ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTION TOWARDS ONLINE ADVERTISING AMONG STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The digital age has already made significant changes to each of the elements of the promotion mix. Companies increasingly see the Internet as an important medium through which advertising messages can be directed towards consumers. In the 21st century, consumers have more control over advertising exposure with web advertising because they can select how much commercial content they wish to view. However, very little is known of consumer perception about Web advertising, attitudes toward Web advertising or Web advertising associated with consumer behavior. The purpose of this study is to determine the attitude and perception towards online advertisement among students and young professionals. The study gives insights into their attitudes and perceptions towards online promotions.

Keywords: Attitude, Consumer Perception, Online Advertising.

1. INTRODUCTION

Online advertising is similar to other forms of communication except for one critical difference that is Internet. Consumer behaviour follows a model radically different from traditional advertising media. This model can be explained as the progression 'Awareness - Interest - Desire - Action'. All these activities occur simultaneously in Internet advertising. Online advertising entails, placing of electronic messages on a web site or email platform which achieves the following purpose-

- Generates awareness for the brand.
Online advertising is a form of promotion that uses the Internet and World Wide Web for the expressed purpose of delivering marketing messages to attract customers. Online ads are delivered by an ad server. Examples of online advertising include contextual ads that appear on search engine results pages, banner ads, in text ads, Rich Media Ads, Social network advertising, online classified advertising, advertising networks and e-mail marketing, including e-mail spam.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 WEB ADVERTISING

Kotler and Keller (2001) defined advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor. Web advertisement consists of impersonal commercial content paid by sponsors, designed for audiences, delivered by video, print and audio. Further to its broad form it ranges from corporate logos, banners, pop-up message, email messages and text-based hyperlinks to official web sites (Ducoffee 1996; Schlosser et al. 1999).

The adoption curve for the Internet is quite steep, especially in comparison to other media introduced in this century (radio, television, cable; Morgan Stanley Technology research cited in Internet Advertising Bureau, 1997). Thus, as many have predicted, investment in internet advertising is likely to escalate into the billions as we enter the next millennium (Cyberatlas, 1997).

Briggs and Hallis (1997) and Gallagher (2001) believe web advertising is the least effective media. However, Gaffney (2001) has a contrasting view on online advertising and indicates that online advertising is considered effective in generating sales. O’ Connors and Galvin (2001) support this view; they indicated that banner ads could build up brand awareness and perceptions even though the users do not click on it. Schlosser (1999) added that generally people trusted the commercial content of an internet advertisement more than that of an ordinary advertisement.

2.2 ATTITUDE TOWARDS ADVERTISING IN GENERAL

Lutz (1985) defined an attitude-toward-the-ad as a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure or occasion. Specific types of feelings can be generated by an ad such as upbeat feelings: amused, delighted, playful, warm feelings, affectionate, hopeful, negative feelings, critical, defiant and offended. Attitudinal components of attitude towards the advertisement comprise of a hedonism, interest and utilitarianism.

Shavitt et al. (1998) informed that the propensity to dislike advertising might be changing as consumers feel more entertained by the advertisement. James and Kover (1992) and Mehta (2000) explained that reactions to advertising and the degree of persuasiveness are directly related to how much consumers like to look at advertising such as entertainment and enjoyment value its informational value as well as perceptions of how truthful or manipulative they are. The structure of attitudes towards internet advertising is the same as attitudes towards advertising in general. It was also informed that the consistency in attitudinal structure supports other findings that the traditional assessments of advertising effectiveness such as information and entertainment value also apply to internet advertising.

Rodgers described two studies with 106 student and 38 nonstudent participants that looked at interactions between user motivation for using the Internet and the effectiveness of certain types of banner ads, finding that for at least some users, “ads that complement the user’s motive may have more success at being noticed and clicked on than ads that do not”.

- Stimulates interest/preference for a product or service.
- Provides the means to contact the advertiser for information or to make a purchase.
Lu et al (2005)\textsuperscript{[8]} suggested that perceived usefulness has an impact on attitude towards online shopping. In a study conducted on online users in Thailand, Chiu et al (2005) concluded that online stores are perceived as more user friendly to facilitate online store visits. The consumer attitude towards online applications is influenced by perceived ease of use.

Perceived value of ads is influenced by a set of factors including entertainment, in formativeness, irritation, credibility, interactivity, and privacy. These factors are underlying information bases for cognitive and affective evaluations. Perceived value directly influences attitude, which in turn determines a consumer's future intention of using ads. Since entertainment and irritation are emotion latent factors, they should directly influence attitude as the affective information base. In addition, past behaviour of using the same or similar ads can have a direct impact on future intention. The relationships among perceived value, attitude, intention and behaviour are based on the theory of reasoned action and theory of planned behaviour. The model provides guidance on what and how to collect empirically in order to answer the five questions.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.6\textwidth]{figures.png}
\caption{MODEL OF CONSUMERS’ EVALUATION OF TARGETED DIGITAL ADS}
\label{fig:evaluation}
\end{figure}

\textbf{3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY}

\subsection*{3.1 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY}

The rapid growth in number of internet users in India provides a bright prospect for e-marketers. This rapid growth in the number of internet users has promoted a belief in many business circles that the web represents a huge marketing opportunity. Therefore, understanding how consumers perceive benefits of online promotions is important from an organizational perspective. The research attempts to identify the various consumer attitudes and perceptions towards online advertisements.

