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THE INFLUENCE OF ADVERTISING TO THE PURCHASE INTENTION OF MOBILE PHONE IN TAIWAN

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ABSTRACT

Consumer purchase intention is one of the key factors affecting companies advertising strategy. Advertising is a pervasive influence in our daily lives. It is urged that, to enhance communication and persuasion, marketers should seek a cognitive, affective, brand attitude or behavioral response through the exposure of advertisement. This paper is to study how ways of advertising influence on the purchase intention of Taiwan University students. Each person could have different reasons and motifs (preference) in choosing brand of mobile phones. Therefore, it is interesting to explore the influence of advertising to the purchase intention of Taiwan university students. Three questions are asked; How Taiwan university students react to the advertising? What factors influence the purchase intention of Taiwan university students? And what are the students' reactions to brand attitude?

Keywords: Advertising, Consumer Behavior, Marketing, Brand, Mobile Phone.

INTRODUCTION

How does advertising affect consumer attitudes and purchase intention? This study will explore this question by conducting a survey on mobile phone advertising in Taiwan. Seven "real" brands (from low involvement to high involvement brand) of mobile manufacturers were used as study stimuli. Advertising is very important since it learns how to create and spread messages used to promote and sell products and services. Firms always use advertising to communicate messages and to persuade consumers to buy their products. Advertising also can build brand image of one product too. Consumers will be influenced to buy something because of the advertising that they have ever seen. If the cognitive thoughts/beliefs are prominent in the consumer's memory, the impact will be greater on the consumer's attitudes and thus his/her behavior [1]. Thus for those consumers drawn to particular sport events, marketers can use sponsorship to increase the frequency of exposure for their marketing messages and have greater impact on consumer attitudes [2]. Advertising and promotion are undertaken through cooperation between the service providers and the mobile phone manufacturers which are represented in the country by their franchise holders. Service providers use brand names in their advertising copy by showing a line of mobile phone models coming from different franchise companies and the range of functional mechanism [3].

Consumer behavior will be influenced by the advertising input given to them. Advertising can give some effects to consumer's affect, cognition and experience [3]. It can motivate consumers to consume and have loyalty to the products offered. They can make a choice to select products they need and want from many kinds of products based on their affection and feeling to the products based on the advertising which is offered or they see from some advertisement, such as television, radio, newspaper, pamphlet, leaflet (advertising copy), or board advertisement.

The distinction between cognition and affect has been reviewed by plenty of scholars [4-6], but the results were not determined. According to the earlier studies [7][8], cognition is one of the most important factors that determine affect and consequently result in purchasing intention and behaviors. Another stream of studies [5] claimed that thinking and feeling are two independent systems. They suggested that the slower, more detailed cognitive system might be predominated by the faster, cruder affective system. More recent studies recognized that affect is a critical role in the consumption experience [9][10]. Attitude toward the ad (A_{ad}) has been defined as a "predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure situation" [5]. A_{ad} may contain both affective reactions, e.g., advertising created feelings of happiness, and evaluations, e.g., of an advertising's credibility or informativeness [11].

This research is done in order to get the data about the ways of advertising that influence the purchase intention of university students in Taiwan since they use many kinds of mobile phones with different brand. According to Biehal, Stephens and Curlo, [4], brands vary in the amount of power and value they have in the market place. They also mentioned that a consumer will behave towards a particular brand. A powerful brand has high brand equity. Brands have higher brand equity to the extent that they have higher brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, strong brand associations, and other assets such as patents, trademarks, and channel relationships.

Upgrading mobile phones to newer models is a common practice among teenagers. Purchase is undertaken either immediately, upon introduction of the newest model with higher prices, or at a later date when the prices are reduced [5]. Besides, mobile phone companies use advertising to influence the purchase intention of customers. Service providers also use brand names in

their advertising copy by showing a line of mobile phone models coming from different franchise companies and the range of functional mechanism.

Researcher and practitioners have the same opinion that the most explosive growth in telecommunications has occurred in internet and mobile telephone services [6]. These two technologies are combined into the internet-enabled mobile device. It has become one of the most promising advertising media around [7]. For example, SMS (short message service) direct marketing is becoming a popular advertising method in worldwide. Consumers are spending 58 million messages per day in 2004 within the United Kingdom [8]. The trend has migrated to the United States as well. An SMS-TV direct marketing campaign was conducted by McDonald in conjunction with a popular song contest program, offering concert tickets and backstage passes. Coca-Cola executed a text message campaign for college students in which a number printed on a Diet Coke can could be used as an entry in the Coca-Cola Grand Sweepstakes Competition [9]. According to Mullman [10], as many as 81 percent of 18- to 21-year-olds have mobile phones, and most of them are likely to participate in TV or radio polls, purchase ring tones, play games, and send text messages.

