ADVERTISERS’ TACTICS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS ADVERTISEMENTS: A COMPARISON OF TWO ETHNICITIES

By

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(2002)
I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a research paper for the Degree of Corporate Master in Business Administration.

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I hereby declare that this research is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references and a bibliography is appended.

Signature : 
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ABSTRACT

The paper determines to discover Iban and Chinese beliefs of the tactics that advertisers use and the overall attitude towards advertisements through a specially designed questionnaire. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) softwares. The study would also like to see if ethnic identification influences the ethnics’ beliefs and skepticism towards advertisements. Questionnaires answered by 500 respondents that comprises of 250 Iban and 250 Chinese respondents revealed that respondents overall seem to state that tactics utilizing cartoon characters are the most effective (scores the highest in all categories) in the eight intended effects measured. The study also indicated that Chinese are more skeptical than Iban towards advertisements and that those weakly identified with Chinese scores the highest as most skeptical followed by strongly identified with Chinese, weakly identified with Iban and strongly identified with Iban. This suggests that ethnic identification does influence their belief and attitude toward ads. The findings can be utilized by the marketers especially those interested in ethnic advertising or target marketing to improve their overall advertising designing and strategy. It could also be a basis for social educators to increase the dissemination of persuasion knowledge and to conduct training in coping up with tactics for the two ethnic groups.
ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kepercayaan kaum Iban dan Cina terhadap taktik-taktik yang digunakan oleh pengiklan dan sikap keseluruhan kedua-dua buah kaum tersebut terhadap iklan. Kepercayaan dan sikap mereka telah diukur melalui borang soal-selidik yang direka khas dan maklumat yang diperolehi dianalisa menggunakan perisian “Statistical Package for Social Science” (SPSS) dan “One-way Analysis of Variance” (ANOVA). Kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengetahui sama ada persamaan kaum atau etnik juga mempengaruhi kepercayaan dan sikap kedua-dua kaum tersebut. Hasil daripada 500 soal-selidik yang diahigraph kepada 250 orang kaum Iban dan 250 orang kaum Cina menunjukkan secara keseluruhan responden menyatakan taktik yang paling efektif daripada pengukuran lapan kesan yang diinginkan adalah taktik yang menggunakan karakter kartun (mencapai markah yang tertinggi dalam semua kategori). Hasil kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa kaum Cina lebih skeptikal terhadap iklan daripada kaum Iban. Kaum Cina yang mempunyai kurang persamaan etnik dengan bangsa Cina telah mencapai markah skeptikal yang tertinggi diikuti oleh kaum Cina yang mempunyai banyak persamaan etnik dengan bangsa Cina, seterusnya kaum Iban yang mempunyai banyak persamaan etnik dengan bangsa Iban dan akhirinya diikuti dengan kaum Iban yang mempunyai kurang persamaan etnik dengan bangsa Iban. Ini bermakna, persamaan etnik ada mempengaruhi kepercayaan dan sikap kedua-dua kaum tadi terhadap iklan. Hasil penemuan kajian ini boleh digunakan oleh para pemasaran yang berminat kepada bidang pemasaran yang tertumpu kepada sesuatu kaum untuk memperbaiki keseluruhan rekabentuk dan strategi pengiklanan mereka. Penemuan ini juga boleh digunakan oleh pengajar sosial sebagai asas untuk meningkatkan penyebaran pengetahuan mengenai dorongan iklan kepada kedua-dua kaum tersebut dan mengadakan sesi latihan dalam menggunakan taktik-taktik bagi mengawal atau mengatasi dorongan-dorongan iklan tersebut.
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INTRODUCTION

There are various explanations as to why marketers are interested in what different ethnic groups think of advertising. Targeted advertising to ethnic groups is vigorously promoted (Dunn, 1992; Steere, 1995; Mummert, 1995; Holland and Gentry, 1999) and ethnic groups have become drivers for several marketing trends (Berman, 1997). There is a proliferation of ethnic media and ethnic differentiated products (Berman, 1997) that it is significant for a marketer to know the beliefs of an ethnic group towards adverts.

