

THE EFFECT OF ATTITUDE TOWARD ADVERTISEMENT ON ATTITUDE TOWARD BRAND AND PURCHASE INTENTION

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Abstract

This study attempts to investigate whether consumers' attitude towards advertisements that they are exposed (Aad) to have an influence over their attitude towards brand (Ab) and purchase intention (PI) of the advertised product. The researchers tried to survey the results of previous studies and compared with this study results to give more benefits to the readers and researchers in this area of study. The study is empirical in nature focusing on Saudi consumers. The convenient samples were shown an advertisement of AL-Bassam, a popular brand of cover head before responded to a structured questionnaire. A total of 150 respondents participated in this study. Consumers' attitude toward advertisement has positive and significant effects on their attitude toward brand as well as on their purchase intention. Attitude toward brand partially mediates between attitude toward advertisement and purchase intention. Findings imply the importance of advertisement to be adopted by practitioners in their strategic marketing as it helps in communicating positive brand image and influencing consumers' intention to purchase the advertised product. In this study, the said relationships amongst the three variables are revisited. The difference lie in the use of Saudi consumers, a developing country compared to developed countries in past studies, in addition to the use of a real product advertisement rather than make believe advertisement. This will provide the first insight on Saudi consumer's behavior.

Keywords: *Attitude towards Advertisement, Attitude towards Brands, Purchase Intention*

INTRODUCTION

In trying to understand what triggers consumer's behavior, the role of attitude has been explored by many researchers on which its importance has already been acknowledged. Today, research on attitude has been expanded to include attitude that relates to product advertisements and brands found in the marketplace as can be found in consumer behavior and communication literature. Consumer's attitude towards one object for instance is said to affect his/her attitudes towards another object with which it is associated. As Hoyer et. al. (1997) explain, consumer's liking and affection of an advertisement (the liking can be due to any reason or reasons known to) will eventually be transferred to the product's brand.

In this study, we attempt to investigate if consumers' attitude towards advertisements that they are exposed (Aad) to have an influence over their attitude towards brand (Ab) and purchase intention (PI). Although past studies have found linkages amongst the three variables (Aad-Ab-PI), the said relationships were found to be casual in nature. Another reason for why this study is conducted is because past studies focus only on developed countries. Question pertaining to whether the same relationship can be found if the investigation is carried out in other countries (e.g. such as Saudi, a developing and under developed country) is yet to be tested. Many of the past studies also do not use real product advertisement in their research investigations. Thus, we think that there is a need for a revisit to test the said (Aad-Ab-PI) relationships amongst the three variables focusing on a group of consumers from a developing country (like Saudi) as respondents. The use of a real selected product advertisement that consumers in that country are familiar with will be implemented in this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Attitude

Attitude is an individual's internal evaluation of an object such as a branded product, and has been an important concept in marketing research since 1960s. Hoyer and MacInnis (1997) define attitude as "relatively global and enduring evaluation of an object, issue, person, or action". There are two major reasons for this long-term interest. First, similar to Hoyer and MacInnis's definition, attitudes are often considered relatively stable and are enduring predisposition for consumer to behave in particular way (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Thus, consequently, they should be useful predictors of consumers' behavior towards a product or service (Oskamp c.f. Wu, 1999). Second, several theoretical models on the attitude construct can be found in social psychology literature especially through studies by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) that have stimulated attitudinal research in marketing.

Previous studies have referred attitude towards specific dimensions such as attitude towards advertiser (Lutz, 1985), attitude towards advertisement and attitude towards brand (Rajeev et al., 1986). The present study is focusing on two of them, which are, (Aad) and (Ab).

Attitude toward Advertisement (Aad), Attitude toward Brand (Ab) and Purchase Intention (PI)

Attitude towards advertisement (Aad) has been defined as a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during particular exposure situation (Mackenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986; Biehal, Stephens & Curlo, 1992).