Mobile phones are popular with teenagers, known as the “text generation”, in the Philippines. Many students, even those in the lower middle class, have been caught up with the inevitable plague of texting within the last five years. The process of texting is that a mobile phone user sends a message from one cellular phone to another in the form of words or texts instead of speaking directly over the phone. The number of global mobile phone subscribers hit 2.3 billion in 2006, which is expected to climb to 3.3 billion by 2011. It is expected that Asia-Pacific will account for 47.9% of global subscribers by 2011. Aside from the strong growth in basic cellular services, there is a strong demand for mobile Internet services across the Asia-Pacific region [11]

It has been proven that each person has different reasons and motifs (preference) in choosing brand of mobile phones. For this reason it is interesting to explore the influence of advertising to the purchase intention of Taiwan university students; how students of Taiwan university students react to advertising?; is it positive or not to them?; what factors influence the purchase intention of Taiwan university students; How does the advertisement influence the brand attitude?, is it influenced directly or indirectly?; and how does the advertisement influence the purchasing intention?.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Cognitions' influence on Ad-evoked Feelings, Attitude Toward the Advertising (A_{ad}) and Attitude Toward Brand (A_b)

Much research on advertising in consumer behavior, for the most has focused much on cognition. But this study is interested in the feelings generated by an individual in response to an advertising and ultimately if that will influence purchase intention. Though Mackenzie, Lutz and Belch [12] used a cognitive response method and did not examine feelings specifically, their results support the hypothesis that feelings toward and advertising can influence the nature of subsequent processing of the advertising, observed in this study as cognition. Cognitive responses can classifications categorize as positively or negatively valenced brand-related cognitions, ad-related cognitions, or idiosyncratic thoughts [13].

According to Edell and Burke [14] that the characteristic the advertising as having cognitive elements. The cognitive element is made up of different subjects' judgments of the advertising's characteristics (i.e. descriptions of the advertising itself, such as “humorous, informative) which in case the affect of feeling element is based on feelings subjects experience during the advertising exposure (e.g., amused moved, fed up). However, Hoch and Loewenstein [15] propose that feelings of desire that consumers often experience in shopping situations may “occur with the minimum conscious deliberation characteristic of automatic or mindless behavior” and with little or no cognition” [15]. Base on Edell and Bruke's study, we propose that the cognitions will have a direct influence on ad-evoked feelings.

H1: The cognitions will have a direct influence on ad-evoked feelings

Cognitive responses are simply the thoughts that consumers produce when they are exposed to advertising. The cognitive response model hypothesizes that when individuals receive a message, they exert mental effort by attempting to relate the message to their existing attitudes, knowledge, and feelings [16]. Consequently, the responses generated in this way would affect consumers' attitudes [17]. The intensity of cognitive responses (i.e., the number of thoughts) is proposed to directly affect consumers' memory performance. This is because an increased depth of ad-processing results in more thoughts about the ad; this allows consumers to be more aware of and better consciously recollect in later retrieval what they saw or heard [18]. The valence of cognitive responses is suggested to influence consumers' attitudes on advertising; accordingly we proposed that the cognitions will have a direct influence on attitude toward the advertisings.

H2: The cognitions will have a direct influence on attitude toward the advertisings

Many studies have been extensively studied the cognitive responses in brand attitude formation under a variety of conceptual frameworks, such as the Dual Mediation Model [19], the resource-matching hypothesis [20], and the accessibility/diagnosticity framework [21]. A common theme among cognitive-response models of attitude formation is that the net favorability of cognitive responses elicited by a persuasive message determines attitude strength [22]. While precedent studies theoretically conceptualized that cognitions influences on consumer's brand attitude, we propose that the cognitions will have a direct influence on attitude toward the brand.

