

Antecedents of Attitude towards Online Advertisement: Evidence from Malaysia

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Abstract

Since the emerging power of internet and the power of globalization have led the change the mode of advertisement in relation to the mode of growing number of online literate people, the objective of the paper is to reveal the relative importance of various antecedents of attitude towards the online advertisement. Both confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis have been used in the study while Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach is used to test the hypothesis between endogenous and exogenous variables. Responses are collected from over 300 Malaysian general internet users. The study finds the positive association between the attitudes of internet users with the antecedents like informativeness, hedonism and credibility while the importance of association is not identical for all of the cases which may be implied in managing strategy of the practitioners in the real field of advertisement, particularly in Malaysia.

Keywords: Antecedents, attitude, online advertising, Malaysia

Introduction

Due to market globalization, a large number of business entity need to move around the word from their typical bases, both culturally and geographically. Despite the growing challenges, this new market and its commercial derivatives open the door of opportunities (Beard, 2003). To cope up with the growing competition, advertisement becomes an important cue for the companies not only to grow but also to sustain. For the development of communication and information technologies (ICT), the

conventional means of advertising needs to be modified and changed. (Mehta, 2008) Due to the presence of internet based advertising, meaningful growth of the industry has been shown.

Similarly, marketers or advertisers have become more enthusiastic because of the high returns of internet advertisement in terms of revenue and customer satisfaction. To justify the effectiveness of online advertising, individual attitude is treated as very important factors. Use of technology has become very common tools as a medium of shopping experience for the consumers (Bradely, 2011). Consumer buying process is changed due to the increasing internet usage (Wasserman, 2006), these change at marketing communication in broad and at advertisement in particular both in execution and philosophy lead the social relationship as well as people's way of living into the new era.

This evolution illustrates the growing importance of having research on consumer behavior particularly consumer attitude and the antecedents of attitude towards online advertising in accordance with its influence in human interaction where it takes place (Munusamy et al, 2007).

Background of the study

Academia is not reluctant in exploring the individual attitude towards advertising, for an instance, examining the attitude of students towards advertising (Beard, 2003). Determining consumer attitude towards a specific country or product and the attitude of the business executive toward advertising (Shiu, 2009), and peoples attitude towards

industrial advertisement (Millar and Waller, 2004)

At recent time, advertising with new media like internet, movie, mobile devices have been studied to explore its effectiveness and people attitude toward these trend. However, lack of research has been found in developing nations and considered as insufficient to determine the antecedents of attitude towards online advertising in particular (Chan and Michel, 2004). Malaysia has no exception in this regard. Fundamentally, attitude of internet users is considered as crucial to design effective advertisement as a useful promotion and communication tools. Hence, determining the relative importance and usefulness of various antecedents of advertisement may give the right cue to marketer to manage and implement the right message and advertisement design (Tsang, Ho, and Liang, 2004).

Attitude definition and characteristics

Attitude is addressed as the state of minds construct which is latent in nature (Shiu, 2009). This definition focuses cognitive system as an important element. Many of other studies define attitude as a non dimensional concept (O'cass, 2004). Kotler and Keller (2006) identified attitude as emotional feelings, enduring unfavorable and favorable evolution and action tendencies to an idea or object that an individual poses. In the context of consumer behavior, attitude is defined as the consistent unfavorable or favorable thought towards a given object which is necessarily to be a learned predisposition. Precisely, attitude as a whole is an enduring justification or an idea or object for an instance, a person service or a brand (Tsang, Ho, and Liang, 2004).

