

Charity Advertisements: Do Sad-Looking Endorsers Work? The Role of Endorsers' Emotions, Brand Awareness and Consumer's Empathy

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Abstract

To counter the declining number of donations, charities have started to invest in and use online advertising. Drawing on Ekman's discrete emotion theory, this study investigates the impact of endorsers' emotion display (sad vs. smiling) and brand awareness on consumer's empathy and resultant intentions to click on the ad, word-of-mouth communication, and donation intention in online charity advertisements. Second, it is examined whether brand awareness influences the effect of sad-looking endorsers on consumer's empathy. The results show that consumer's brand awareness drives empathy and resultant consumer responses. Sad-looking endorsers directly affect consumer responses. Brand awareness negatively moderates the impact of endorsers' emotion display on consumer's empathy. Important implications for online marketing research and charity organizations are discussed.

Keywords: *Charity Advertising; Endorsers' Emotions; Consumer Responses*

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