Each ethnic group has specific wants and buying habits. Many marketers of food, clothing, furniture and other products, specially designed products and promotions to one or more of this group (Kotler and Armstrong, 1994). Ethnic advertising is certainly not a temporary phase (Dunn, 1992) and the ethnic markets in the United States are large and growing (Mummert, 1995). The explosive growth of ethnic media outlets especially in the United States (Schmuckler, 1995) allows for such targeted advertisements. As ethnic groups are subculture that provides more specific identification and socialization for its members, it creates a homogenous group that can be segmented and targeted (Kotler et al., 1999).

Sarawak, the largest state in Malaysia, is a multiethnic society. It has a population of approximately 2,001,100 people (Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2000). More than 30 ethnic groups live together harmoniously in Sarawak including 21 native ethnic groups. Even with such diversity, individual groups have retained their cultural identity. The main groups are the Iban, Chinese, Malay, Bidayuh, Melanau, Indian and the many smaller tribes who make up the Orang Ulu.

Iban, the biggest ethnic group in Sarawak, with population approximately 584,500 people (Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2000). They migrated to Sarawak from the 16th to the 18th century and populated the rural areas of Sri Aman division (Austine, 1974) and most of them dwell in longhouses. They are infamously known as headhunters or Sea Dayak, people with rough character and least likely to be educated. However, from the late 19th
In the 19th century onwards, many of them have migrated to the urban areas and are highly educated but still retain their ethnic identity. Sarawak Chinese are the early and dominant businessmen in Sarawak. They migrated from China during the pre-independence era (before 1963). Chinese who immigrated to Sarawak are almost exclusively from the Southeastern provinces of Kwangtong, Fukien and Kwangsi. The reasons for their migration are mainly due to population pressure and poverty. They consist of Hokkien, Hakka, Foochow, Teochew, Hainanese, Henghua and Cantonese (Lam, 1989). Before independence, they started off as farmers and miners of gold and antimony but many of them changed their occupation to traders later on in Kuching. The older generations are not educated but in the 20th century majority of them are educated. Today, the Chinese hold an important role in urban industries. Over 80% of those engaged in commerce in Sarawak over these years were Chinese.

Advertisements in Iban language that is targeted at the Iban are not many. The main medium used is radio advertisements in Iban language. Posters in Iban language is normally used for the promotion of alcohol drinks like Guinness Stout and Anchor Beer and is always linked to the Iban’s annual celebration after harvesting which is Gawai Dayak. However, the scenario is different for the Chinese. Advertisements in Chinese language targeted at the Chinese are many. The mediums used range from newspapers, magazines, posters, company signage to radio and television advertisements. Among the Chinese newspaper circulated in Kuching city are the International Daily News, Swee Hua Daily News, Sin Chew Daily News and Berita Petang.

The purpose of the present study is to discover what are the two main ethnic groups of Sarawak views of advertising. More specifically, the focus will be on their beliefs of the tactics that advertisers use and their overall attitude towards advertisements.

**Problem Statement**

What is the Iban and Chinese beliefs of the intended effects from the tactics that advertisers use and their overall attitudes toward advertisements?
Background of Problem

Beliefs of Advertisers Tactics and Attitudes toward Advertisements

Research on ethnic view of advertising in Sarawak is nearly non-existent. Therefore, no one can really say how the Iban and Chinese in Sarawak see advertisement or what are their beliefs of the advertisers' tactics. This brings us to the next point, which is inline with marketing communication requirement. Successful marketing communication strategy (e.g. using advertising) requires an understanding of consumer behavior. But consumer behavior is influenced by their perception and belief (Shimp, 1993). Thus, before an advertiser even prepare the message or choose the appropriate media or medium, he or she must first of all understand or have some knowledge of both the ethnic group's beliefs of advertisers tactics and their attitudes towards advertisements.