Advertising and consumer attitude

In comparison to last decade, consumer has more advertisement option to be attached with now. Most of the advertisement is

designed with the global application as it can be viewed from anywhere. To improve the useful advertising strategy, marketers need to understand consumer behavior, profile and their attitude toward the advertisement (Barrio, 2003). A review of the literature suggests that the attitude of the consumers is one of the core indicators for justifying the advertising effectiveness (Metha, 2000). Customer cognitive ability to an advertisement demonstrates that their feelings and thoughts are more likely to be motivated and would therefore lead an outcome on their approach for the specific advertisement. In addition, the antecedents of this attitude are dynamic and case sensitive in nature (Wang et al; 2006)

Online advertisement and consumer attitude

In last few years, the growth of online advertising is much faster than the conventional one. Franks (2008) identifies two important ways to distinguish online advertisement from the traditional advertisement: targetability and measurability. To justify the effectiveness of advertisement, these two are the key features that the advertiser must comply with. For conventional advertisement it is very difficult to deal with while very easy for online marketer to target the right customer for the particular commercials and measure the effectiveness (Haghirian, 2005). A review of the literatures considered the antecedents of the advertisement's worth as key elements to explain the consumer attitude to internet advertisement (Burns, 2003, Crowley et al; 2000)

Wang et al, (2009) consider entertainment, information seeking, credibility and economic value as core antecedents of consumer attitude for the online advertisement whereas Ducoffe (1996) added interactivity with all the above factors to consider the value of advertisement in explaining consumer attitude toward internet advertisement. Cowley et al; (2000) showed three

dimension of believe in developing a model for attitude towards online advertising. This dimension includes instrument (advertisement frequency, appeal in advertisement, deceptive/offensive advertisement) institution (social and economical cost /benefit) and function (social image and role, hedonic, product information). Schloseer et al (1999) evaluates the integration between belief dimension and attitude of internet advertisement. Here the study discover the utility factor, entrainment, informativeness) as the most predictive factors to justify attitude for internet advertisement.

Informativeness

Having product information in the advertisement is crucial as it works as cue in consumer decision making. The more complete and useful of the information of the advertisement gives the better chance to convince consumers (Usman et al; 2010). To define it as the core positive predictor, Wang et al (2009) address it even more important for the online environment. The study ranked information as the first and foremost antecedents to form attitude for online advertisement while credibility and hedonism come later. Gender difference may have the moderating effect to sort out the importance of adequateness in online advertisement. In addition level of income and the size or the member of the family is also work as important cue here.

Haghirian and Madlbarger (2005) also find information as a key factor to increase the purchase rate for online display. The study focuses that the information should be genuine and relevant to the needs of the target customer. Albion and Farris (2001) depicts the favorable roles of commercial as a base source of information that generates good result for an instance, aiding shopping of consumers, promoting new brand or product to causing competitive advantage.

Hedonism

The entertainment value of the commercials to form attitude of the consumer is widely accepted. Many of the marketing study argue that if there is no entertain value in a commercial, there is a less chance to form positive attitude in the mind of the consumers. If an advertisement has the entertainment value, there is a more chance for the advertisement to get attention of the concerned consumers. Ducoffe (1996) also address enjoyment dimension as one of the significant elements to form attitude towards online commercials. Since, internet is being placed as the sophisticated media where most of the users are addressed as the value seekers; they usually do not concentrate to commercial which is unable to entertain and not refreshing or fail to accommodate the right appeal (Dreze and Hussherr, 2003). Conversely, consumers typically become more attentive to an internet commercial that they choose or like in terms of color, design, graphic or the advertisement is associated with any kind of relevant attractive appeal (Gong et al., 2007). When there is no pleasure for them, internet savvy consumers are quite reluctant to be attached with the specific commercial.

