

Attitude Towards Advertising: A Young Generation Cohort's Perspective

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate young consumers' views about advertising from generation perspective. Specifically, it seeks to scrutinize the effects of both advertising beliefs and personal values on their attitude towards advertising. As past studies review little about the implication of generation on advertising attitude in developing markets, the study looks into the subject matter from the standpoint of a young generation cohort in Sarawak. Self-administered survey was utilized on the basis of purposive sampling strategy to sample Neoteric-inheritors (aged 15-21 as of 2013) in the state. 450 copies of questionnaire were distributed, and 384 usable copies were subsequently collected. Data was analyzed using descriptive analysis and regressions. The findings show that product information, social role/image, being good for the economy, not being materialistic and truthfulness have significant effect on Neoteric-inheritors' attitude towards advertising. Contrary to past studies, their advertising attitude is found to be predominantly formed by positive beliefs. Moreover, only internal value is found to be significant in predicting attitude though the effect is weak. The study thus provides insights into how young consumers in developing markets view advertising, and how the understanding of generation articulates the effect of advertising beliefs and personal values on attitude and behavioural intention. By understanding the embedded orientations in generation, knowledge about young consumers' attitude towards advertising, and advertising effectiveness can be further enhanced.

Keywords: Young consumer, advertising, value, belief, attitude, generation cohort

Introduction

Attitude towards advertising is generally accepted as a key indicator to advertising effectiveness (Mehta, 2000) due to its predictive relevance to behaviours (Ling, Piew and Chai, 2010; Mehta and Purvis, 1995). Such attitude is claimed to be mainly constructed by beliefs about advertising (Pollay and Mittal, 1993; Tan and Chia, 2007). When beliefs about advertising change, attitude towards it changes accordingly. It will subsequently affect purchasing intention and behaviours (Wang, Sun, Lei and Toncar, 2009). On another note, personal values are also found to have

positive relationship with views towards advertising (Brumbaugh, 2002; Kopanidis, 2009; Nairn and Berthon, 2003). Researchers have asserted that personal values provide the best reflection of human behaviours (Pitts and Woodside, 1984) as they are guiding principles in their lives (Seligman and Katz, 1996). Personal values have often been looked into to understand why certain decisions are made (Kamakura and Novak; 1992; White, 2005). Hence, both beliefs about advertising and personal values provide relevant and profound explanation to attitude towards advertising.

Past studies have used different demographic variables to assess how consumers perceive advertising (Butt and de Run, 2010, 2012; Yasin, Anwar and Sajid, 2013). However, little is known about the simultaneous effect of advertising beliefs and values on attitude towards advertising from the perspective of generation (de Run and Ting, 2013). Moreover, given most of the past studies were conducted in western countries, there has been a mounting interest to delve into the subject matter in developing markets (Fam, Waller, Ong and Yang, 2008). Furthermore, while advertising studies using general public as samples are abundant, how adolescents and young adults perceive advertising remains relatively ambiguous as they are largely assumed to be similar to adults (Wang, Holloway, Beatty and Hill, 2007). Taking the Neoteric-inheritors, a young generational cohort in Sarawak, as the target population (Ting, de Run and Fam, 2012), the purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of their beliefs about advertising and personal values on attitude towards advertising. As young consumers in this cohort are still in their formative years, the understanding of their beliefs and values provides fundamental knowledge about their attitude towards advertising and future behaviour (Pechmann, Linda, Loughlin and Frances, 2005; Rogler, 2002).

Literature review

Attitude towards advertising

Attitude towards advertising is by and large referred to as response to advertising either in favourable or unfavourable manners (Bamoriya and Singh, 2011). Moreover, attitude towards advertising also reveals the degree of involvement in advertisement (Chowdhury, Parvin, Weitenberner, and Becker, 2010). For example, when consumers express favourable attitude to an advertisement, it indicates that they are highly involved in the advertisement. Furthermore, attitude towards advertising is found to have direct effect on the effectiveness of advertising as it affects consumer purchasing intention and subsequent behaviour (Mehta, 2000; Mehta and Purvis, 1995).

However, past advertising studies do not necessarily show consistent results. Early researchers reported unfavourable attitude towards advertising, thus generating interest to further look into the phenomenon (Alwitt and Prabhaker, 1994; Mittal, 1994). In particular, studies in 1970s revealed negative trends of public attitude towards advertising (Zanot, 1984). Nevertheless, latter researchers advocated that attitude towards advertising in general was found to be largely favourable (Deshpande, Hoyer, and Donthu, 1986; Shavitt, Lowrey, and Haefner, 1998; Valencia, 1985). For example, most Americans were found to have favourable attitude towards advertising as advertisements provided information and entertainment (Shavitt et al., 1998). Notwithstanding the rise of positive attitude,