In a develop country such as the United States, marketers are increasing their efforts on target marketing or advertising to a specific group. The rationale behind the move is that this ethnic market is becoming more and more important. On one hand, many Americans, see this as a positive response to growing market diversity and freedom (Berman, 1991). On the other hand, there are criticisms especially from religious leaders, consumer groups and health activists (Ringold, 1995). As consumer power increase, these racial or ethnic minorities no longer wait patiently for companies to discover them but actively demand marketers' attention (Zuckoff, 1992). Repeatedly, African American, Asian and Hispanic business leaders state that these consumers, like other segments of the population, respond best to targeted offerings (Astor et al., 1982). As the rapid growth of this market continues, Legette (1993) stated that enterprising companies that target this market would have a competitive advantage.

Looking at this trend, there is a good reason and a dire need to conduct research on ethnics view of advertising in Sarawak. This is to prepare Sarawak and its marketers if the market moves in the similar directions because Sarawak is a state, which is rich with diverse ethnic groups.
Theoretical Perspective

Those who are for target marketing hold a common belief of a competent consumer model that suggests that consumers are generally skeptical of commercial information, recognizing its limitations and usefulness. That is, consumers are skeptical of marketing communications in general yet willing to use commercial information when it provides valuable information. They are aware of sellers' incentives to exploit their ignorance and despite that still want products and services that meet their needs. (Baucer, 1964; Calfee and Ringold, 1992, 1994). Being skeptical is a good mean of consumer's self-check or judgement towards persuasive attempts. Supporters of the economic theory of information (EOI) have also long held that consumers are skeptical of advertising (Nelson, 1970). On the contrast, those who are against target marketing holds a common belief to the vulnerable consumer model (Baucer, 1964; Calfee and Ringold, 1992), which characterizes consumers as limited in their ability to process information relevant to their own welfare. Thus advertising is a powerful influence that consumers are ill prepared to resist and sellers always deceive consumers (Leventhal, 1964). Consistent with those who are against, some see target marketing as a manipulative practice that take advantage on the vulnerability of a particular segments (Hacker, Collins and Jacobson, 1987).

However, according to Stewart and Rice (1992), there is no evidence to suggest that vulnerability to persuasive communication is associated with race or ethnicity. In this research we would like to see if this is true or maybe one of the ethnic group believe most of advertisement claims. Hence, this research could be an evidence from the theoretical point of view, whether for or against Stewart and Rice’s (1992) suggestion. If it is true that the vulnerability is associated with ethnicity, then it will also be an issue from the social perspective.

Social and Business Perspective

In the United States, some in the Congress has engaged in efforts to ban or restrict advertising aimed at a particular group. This is because the group is at risk, that is, more prone than others in
society to marketers’ influence (Amos et al., 1990). Moreover, Sowell (1981) has pointed out, rather than recognizing the rights of others to make choices that reflect economic and social preferences fundamentally at odds with their own, critics have sought to curtail these choices via government intervention. The consumer’s right to information and to the freedom of choice it ensures is not well served by proposals to curtail target-marketing activities. Thus, in suggesting the public policy perspective we will also consider the customer’s right and freedom of choice. Businesses need to understand the similarities and differences between the ethnic groups. There are also good reasons for businesses to be interested in ethnic views of advertising because there may be different levels of knowledge, beliefs and attitudes for different ethnicities. The understanding will facilitate them to better market, advertise and position their products.

In Sarawak, Iban and Chinese put together make around 56% of the total population of 2 million people (Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2000). Therefore, the two ethnics are undeniably an important market segment in Sarawak. Hence, it would be worthwhile for businesses to look at their beliefs and attitudes.

**Purpose of Study**

This research desires to discover the views of Iban and Chinese towards advertisements in Sarawak. It also determines to know their beliefs of the advertisers’ tactics. The objective of the study is to provide insight and answers to the following questions:

1. What are the two ethnic’s beliefs of the tactics that advertisers use?
2. What are these ethnic group’s overall attitudes toward advertisements?