\subsection*{3.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY}

- To identify consumer attitude and perception towards online advertising, among students and young professionals
- To identify the factors that constitutes online purchasing behavior.

\subsection*{3.3 SAMPLING METHOD}

The sampling procedure used was convenience sampling, as in questionnaire were administered through different online platforms.
3.4 TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION
Interaction with Respondents was done virtually through online platform with the help of questionnaire. The questionnaire was made available to respondents through Google forms. The questionnaire consisted of a set of questions, asked to the respondent for his/her response. The questionnaire was structured and non-disguised. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions.

3.5 DATA PROCESSING
Collected data was Analyzed and tabulated with the help of MS Excel and SPSS, further they have been presented in form of tables and Graphs in this report.

4. DATA ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

4.1 INTERNET USAGE PATTERN

Thus we can deduce that online advertisers have enough opportunity to target the internet users. Therefore, companies must ensure that they effectively promote their products on the internet.

4.2 PURCHASED PRODUCT CATEGORY
Almost 90% of respondents make online purchases related to lifestyle products. Thus online platforms provide a huge potential for marketers dealing in lifestyle related products.
4.3 TYPE OF ADVERTISEMENTS PREFERRED

From above graph it is quite clear that interactive advertisements are most influential.

4.4 ADVERTISING MEDIUM PREFERRED

From the graph we can see that Internet is the most preferred medium to receive advertisements among respondents with more than three quarter respondents marking Internet as preferred medium to receive advertisements.

4.5 NATURE OF ADVERTISEMENT PREFERRED

From the research we found that most respondents prefer advertisements which are creative. Secondly, it must be funny, unique, informative or meaningful. Emotional, crazy and simple advertisements are least preferred.
4.6 OCCUPATION V/S FREQUENCY OF CHECKING ONLINE ADVERTISEMENTS

From the above crosstab we can interpret that almost 80% of the respondents check online advertisements sometimes or the other. It is also seen that students check online advertisements more frequently compared to employees of different organizations. Another interesting fact that came out from this cross tabulation is that none of the respondents are able to completely isolate themselves from checking online advertisements.

4.7 TIME SPENT USING INTERNET V/S PURCHASE FREQUENCY

From the survey it was deduced that there is not much correlation between the time spent online by respondents and their purchase frequency. Whatever the amount of time spent online most of the respondents make online purchases occasionally and around one quarter of the respondents make online purchases every month. Another interesting deduction is that more than 95% of respondents make online purchases.

4.8 FREQUENCY OF CHECKING ONLINE ADS V/S PURCHASE FREQUENCY

From the survey it was found that there is not any clear relationship between the frequency of checking online ads and purchase frequency. Thus, the marketers must not only target people who check online advertisements more frequently, as people who rarely check online advertisements make almost equal purchases.

4.9 OCCUPATION V/S PURCHASE FREQUENCY

From the survey it was found online purchases are made occasionally by people of different occupations. However very frequent online purchases (once a week or every fortnight) is done by employees, this can be a result of their higher purchasing power.

5. CONCLUSION

From the study it is found that frequency of checking online ads does not directly affected a purchase. However, online ads are effective as awareness or branding tool and also play a part in reinforcing Web users’ purchase decisions. This study identified four factors which are significant predictors of customer attitude and perception towards online advertising: positive purchase behavior enhances updation about products, engaging & time saving, and annoying. Among the four factors positive purchase behavior plays the most important role. Also respondents perceive online advertisements enhances updation about a product as it explain features effectively, keeps updated
about products and are more convincing. Both these factors are result of beauty of this technology viz. the usage of visuals and information. Companies must exploit this feature of internet through the usage of coloured pictures and images of the entire product. In addition to the visuals, online promotions serve an excellent purpose in description of the entire product and service. Also it was found that online advertisements are perceived to be engaging and time saving. Interactive online advertisements are most preferred by respondents, it has distinguished the Internet advertising from traditional mass media, as traditional way could only present one way communication from advertiser to the audience. Finally, online advertisements were also perceived to be annoying. The respondents believe time is wasted due to online advertisements and they want there must be a way to block online advertisements. The reasons for their annoyance with advertising seem to be its ubiquitous nature and its increasingly intrusive nature.

6. REFERENCES