H3: The cognitions will have a direct influence on attitude toward the brand

Effects of Ad-evoked Feelings on Attitude Toward the Advertising (A_{ad})

Several researchers have demonstrated that, next to cognitions, feelings could also play an important role in the formation of judgments on advertising [23]. Individuals in positive-mood states have shown to evaluate stimuli more positively than individuals in neutral- or negative-mood states. It means that mood may influence persuasion relatively to direct affect transfer [24]. The primary implication of direct affect transfer is that when an unconditioned stimulus spontaneously provokes an affective response then the transfer of affect exists [25]. In addition, based on the Feelings-as-Information Model, Schwarz [26] suggested that individuals might assume that their mood states are affective reactions to the object being evaluated and thus base their evaluations on their affective states. Thus it is predicted that the ad-evoked feelings could frame A_{ad} .

The underlined theoretical argument from Elaboration Likelihood Model [27] suggests that there are two different ways in which ad-evoked feelings might influence A_{ad} . While the direct impacts of ad-evoked feelings on A_{ad} in our research model are just as what ELM called “peripherally process the message”, we propose that the ad-evoked feelings will have a direct influence on A_{ad} .

H4: The ad-evoked feelings will have a direct influence on A_{ad}

Effects of Ad-evoked Feelings on Brand Attitude (A_b)

Studies of ad-evoked feelings typically have included A_{ad} and A_b as dependent variables. Earlier analyses of the impact of affective responses to advertisements suggest that ad-evoked feelings elicited by advertising will have an impact on brand attitude (A_b). Holbrook and Batra [28] suggest that A_{ad} and emotional response to advertisements mediate the effect of advertising content on change in A_b . Furthermore, different emotional responses have different effects on A_{ad} and work through A_{ad} to explain changes in A_b . According to Edell and Burke [14] and Stephen and Russo [29], direct and indirect effects of ad-evoked feelings on A_b are found for both familiar and unfamiliar brands.

Each consumer would have his/her own unique brand mental map (or consumer brand representation). In addition to this, the consumer brand knowledge may be derived from several sources: objective reality (consumer personal experience); constructed reality (message from advertising and media); and experiences of others (such as word-of-mouth) [30]. The influence of feelings has been theoretical and empirical supported. Holbrook and Batra [28] demonstrated that A_{ad} and ad-evoked feelings mediate the effect of advertising content on A_b and that different emotional responses have varying effects on A_{ad} , in turn, influence A_b . Because of the extent of theoretical and empirical support for the causal linkages in Burke and Edell’s framework, we propose that the ad-evoked feelings will have a direct influence on A_b .

H5: The ad-evoked feelings will have a direct influence on A_b .

Effect of Attitude towards the Advertising (A_{ad}) on Brand Attitude (A_b)

Mitchell and Olson [31] highlighted the major influence of the attitude towards the advertising (A_{ad}) by demonstrating that the effect of visual and emotional elements on the brand attitude (A_b) is mediated by A_{ad} . They further argued that this A_{ad} is a distinct concept from formed product beliefs and that they both influence A_b independently. Studies on A_{ad} had been conducted in a number of methodological contexts, although a number of researchers have found that the dual-mediation model of the effects of A_{ad} best fits the data in individual studies, more specific findings concerning path within the model have been mixed. Since then emotional responses in advertising have received increasing attention. Shimp [32], just mentioned assumes a direct link between A_{ad} and A_b and implies that a positive attitude towards the advertising is directly carried over to a positive attitude towards the brand. Support for this theory has been found in previous studies, in which it was concluded that advertising evaluations were debilitated by negative affect and stimulated by positive affect [33][34]. The findings of Biel and Bridgwater [35], for instance, state that “people who liked a commercial ‘a lot’ were twice more likely to be persuaded by it than people who simply felt neutral towards the advertisement.” Consumer’s affective responses to ads have been of increasing interest academics. In particular, one research stream has investigated the influence of attitude toward the advertising (A_{ad}) on brand attitude (A_b). In the 1970’s, scholars suggested the importance of understanding viewer’s global evaluations of advertising [36]. Okazaki, Katsukura, and Nishiyama [9], also refer that attitude toward advertising directly and positively affects attitude toward brand. Based on the prior studies, we propose that the effect of A_{ad} will have positive influence on A_b .

H6: The effect of A_{ad} will have positive influence on A_b .

The Effects of Attitude toward advertising (A_{ad}) and Brand Attitude (A_b) on Purchase Intention (PI)

Brand attitude has been proposed to be preceding purchase intentions. Shimp [32] proposed that attitude towards the advertising is a mediating influence on purchase intention. According to Kotler and Keller [37], an attitude is a person’s enduring favorable or unfavorable evaluations, emotional feelings, and action tendencies toward some objects or ideas. Attitudes put the consumer into a frame of mind of liking or disliking an object, and lead consumers to behave in a fairly consistent way toward similar objects. Thus, favorable attitude will lead to behaviors.