In a print advertisement for example, consumers will be depending very much on the picture(s) and information about the product that are inserted in it to motivate them to take a closer look at and continue reading it. An advertisement that provides good picture(s) may give a significant impact as the picture(s) help reader consumers to get “connected” with the product. Consumers can get closer to the product as they experience certain feeling(s) from watching the product e.g. the product seems authentic, credible and real (Brosius, Donsbach & Birk, 1996). According to Garcia and Stark (1991), novel in-text picture(s) are identified as (advertisement) content component(s) that are most likely to foster curiosity and thus motivate readers to continue reading. This is in addition to the line of catchy words (especially in the headline) that are carefully positioned to attract consumers when they read them (Boduch, 2001). A good advertisement can change one’s perception as has been proven by N.W. Ayers, a New York based advertising agency on whom in 1938 was given a task of changing public perception towards diamond from a “one time object of financial investment” to being a “symbol of commitment and everlasting love” (Jhally, 2003). Today, we can see that the perception of romantic love is associated with the giving of diamonds to the loved ones.

The present study assumes that attitude toward advertisement is already available with any consumer. As the consumer is exposed to an advertisement, its influence can be observed through consumer’s reactions such as his/her persuasion speech (can be either positive or negative) about the brand on other people and his/her own behavior towards it. The uniqueness of (Aad) is that it has been used as antecedent to other variables or independent variable (e.g. Biehal *et al.*, 1992), mediating variable (e.g. Ugur & Abdulla, 1993), even as dependent variable (e.g. Marian & Edell, 1989; Holbrook *et al.*, 1987; Yi, 1990; Edell & Burke, 1987; Homer & Yoon, 1992) in past studies. Its usage depends very much on the way of how it is perceived and positioned by the researchers.

Many studies considered attitude towards advertisement (Aad) as the main input of attitude towards brand (Ab), with both (Aad) and (Ab) hypothesized to have an effect on consumers’ purchase intention (PI). Many previous studies have attempted to model the

advertising effects that are assumed to happen through the flow of casual relationship between (Aad-Ab), (Aad-PI), and (Ab-PI). The advertising effect models can be found in studies such as Goldsmith et al. (1999, 2000, 2001, 2002) and Shimp and Gresham (1985).

Attitude toward brand (Ab) is defined as a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular brand after the advertising stimulus has been shown to the individual (Phelps and Hoy, 1996). Previous studies indicated that (Aad) and (Ab) are not considered as one variable as they are different from each other, and had been used as separated variables (e.g., Goldsmith et al., 2000; 2002). The difference between the two, i.e. (Aad) and (Ab) is very clear from each one's given definition in the literature.

Messages in advertisements may affect the relationship between (Aad) and (Ab), specifically when consumers are not familiar with the advertised brand due to their lack of prior knowledge on which to base their (Ab) evaluation. Thus, they are more likely to rely on (Aad) in forming their (Ab). Consumers with prior brand familiarity, by contrast, are more likely to draw on their existing brand knowledge, attenuating the influence of attitude towards specific advertisement (Aad) on (Ab). Therefore, the effect of (Aad) on brand evaluations should be greater when the advertisement is for an unfamiliar rather than a familiar brand (Machleit & Wilson, 1988; Machleit & Madden, 1993; Campbell & Keller, 2003). There is a general agreement on the effect of (Aad) on (Ab) when unfamiliar brands are tested. However, the relationship between (Aad) and (Ab) is different when brand familiarity is tested. Both (Aad) and (Ab) have been assumed to have effect on consumers' purchase intention (PI) (e.g. Shimp & Gresham, 1985; Goldsmith et al., 2000; 2002).

The consumer, who is effectively affected by advertising, may form a positive (Aad) that may then influence his/her (PI). A direct relationship between (Aad) and (PI) for both familiar and unfamiliar brands were found in Goldsmith et al.'s studies (2000; 2002). The relationships appear when affective responses are evoked, especially under conditions of low involvement. However, there can also be an indirect relationship between (Aad) and (PI) through (Ab), as will appear when the consumer develops a positive (Aad) which leads him or her to form (Ab) before starting to build a positive (PI) (Shimp & Gresham, 1985; Mackenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986; Brown & Stayman, 1992; Yoon et al., 1998).