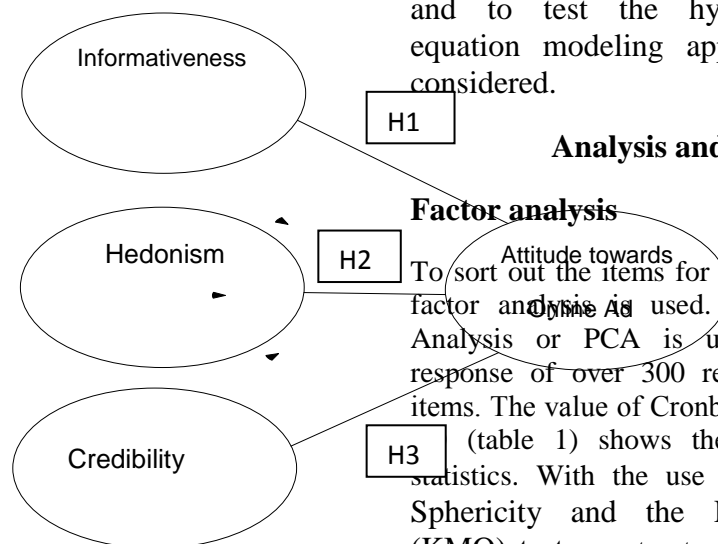
Credibility

Kwek et al; (2000) demonstrate credibility as key characteristics of an advertisement that works as a cue to build positive attitude towards online commercials. Credibility of the advertisement or the messages of the advertisement are associated with many of the factors. For an instance, Adler and Roadman (2000) illustrate believability of the message that take place in the mind of the receivers.

Apart from the believability, the relevance or the advertised utility or information should be closed to the needs and desire of the consumers to strengthen its credibility towards the receivers Gong et al., (2007) argue that the context and the way the message is delivered influence the overall credibility of the advertisement in forming the attitude of online advertisement

receivers. Many of the researchers include economic benefit as a part of credibility towards online commercials. They argue that the economic value of an advertisement is brought with the skill of the advertisers in providing credibility and precise information regarding the service or product to the receivers (Petrovici et al, 2007). Kwek et al. ;(2010) and Wang et al., (2009) discover the credible advertisement is very much attached with good for economic factor to form the positive attitude of the consumer in different perspective.

Conceptual Model for this study



Methodology

A self administered questionnaire is designed to collect first hand data from general internet users since the objective of the study is to justify the comparative importance of the antecedents of attitude towards online commercials like informativeness, credibility and hedonism. The study used convenient sampling method. Page and Mayer (2002) argue that convenient sampling with proper justification can demonstrate the overall characteristics of total population.

Various place like Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Johor, Perlis and Melaka have been

chosen to collect first hand data. In collecting information, face to face survey method was used. In addition, email was also used for some cases. In terms of scaling, five point liker scale is used where responses were ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. From 401 questionnaires, 301 responses are finally accepted as valid and complete for the analysis of data. With the consideration of cost and time constraints, 74% success rate is acceptable (Malhotra, 2008). Factor analysis is used to sort out the relevant items from many, for each constructs. It is an effective statistical tool to reduce the volume of variables into manageable size (Hair et al, 2010). To elicit the relationship and to test the hypothesis, structural equation modeling approach (SEM) was considered.

Analysis and Results:

Factor analysis

To sort out the items for the relevant construct, factor analysis is used. Principle component Analysis or PCA is used to examine the response of over 300 respondents among 16 items. The value of Cronbach's alpha more than (table 1) shows the adequate reliability statistics. With the use of bartlett's test of Sphericity and the Kaiser–Mayer–Olkin (KMO) test, construct validity of the study is confirmed. Sample adequacy is justified by the KMO whereas for construct t validity, the value of Bartlett's test of sphehcrcity is expected to be significant. The study at hand contains the adequate number of samples and significant value in sphericity test. Significant value of Bertlett's test and KMO value more than .60 shows that the factor analysis is appropriate in this case (table 2). Determining the number of factor is necessary to be determined after making sure the applicability of the analysis. This is well justified to determine the number of factors according to the dictation of eigen value (Hair et al, 2010). The study set 1 as the benchmark of eigen value here which is determine overall four factors to be considered. Table 3 shows the factor loading which shows the affiliation of each items to the concerning constructs. Loading more than .30 is assumed as

significant while 0.40 and greater is considered appreciable (Malhotra, 2010). Higher affiliation is shown by the higher loading on three demonstrating the items where none of the items is seen as insignificant.