**Scope of Study**

The subjects of the study are the Iban and Chinese from the general public who are working with the government or private sector, housewives and/or college students, and are exposed to advertisements. Their attitudes and skepticisms on the advertisements and their beliefs of the effects of advertiser tactics are obtained.
The area of study is confined to Kuching City. Kuching is the state capital for Sarawak (Sarawak Tourism Board, 2000). Kuching has the population of 509,374 people, which is about 25% of Sarawak total population (Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2000). Kuching City covers an area of 431.01 km square (Land and Survey Department, 2002), that is, slightly less than the size of Singapore. The city is divided into two jurisdictions; Kuching City North and Kuching City South. The areas included in Kuching City are Petra Jaya, Santubong, Satok, Bako, Matang, Kuching central, Pending, Padungan, Batu Lintang and Stampin. In Kuching there are 47,597 Iban and 197,955 Chinese (Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2000).

**Importance of Study**

By answering the research questions mentioned earlier, this research paper can highlight to the advertiser, marketer, businesses or the client, on the general effectiveness of advertisement. The research findings will also help the advertiser and client to better understand the Iban and Chinese in Sarawak, therefore, hopefully, able to formulate more effective advertising and positioning strategies in Sarawak. Therefore it is useful for those clients, advertisers or marketers who are interested in target marketing.

The study will give an insight to any reader on the belief and skepticism of Iban and Chinese towards advertisement. It can also highlight to the authority, policy makers, educators or regulators on the need to educate and protect specific ethnic group from advertisement effect. It will contribute to knowledge on ethnicity and advertising in Sarawak. This research can be an evidence to test the theory of the competent and vulnerable consumer model on Sarawak ethnic groups.

**Limitations**

There are three main constraints or limitations in completing this research. Firstly, is the sampling method. Non-probability convenience sampling was used to select the 500 respondents in Kuching City. The respondents were from several government departments, private companies, religious associations,
housewives and colleges. In this type of sampling only specific samples were interviewed rather than the general samples. Secondly, the sample size chosen for this research does not represent the actual population in Sarawak. It is based on the affordability of the researcher in term of cost and time. Thirdly, the lack of information on the advertisements issues for Iban and Chinese in Sarawak constraints the authors discussion of the issue. This thesis will allow for more published information on the issue.

**Definitions**

Advertisements are specific messages that someone or some organization has placed in an attempt to persuade an audience. They are sometimes referred to as the copy of commercials. It is the final product of the advertising process. This is the print or audible message from the advertising medium. It is a form of either mass communication or direct to customer communication e.g. television, newspapers, magazines or radio (Hajah Ubaidah and Rozita, 2000).

Perception is the process by which an individual selects, organizes and interprets information inputs to create a meaningful picture. It is what the respondents perceived or thinks after they viewed or heard the advertisement. It is also the picture formed or message that the respondent receives in their mind (Kotler, Swee, Siew and Chin, 1999).

Belief is a descriptive thought that a person holds about something (Kotler and Armstrong, 1994). Attitude is a person’s consistently favorable or unfavorable evaluations, feelings and tendencies towards an object or idea (Kotler and Armstrong, 1994) whereas attitude toward advertising is defined as a general predisposition in the process of advertising messages (Boush et al., 1994).

Skepticism on the other hand is the negative thinking (critical, sarcastic or pessimistic) that the respondent thinks about the advertisement (Boush et al., 1994) while skepticism towards advertising is whether respondents approach advertisements with an informed discerning mind or are predisposed to reject or to believe whatever is shown on advertisement (Boush et al., 1994).
Beliefs of advertisers’ tactics and attitudes toward ads

Research on beliefs and attitudes toward advertising are rooted in the basic literature on the different level of knowledge and skepticism (Boush et al., 1994). It is also rooted in the idea that people develop a “schemer schema” (Wright, 1986), that is, beliefs about the tactics that advertisers use to try to persuade them. As such, this section reviews the literature in relation to the study.