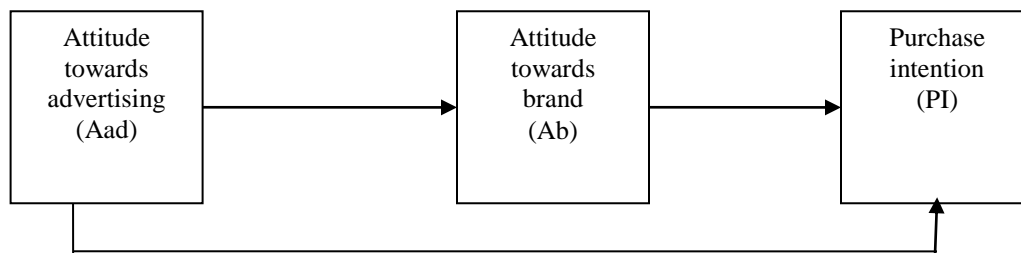
Phelps & Hoy (1996) in their study found out there is a significant effect of (Aad) on (PI) for both familiar and unfamiliar brands. Saliagas & William (1987), in their study, found out that (Aad) had an effect on (PI). However, Shimp & Gresham (1985) found out that (Aad) had both the direct effect on (PI) and the indirect effect through (Ab). In addition, Homer (1990) also found out that (Aad) had an effect on (PI).

As for association between (Ab) and (PI), many studies found that (Ab) to have a positive and significant effect on (PI) (Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Shimp & Gresham, 1985; Batra & Ray, 1986; Laroche, Kim & Zhou, 1996; Phelps & Hoy, 1996). For example, Shimp's (1986) study found out a strong relationship between (Ab) and (PI). Many other studies have found out positive effects of (Ab) on (PI) when familiar and unfamiliar brands were tested. (e.g., Shimp & Gresham., 1985; Batra & Ray, 1986; Rajeev et al., 1986; Homer, 1990; Yi, 1990; Brown & Stayman, 1992; Homer & Yoon, 1992; Phelps & Hoy, 1996).

In addition, the causal sequence of (Aad – Ab – PI) relationship explored in the previous studies considered attitude towards brand (Ab) as a mediator in the relationship between (Aad) and (PI) (Mechleit et al., 1988; Phelps et al., 1996).

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Figure 1: Framework of the Study



H1: Consumer's attitude toward advertising (Aad) has significant and positive influence over his/her attitude toward brand (Ab)

H2: Consumer's attitude toward advertising (Aad) has significant and positive influence over his/her intention to purchase the advertised product (PI)

H3: Consumer's attitude toward brand (Ab) has significant and positive influence over his/her intention to purchase the advertised product (PI).

H4: Consumer's attitude toward brand (Ab) acts as a mediator between Consumer's attitude toward advertising (Aad) and his/her intention to purchase the advertised product (PI).

METHOD

Choice of Real Product Advertisement

Saudi's consumer who act as users of cover head product (AL-Bassam) were considered the population for this study. However, since this will include many of them only Saudis' men, who wear and use AL-Bassam product were selected as samples. To achieve the objective, an

advertisement for a very popular and well known brand for a cover head product in Saudi Arabia i.e. Al-Bassam, was chosen to be evaluated by Saudi's consumers. A total of 150 questionnaires were personally distributed to selected group of Saudi's consumers. The questionnaires contain a full-page advertisement of the Al-Bassam brand.