Credibility	.723
Believability	.712
Execution Strategy	.658
Interactivity	.763
sustainability	.763

Table 1: Reliability statistics Attitude towards online Ad:

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.901	27
Emotional feelings	.773
Enduring evaluation	.748
Action tendency	.537
Moral decision	.623

Table 2: KMO and Bertlett's test

KMO and Bartlett's Test				Structural Equation Modeling Approach	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Adequacy.	Measure of Sampling	.826			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1714.952			
	Df	455			
	Sig.	.000			

To find the relationship among the factors, structural equation modelling is a comprehensive approach. The study should determine the overall model fit before to conclude the specific association of the variables. At the very beginning, the researcher must decide regarding the acceptance or rejection of the total model. Therefore, before path analysis, measurement model is used to justify whether the constructs are defined adequately in the model. Measurement model is necessarily to be similar with the path model for different types of validity also. For path model to be statistically significant, some of the indices and statistical measure are relatively more important than others.

Table: 4 Rotated Factor Matrixes

Description	F1	F2	F3	F4
Informativeness:				
Complete Information	.789			
Necessary Information	.754			
Genuine information	.719			
Relevant Information	.668			
Hedonism				
Likings		.719		
Pleasure		.680		
Entertainment Value		.745		
Refreshing		.614		

To decide on the overall model fit, P value with the given degree of freedom, Chi square along with the CFI value as an incremental index, RMSEA as absolute index demonstrate the overall model fit should be reported (Hair et al, 2010). χ^2 (chi square) is assumed to be a fundamental measure for the overall model fit. Lower chi square value is expected at the given "P" value as it depends upon the sample size and calculated difference of observed and

covariance matrix. In the study, the chi square value with the associated p value shows the good fit. To justify the baseline comparison, CFI or comparative fit index is widely used. It measures, fundamentally, the correlation and its average size for the given data set. Higher correlation indicated the higher value of

Fit measures	Main Model
X2	548.509
Degree of freedom (df)	102
P	0.00
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.223
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.913
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	0.967
Adjusted Goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	0.940

p.000
RMSEA
CFI .783
TLI .745

CFI. In the study (figure 1) the CFI value is well suited to make the study significant (over .90). Among the absolute indexes, root means square error of estimation or RMSEA is widely used by the researcher (Haque et al, 20110). The value of RMSEA is expected to be equal or less than .05 while .1 or is not expected for the good model fit. Figure 1 in the following shows the complete path model where some of the insignificant items are omitted from the measurement model

Table 5: Fit Measures of Main Model

Figure: 1 degree of association between attitude towards online advertisements with informativeness, hedonism and credibility.

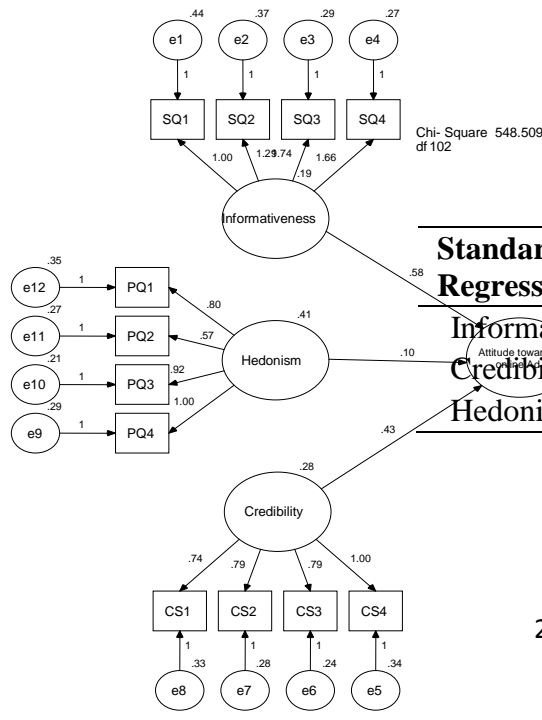


Table 6: Standard Estimation of the Main Model

Standardized Regression Weights	Estimate	S.E.	C.R	P
Informativeness	.201	.100	7.567	***
Credibility	.172	.093	5.683	***
Hedonism	.192	.106	2.195	***

