tool for campaign design and brand management. Additionally, the framework sets a foundation for future empirical testing to verify the proposed relationships and explore potential mediating or moderating factors, such as consumer demographics or digital platform effects.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study develops a conceptual framework that links advertising creativity dimensions including creativity, visual appeal, emotional appeal, and message clarity to sales performance and customer loyalty. The framework contributes theoretically by combining Stimulus–Organism–Response and Brand Equity theories, offering a structured explanation of how advertising stimuli influence internal consumer states and behavior, and how these translate into organizational outcomes. Practically, it guides marketers in designing advertisements that are both engaging and effective, reinforcing brand equity and long-term loyalty. As a conceptual study, the framework is limited by the absence of empirical testing and potential variability across industries, cultures, or advertising media. Future research is recommended to empirically validate the proposed relationships, investigate potential moderating or mediating variables, and assess the framework’s applicability in diverse contexts, including digital and traditional marketing platforms, to ensure broader generalizability and practical relevance. Overall, the study provides a foundation for both scholarly inquiry and actionable marketing strategies focused on maximizing the impact of creative advertising.

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