The population for this study is Saudi male in Najran city who normally wear head covers. Although all males in Najran city wear head covers, this study focuses only on male students learning at Najran University in Najran city in Saudi. The respondents were invited to a showing of an advertisement and then were asked to fill in a survey questionnaire. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree were used to measure responses for all (Aad), (Ab) and (PI) variables in the study. To measure (Aad), the study adapted Holbrook & Batra (1987) and Goldsmith et al.'s (1999; 2002) instruments. For (Ab), five items were adapted from the study of Goldsmith et al. (1999; 2002), and lastly, this study adopted the three items measure from Goldsmith et al. (1999; 2002) study for (PI).

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Of the total 150 respondents surveyed, all of them use cover head product AL-Bassam, most of them were found to be not married (76.8 percent), either already possessing a first degree (69.6 percent) or are now studying for their first degree (30.4%). Majority of respondents were their age less than 26 (77.2%). In addition, the majority of them only paid occasional attention to the advertisements shown in the newspapers (62%) and magazines (51%). However, approximately 95.6% of them admitted their concern about the brand of cover head that they used in their wearing. More details about the results are followed:

Simple Regression Analysis

Relationship between (Aad) and (Ab) – H1

Results from simple regression analysis carried out (Table 1) found that explored that (Aad) was positively and significantly associated with (Ab) with $\beta=.53$ at $p<0.01$. In addition, (Aad) explained 0.28) of the variance in (Ab) ($R^2=.28$). This means that Hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

Table 1: H1 - The Effect of Consumer's Attitude toward Advertisement (Aab) on Attitude toward Brand (Ab)

Attitude towards Brand	Beta	t-test	Sig	VIF	tolerance
Attitude towards Advertisement	.53**	6.63	.000	1.000	1.000
R ²	.28				
Adjusted R Square	.27	F Value		43.9**	

Note: ** $p<0.01$

Relationship between (Aad) and (PI) – H2

Table 2 shows results on the testing of the hypothesis 2. (Aad) explained (.30) of the variance in (PI) ($R^2=.30$) and it was found to positively and significantly associated with (PI) as $\beta=.55$ ($p<0.01$). This indicates that hypothesis (H2) is accepted.

Table 2: H2 - The Effect of Consumer's Attitude toward Advertisement (Aab) on Purchase Intention (PI)

Purchase Intention Path c	Beta	t-test	Sig	VIF	tolerance
Attitude towards Advertisement	.55**	7.0	.000	1.000	1.000
R²	.30				
Adjusted R Square	.29				
F Value	48.6**				

Note: ** $p<0.01$

Relationship between (Ab) and (PI) – H3

Results shown in Table 3 indicates acceptance of hypothesis (H3) whereby (Ab) was found to have the ability to explain (.38) of the variance in (PI) ($R^2=.38$); and that (Ab) was found to positively and significantly associated with (PI) with $\beta=.61$ ($p<0.01$).

Table 3: H3 - The Effect of Attitude toward Brand (Ab) on Purchase Intention (PI)

Purchase Intention	Beta	t-test	Sig	VIF	tolerance
Attitude towards Brand	.61**	8.3	.000	1.000	1.000
R²	.38				
Adjusted R Square	.38				
F Value	69.3**				

Note: ** $p<0.01$

Hierarchical Regression Analyses

Mediating role of Attitude toward Brand (Ab) between Attitude toward Advertisement (Aad) and Purchase Intention (PI) – H4

Results of regression analysis shown in Table 5 indicating support for H4 with (Ab) plays only a role of partial mediator between (Aad) and (PI).

Table 4: H5 – (Ab) as Mediator in the Relationship between (Aad) and (PI)

	Model (1) Purchase intention Beta	Model (2) Attitude toward brand Beta	Model (3) Purchase Intention Beta		t-test	Sig	VIF	Tolerance
Attitude toward advertisement (Aad)	.55**	.53**	.31**	3.4	.001	1.4	.72	
Attitude toward brand (Ab)			.45**	6.0	.000	1.4	.72	
t-test	7.1	6.6						
Sig	.000	.000						
VIF	1.000	1.000						
tolerance	1.000	1.000						
R ²	.30	.28	.45					
F	48.6**	44.1**	45.6**					