Past research on beliefs and attitudes about advertising has concentrated on children and are generally concerned with whether children need protection from advertisers persuasive attempts (Robertson and Rossiter, 1974, 1976; Rossiter, 1979; Ward, Wackman, and Wartella, 1977). However, there are not much research done internationally and none in Sarawak on different ethnic group’s beliefs and attitudes. Sapiro (2000) study is the closest to an ethnic based study. Sapiro (2000) discovered that when the public watches TV it seems that different nationals have different interpretation of advertisements. Sapiro (2000) showed that westerners believe most adverts as unreal whereas Arabs believe otherwise.

A longitudinal study of middle school students indicated that the more older the students become, which moves in the direction of adult understanding, the more knowledge of advertisers’ tactics they acquire. This therefore makes them more skeptical towards advertisements (Boush et al., 1994). The issue of how older children might respond to advertising is rarely examined (Linn, Delucchi and de Benedictus, 1984) and more so for the issue on the response from adults of different ethnicities.

The theory of Economics of Information predicts that consumers will be most skeptical of advertising claims they can never verify and least skeptical of claims they can easily and inexpensively verify prior to purchase (Ford, Smith and Swasy, 1990). Consumers’ differential skepticism for research, experience and credence claims is tested in an experience-based study using adult consumers. Results offer clear support for Nelson’s (1970) hypotheses that consumers are more skeptical of experience than
search attribute claims and more skeptical of subjective than objective claims. On the other hand, Darby and Karni (1973) hypothesis is that consumers will be more skeptical of credence than experience attribute claims or that consumers will not be less skeptical of experience for low-priced goods. The results indicated that consumers are differentially skeptical of advertising.

There is some degree of skepticism towards “green” marketing claims. Marketers’ claims about the environmental effects of products and their packaging are becoming more pervasive. Consumers’ organizations, government and marketers have long realized that consumer’s receive such claims with some degree of skepticism (Mohr and Eroglu, 1998). For cigarette advertising, teenagers are found to be three times stronger than adults in their sensitivity towards those advertisements (Pollay et al., 1996).

Skepticism can be the result of the defensive consumers who tries to resist the perceived hidden tactics and persuasive efforts of advertisers. Consumers may challenge claims even if they have no rational reason for doing so (Koslow, 2000). Consumers are skeptical of advertising not simply because advertisers sometimes lie or because their arguments lack credibility in the marketplace but also because skepticism helps individuals resist or cope with an advertising system that is frequently perceived as trying to sell to them rather than to inform them (Koslow, 2000).

Boush et al. (1994) noted especially that self-esteem is positively associated with advertising criticism while consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence is negatively related to advertising skepticism. Boush et al. (1994) suggests the method on how to measure the beliefs about advertisers’ tactics and effects. Belief about advertiser tactics were assessed by asking respondents to rate six different tactics in terms of how hard advertisers were trying to accomplish eight different effects. Meanwhile, skepticisms were assessed by asking respondents to rate their level of agreement on five-point scales on the statements made about advertisements. This will be replicated in this study to determine if the finding holds.
Previous research on development of consumer knowledge (Rodder and Whitney, 1987) suggests that children develop increasingly sophisticated and complex knowledge structure as they grow. This knowledge structure contains beliefs about the tactics and effects by advertisers. Marketers also wish to know this knowledge structure so that through educational programs they can help kids to become “critical consumers” of mass media content. In the case of naïve ethnic groups, such educational programs may help them to also become critical consumers. Social groups like the religious, consumers and health leaders have criticized target marketing. The targets of this form of marketing activities are specific ethnic groups. Their criticisms are the ads are misleading, misinforms, targeting youths by featuring young models, de-emphasizing the product itself by directing the focus, frequency and overtime, manipulative, bias, low credibility, distrust, inducing and skeptical of the promises. Critics of target marketing must realize that the process has been recognized as a positive response to growing market diversity and freedom. In addition, criticism is more common in the case of products such as alcohol and cigarettes, which are viewed negatively for social and health concerns (Ringold, 1995). Other unintended effects of advertisements are that it promotes materialism (Goldberg and Gorn, 1978), status seeking, social stereotypes, short sightedness, selfishness, a preoccupation with sexuality, conformity (Pollay, 1986). Others have stated that the main unintended effects of advertisements are the narrow view of reality (Pollay, 1986; Richins, 1991, 1996; Ottesen, 1981), affecting values, taste, and culture (Ottesen, 1981; Pollay, 1986). Goldberg and Gorn (1978) studied the unintended effects of advertising on children and proposed that it makes children more materialistic and less desirable of social interactions, increases parent child conflict, and lead to a disappointed and unhappier child.