According to the balance theory [38], a consumer will generate favorable attitudes toward an advertising message or a brand; he/she will maintain cognitive consistency among various ideas and concepts about which he/she think. In order to be consistent among ideas, the consumer may create behavior intentions toward buying the brand if he/she has already generated favorable

attitudes toward the products. Mowen [39] argued that consumer’s intention to buy some product might result from positive affects or feelings toward the product. In the low involvement situation, the impact of beliefs on behavior is minimal, while in high involvement situation, the beliefs of the product play more critical role on purchase intention.

Many researches has been done on Brand Attitude (A_b) and its effects or relations to Purchase Intention (PI) such as researches by Brown and Stayman [40] and MacKenzie, Lutz and Belch [12][19]. This research found strong support for A_{ad} - A_b -PI relationships. MacKenzie, Lutz and Belch [12] proposed and tested four causal models of the mediating role of A_{ad} on A_b and PI. They found support for the dual mediation model. Also, Mowen [39] argued that consumer’s intention to buy a product might result from positive affects or feelings toward the product. As result of this evidence, we have developed the following hypothesis (as mentioned above):

H7: The effects of A_{ad} will have positive influence on consumer’s purchase intention

H8: The effects of A_b will have positive influence on consumer’s purchase intention

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the literature review and research hypotheses as illustrated in the previous sections, this study develops the conceptual framework of this research as shown in figure 1. Although many studies have focused on investigating the interrelationship between Cognition, Attitude toward Advertising, Feeling, Brand Attitude and PI a comprehensive research framework as illustrated in this study was not formulated from previous literature. It is argued that the results of the study may provide a more holistic perspective for the academicians and the practitioners to evaluate the effects of cognition on attitude toward advertising, feeling and PI.

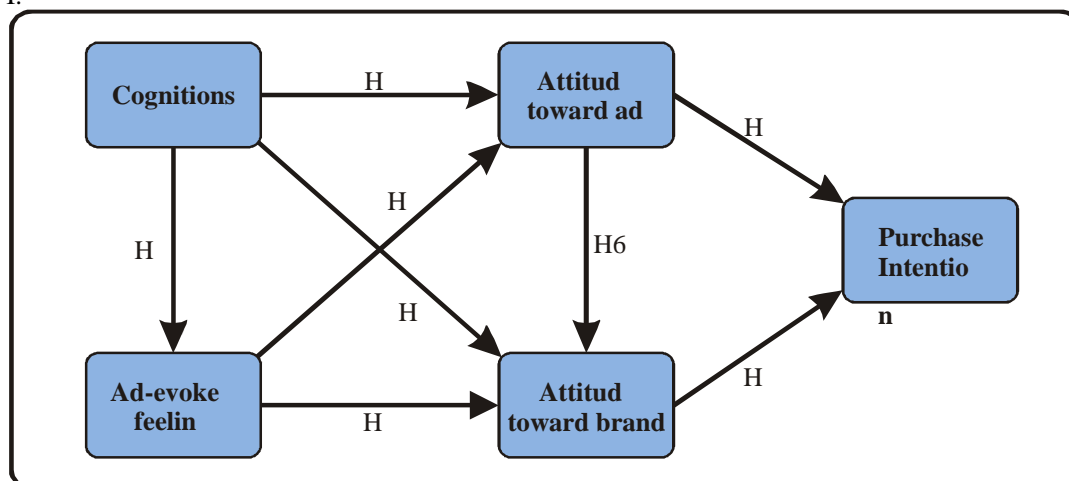


Figure 1 The conceptual framework of this study

PRODUCT STIMULI SELECTION

Zaichkowsky’s [41] involvement scale will use for the manipulation check of the level of involvement of the product brand. The selection of the product is based on four categories for three reasons. First, they are different in many aspects, such as price range, purchase frequency, and consumption situation (place and interaction among others). Second, these products are suitable for the studies of Attitude toward advertising and Brand attitude due to the consumers can evaluate differently on each individual products. Third, the respondents that are familiar with the brands and products will provide reliable responses to the questionnaire. The product brands selected for this study are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Product Brands in Formal Test

Products of the Brand	Brand Involvement index Based on Zaichkowsky
Sony Ericsson	High ↑↓ Medium ↑↓ Low
Motorola	
Nokia	
Ben-q	
Pantech	
Innostram	
DB Tel	

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