Note: Significant levels: **P<0, 01

SUMMARY

The simple regression analysis is the statistical technique used to analyze the relationship between a single dependent (criterion) variable and single independent (predictor) variables. The simple regression analysis was used to find the effect of (Aad) on (Ab). The results explore that (Aad) was found positively and significantly associated with (Ab). Similar tests were conducted for the second hypothesis that focused on the relationship between attitude toward brand and purchase intention. There is a positive and significant relationship between consumers' brand attitude (Ab) and purchase intention (PI). Lastly, in terms of mediating variable of this study which namely is attitude toward brand, after regressing (PI) with both (Aad) and (Ab), both yielded significant effects. Therefore, (Ab) is considered to be a partial mediator (Aad) and (PI).

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study attempts to investigate the effect of consumer's attitude towards advertisement (Aad) on their attitude towards brand (Ab) and purchase intention (PI) of the advertised product. In addition, it tries to find out the role of (Ab) as a mediator in the relationship between (Aad) and (PI).

The present study found that attitude towards advertisement (Aad) had significant effect on both attitude towards brand (Ab) and purchase intention (PI), which supported study results carried out by Goldsmith et al. (2000; 2002). The results found in the present study on the

positive effect of (Ab) on (PI) are also in line with previous studies like Mitchell and Olson (1981), Shimp and Gresham (1985), Batra and Ray (1986), Laroche, Kim and Zhou (1996) and Phelps and Hoy (1996). However, the causal sequence of (Aad – Ab – PI) relationship explored in the previous studies that considered attitude towards brand (Ab) as a full mediator in the relationship between (Aad) and (PI) as reported by Mechleit et al. (1988) and Phelps et al. (1996) is not supported in the present study. (Ab) shows its ability on being partial moderator only.

An important finding from this research is that Saudi consumers are indeed affected by the advertisement that they are exposed to. This influences them to form positive attitude towards brand (Ab) and purchase intention (PI). The results indicate a consensus within this study and previous studies that found strong relationship to exist between (Aad) and (Ab); between (Aad) and (PI); as well as between (Ab) and (PI). Although Saudi is a developing country, in terms of communicating and marketing of products, it seems consumer dependency upon advertisements such as print still exist.

This indicates advertising activities of familiar products must be continued as it provides consumers with information that they need in regards to the product in question. Advertising seems to be an important activity to undertake even for familiar, convenience cover head product like AL-Bassam. Advertising may be helping in terms of transferring values between advertisers and consumers at large. This may be done through the establishment of “a nexus between what a culture views as desirable states of being and particular products” as suggested by Ng (2009).

Although not mentioned, there is a possibility that product and brand confidence may be created through the advertisements that consumers see. As mentioned earlier, an advertisement that provides good picture(s) may give a significant impact as the picture(s) help reader consumers to get “connected” with the product. In the case of AL-Bassam cover head, the wearing product should be pictured as authentic, credible and real following Brosius, Donsbach and Birk’s (1996) suggestion. The use of novel in-text picture(s) which have been identified by Garcia and Stark (1991) as (advertisement) content component(s) that are most likely to foster curiosity and thus motivate readers to continue reading should also be considered by advertisers in their advertisement strategy as well as the use of catchy words (Boduch, 2001) (Jhally, 2003).

CONCLUSIONS

The findings provide an understanding of Saudi consumers’ attitude towards cover head advertisements and AL-Bassam brands. The present study gives practitioners some ideas in

understanding how the companies can make use of advertisements in order to form Saudi consumers' attitude towards advertisement and products' brand (Ab) and purchase intention (PI). It is hoped that the present study can provide insights for further research in this area and help company policy makers to employ the implementation of attitude towards advertisement as it was found that attitude towards advertisement to be among the main drivers of consumers' intention and behavior in their buying behavior. It must be noted here that the sample size was only 150 Saudi male students learning at Najran University in Najran city. Thus, the results could not be generalized to all Saudi consumers.

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