One of the major criticism on target marketing is that the manufacturers of alcohol and cigarettes are intentionally directing marketing efforts (i.e. advertising) to specific demographic groups; racial or ethnic minorities (Pollack, 1999; Anonymous, 1999). As a result, this group is at risk- that is, more prone than
others in society to marketers’ influence. Some in Congress have engaged in efforts to ban or restrict advertising aimed at particular groups. There are investigations carried out on these alcohol and cigarettes manufacturers by the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and these investigations have been interpreted as responses to target marketing activities (Amos et al., 1990). Tobacco industry has attempted to allay the fears of youth by de-emphasizing the product itself in favor of healthy images: such as adventure, recreation and romance (Albright et al., 1988).

Moore and Mochis (1978) concluded that adolescents have generally negative attitudes towards advertising. In particular, advertising was found to have low credibility. This skepticism for advertising may result in adolescent tuning out most advertising they are exposed to. Fisher and Magnus (1981) reported that as many as 80% of children aged 10 and 11 asserted that the purpose of cigarette advertising is to induce people to smoke. The study also shows that children know the tactic of the tobacco company in that they believe that the sponsorship of sport is really just another way of advertising. There was considerable skepticism about the promises that beer commercials make about the popularity, fun and good times to be had if you buy their brand of beer.

There is also skepticism for health claims. There were significant differences in the consumers’ beliefs (more skeptical) for three health claims (Mazola, Campbell’s and Lean Cuisine) that had been challenged by both FTC and consumers groups (Mazis and Raymond, 1997). In spite of this, the findings of this study have implications for understanding the role of education in reducing consumer misconceptions of health. Mazis and Raymond (1997) study supports the view that increased consumer knowledge of nutrition information may reduce consumer’s misperceptions of health claims whether in food ads or food labels.

Policy makers at Federal Trade Commission are using Economics of Information theory as a basis for establishing advertising regulation policy (Ford and Calfee 1986). Economics of Information theory predicts that when consumer can easily evaluate the truthfulness of the advertising claims before purchase, the claims will most often be true because the market will discipline advertisers who are untruthful. The FTC has
adopted this logic regarding deceptive advertising policy and has indicated it is unlikely to get involved “when market incentives place strong constraints on likelihood of deception” (Federal Trade Commission, 1983 p. 693). Since the early 1980s, the FTC has relied on Economics of Information theory about consumer skepticism of advertising claims as justification for ignoring potentially deceptive advertising matters (Ford and Calfee, 1986). It is important to note that prohibitions by the critic of target marketing are unlikely to enlarge the set of options available to minority consumers. Government interventions have typically eliminated options without creating new ones and reductions in consumer welfare (Sowell, 1975, 1981). Civil rights means that all individuals are treated the same under the law, regardless of their race, religion, gender, other social category, or preferences in the marketplace (Ringold, 1995). Target marketing of socially acceptable products (e.g. toys, health care, and financial services) has been praised as maximizing choices and enhancing consumer welfare. The practice has drawn fire only when the product being marketed is controversial or problematic (Ringold, 1995).

Although some members of all groups are less well equipped to navigate the marketplace, there is no empirical basis on which to characterize members of racial or ethnic minorities as vulnerable consumers. On the contrary, consumers, regardless of gender and race, appreciate the various roles played by advertising and health consequences of controversial behaviors. Those who suggest that government shall decide what speech certain segments of citizens should hear and what products they should be allowed to buy decline to consider the sophistication and knowledge of the public, more important, their civil rights (Ringold, 1995).

