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## **HOW ADOLESCENTS VIEW ADVERTISING: THE EFFECTS OF BELIEFS AND PERSONAL VALUES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to investigate how adolescents view advertising. Specifically, the study utilizes the seven-belief factors model and the List of Values (LOVs) to look into the effects of beliefs about advertising and personal values on attitude towards advertising. Given the fact that little is known about adolescents' views on the subject matter, and how the two antecedent variables affect their attitude in emerging markets, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was adapted to determine the attitude of Neoteric-inheritors (age ranged from 15 to 21 years old in the year of 2013) towards advertising. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed in Sarawak, and 384 usable copies were subsequently collected and keyed in for analysis. The findings show that product information, social role/image, being good for the economy, not being materialistic and truthfulness have positive effect on attitude towards advertising. However, only internal value is found to be significant predictor of attitude towards advertising, albeit weak. The study thus provides insights into beliefs and attitude of adolescents towards advertising, and how the shaping of personal values may affect such attitude. Managerial implications of study are provided.

**Keywords:** Adolescent, advertising, value, belief, attitude, generation cohort

**Category:** Business

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## INTRODUCTION

Attitude towards advertising is generally accepted as a key indicator to advertising effectiveness because of its predictive quality of purchasing intention (Ling, Piew & Chai, 2010; Lutz, 1985; Mehta, 2000; Mehta & Purvis, 1995). Such attitude is claimed to be mainly constructed by belief about advertising (Tan & Chia, 2007). When belief changes, attitude towards advertising will change accordingly (Andersen, 1972). It will ultimately affect purchasing intention (Wang, Sun, Lei & Toncar, 2009). However, personal values have also been found to have effect on attitude towards advertising (Kopanidis, 2009). Researchers have asserted that personal values provide the best reflection of human behaviour, especially when it involves attitude and action (Pitts & Woodside, 1984). Personal values have often been looked into during decision making process (Kamakura & Novak; 1992; White, 2005). Hence, both beliefs about advertising and personal values are regarded as antecedents of attitude towards advertising.

Past studies have used different demographic variables to assess how consumers perceive advertising. However, little is known about attitude towards advertising and the effect of beliefs and personal values on attitude towards advertising from the perspective of generational cohort. Given most of the past studies were conducted in developed countries, there is a lack of literature about the subject matter in emerging markets. While advertising studies using university students and general public as samples are abundant, how adolescents perceive advertising remains largely unclear. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of beliefs about advertising and personal values on attitude towards advertising from the perspective of Neoteric-inheritors in Sarawak, who are still in their formative years (Ting et al., 2012).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Attitude towards Advertising*

Attitude towards advertising is referred to as response to advertising either in favourable or unfavourable manners (Bamoriya & Singh, 2011). Moreover, attitude towards advertising also reveals the degree of involvement in advertisement (Chowdhury, Parvin, Weitenberner, & Becker, 2010). For example, when consumers express favourable attitude to an advertisement, it means that they are highly involved in the advertisement. Furthermore, attitude towards advertising is found to have effect on the effectiveness of advertising as it affects consumer purchasing intention and behaviours (Lutz, 1985; Mehta, 2000; Mehta and Purvis, 1995).

However, past advertising studies did not necessarily show consistent results. Early researchers have reported unfavourable attitude towards advertising (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1994; Mittal, 1994). Studies in 1970s found negative trends of public attitude towards advertising (Zanot, 1984). Nevertheless, latter researchers countered the earlier findings as they found attitude towards advertising is largely favourable (Deshpande, Hoyer, & Donthu, 1986; Shavitt, Lowrey, & Haefner, 1998; Valencia, 1985). For example, most Americans are found to have favourable attitude towards advertising as advertisements provide information and entertainment (Shavitt et al., 1998). Similarly, Malaysians in Selangor are also found to have favourable attitude towards advertising in recent studies (Munusamy & Hoo, 2007; Yaakop, Hemsley-Brown, & Gilbert, 2011).

### *Beliefs about Advertising and Personal Values*

The seven-belief factors model by Pollay and Mittal's (1993) is adopted in the study to decompose attitude towards advertising due to its widespread use in advertising studies (Korgaonkar, Silverblan & O'Leary, 2001). The seven belief factors can be categorized into two groups, which are personal uses and