Hypothesis Testing

Standard estimation of the main model or table five is usually used to test the hypothesis in structural equation modeling. The value of critical ratio more than 1.96 is treated as the significant value to assess the relationship (Hair et al, 2010). In every case in the table five the value of critical ratio is significant that illustrate that, informativeness, hedonism and credibility of the advertisements has the significant impact in creating the overall attitude towards the online advertisements. Meaning that, alternative hypothesis H1, H2 and H3 are not rejected. P value with the given degree of freedom, Chi square along with the CFI value as an incremental index, RMSEA as absolute index demonstrate the overall model fit. Overall, the relationship between endogenous and exogenous variable is assumed to be straight and significant. Since, to determine the relationship between each item to concerning construct, loading more than .20 is expected, path analysis (figure one) illustrates that the relationship between informativeness to online advertisement attitude, hedonism to online advertisement attitude and credibility to online advertisement attitude is significant respectively.

Validity of the Analysis

Along with the derived path model the study consider measurement model to test the overall validity of the analysis. Convergent, discriminant and nomological validity is expected to be measured for the Structural equation Modeling based analysis. To confirm the convergent validity, the value of the factor loading should necessarily be equal or over .60 for every item to construct relationship. At the final path model, the expected value confirms the convergent validity of the analysis. Since The significant squared correlation value is used to determine the discriminant validity, at the level of 0.001, all the values in the model seems quite fit to confirm the discriminant validity. Given fit indices, various measures, number of respondents used in the study

confirms the expected level of nomological validity.

Important Antecedents of the Attitude towards Online Advertisements

The respective value of factor loading from figure one shows that sequentially informativeness, credibility and hedonism has the significant attachment in creating brand awareness with the factor loading of 0.58, 0.10 and 0.43 respectively. The value shows that all path coefficients in the model are significant though the level of significance is not identical. The model identified informativeness as the most contributing factor in forming attitude toward online advertisement. It is the similar types of results of Giles (2010). The study showed that among all the tools, "information" is the key aspect the receivers are looking at.

Credibility is found as the next important strategies to create the attitude towards the online advertisements. This is also the reflection of people's attraction towards the believability and the communicability of the advertisements (Kwek et al; 2010) The result is the similar to the study of Wang et al (2009) that indicates internet users' attraction toward the practical thought rather to become more emotional. The model shows that internet savvy people are not reluctant to pursue the entertainment value of the advertisement but they only value it after informativeness and credibility of the advertisement.

Limitation and the scope of future research:

The study examines the comparative importance of antecedents of attitude towards online advertising like informativeness, credibility and hedonism comprehensively, however, other factors like the corporate web site, online purchase hub (like eBay, amazon.com) could have been considered in the study. Fundamentally, the research has very few

similar types of study to compare every parts of the theory. Moreover, as Malaysia is the multicultural country with many of the races, a future study can be done with considering race like Malay, Chinese and Indians as the moderating variables of the analysis.

Implication and Conclusion:

Creating campaign to build favorable attitude towards internet commercial is fundamental at this modern era. The study displays how Malaysian general internet users form their attitude "toward online commercial. It shows that the factors like informativeness, hedonism and credibility have the significant effects on forming attitude of the internet users. Overall, the study show Malaysian internet users as more rational decision makers. It finds informativeness as more influential factor to form positive attitude. Hence, the commercial with the relevant and appropriate information may produce better market place competencies (Polly and Mittal, 1993)

The second important factor for the marketer to think about is the "credibility" of the advertisement as a whole. The study discovered. If the viewers find the commercials as not a credible one, there is possibility for them to form negative attitude about the concerned service or the product, the finding is similar to one of the previous study (Kwek et al. 2009). The study also finds hedonism as an important issue to gain consumers prompt attention. The result is similar to Bauer and Geyser (2005). Even when the advertisement is non contextual, internet users are not reluctant to watch the advertisement that they start enjoying.

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