Consumer may seek the persuasion knowledge for evaluating claims about the product or services, judging the advertiser or because of their interest in marketing. The persuasion knowledge influences the consumer response. Persuasion knowledge model is a model of how people’s persuasion knowledge influences their responses to persuasion attempts, to refine consumer attitude towards product, marketer and advertiser, develop the ability to know the difference between self-generated response and influenced response and develop coping tactics (Wright, 1985). In addition, the Elaboration Likelihood Model proposes that
sometimes people are influenced mainly by "peripheral cues" in a message and that peripheral cues include any variable capable of affecting persuasion without scrutiny of the message arguments on the topic (Areni and Lutz, 1988). Brucks, Armstrong and Goldberg (1988) argued insightfully that detailed knowledge about advertising tactics is needed in order to cope well with advertising.

**Business Perspective**

Demographers in US predict the growing importance of ethnic group and minority racial group as a market by early of the next century (Fisher, 1991; Jones, 1992) and even in the workforce by the year 2000 (Novak, 1992). Predictably, manufacturers, retailers and service providers also have redoubled their efforts to market more effectively to ethnic and racial minorities (Yarrow, 1991; Zuckoff, 1992). To many, target marketing is corporate America's response to living in the age of diversity (Berman, 1991), and it has been praised in conjunction with the development and marketing of clothing, education programs, food, health care, mortgages, personal care products and toys for minorities. Targeted advertising to ethnic groups is vigorously promoted now (Dunn, 1992; Steere, 1995; Mummert, 1995; Holland and Gentry, 1999) and ethnic groups have become drivers for several marketing trends (Berman, 1997). There is a proliferation of ethnic media and ethnic differentiated products (Berman, 1997). Each ethnic group has specific wants and buying habits. Many marketers of food, clothing, furniture and other products, specially designed products and promotions to one or more of this group (Kotler and Armstrong, 1994). Ethnic advertising is certainly not a temporary phase (Dunn, 1992) and the ethnic markets in the United States are large and growing (Mummert, 1995). The explosive growth of ethnic media outlets especially in the United States (Schmuckler, 1995) allows for such targeted advertisements. As ethnic groups are subculture that provides more specific identification and socialization for its members, it creates a homogenous group that can be segmented and targeted (Kotler et al., 1999).

In a develop country such as the United States, they are increasing their efforts on target marketing or advertising to a specific group.
The rationale behind the move is that this ethnic market is becoming more and more important. As consumer power increase, these racial or ethnic minorities no longer wait patiently for companies to discover them and actively demand marketers’ attention (Zuckoff, 1992). Repeatedly, African American, Asian and Hispanic business leaders state that these consumers, like other segments of the population, respond best to targeted offerings (Astor et al., 1982). As the rapid growth of this market continues, Legette (1993) has written that enterprising companies that target this market will have a competitive advantage.

**Theoretical Perspective**

Societies that have had less experience to a medium may be more naïve with respect to advertising persuasion knowledge (Massery, 1993). Robertson and Rossiter (1974) suggest that as children age they increasingly attribute persuasive intent to commercials, believe commercials less, like commercial less, and are less likely to want the products advertised. Skepticism is conceptualized as an outcome of the socialization process, a negatively valenced attitude learned through interaction with the three socialization agents: parents, peer and the mass media (Mangleburg and Bristol, 1998).

Those who are for the Economic of Information theory have long held that consumers are skeptical of advertising (Akerlof, 1970). Researchers have asserted that consumers do more than simply distrust advertisers. It has been suggested that consumers speculate about the motives and practices of advertisers, that consumers appreciate when advertisers have the incentive to speak truthfully because the market will inflict penalties on untruthful behavior, and that consumers believe that sellers take consumer perception of advertising into account (Wright, 1986).

A majority of consumers view advertising as an essential source of useful product information and simultaneously appreciate advertising’s role as persuader. Thus, consistent with the skepticism predictions of Economics of Information, relatively small minority of consumers believes that advertising is completely truthful. This is not to say that consumers find little merit in advertising overall. In fact, the majority of consumers seem to feel that the benefits of advertising outweigh the costs.