

RELEVANCE, CONFUSION, ENTERTAINMENT AND SKEPTICISM TOWARDS ADVERTISING

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Abstract

Advertising is the method to communicate the product or brand message, but today consumers are going towards the skepticism. The most influencing variables on advertising are message relevance, confusion and entertainment. Three hypotheses were tested to see their influence on skepticism on advertising in Pakistan. This empirical study examines the ad skepticism of brands and services. Radom sampling technique was used to collect the primary data. Obermiller & Eric (1998) and Lastovicka (1983) instrument is used to measure the response. Results show that relevance of message will generate the viewer interest and trust which will lessen the skepticism, while reducing the confusion in message will weaken the influence of skepticism in adverting. However the entertainment plays a vital role in communicating the message to end user. Entertainment is searched by the viewers in media and same they find in the ads of a brand. Relevance, confusion and entertainment are found correlated significantly.

Keywords: Advertising, Skepticism, Relevance, Confusion, Entertainment

INTRODUCTION

In the area of advertising skepticism researchers have tried to study the effect of skepticism on Green purchase behavior (Albayrak, Caber, & Moutinho), knowledge of advertiser (Boush, Friestad, & Rose, 1994), More than \$16 billion globally are spent on the marketing and advertising (Research, 2011), if that advertising is not effective and target market is more tend towards the skepticism, that money is wasted. But if the relevance, confusion and entertainment are considered as main pillars of the advertising message, it can save the huge amount of a company and can communicate the message more effective. Skepticism is defined as the tendency toward disbelief in advertising claims(Obermiller & Eric, 1998). Ad skepticism is an unchanging characteristic of customers that plays a role in responses to advertising. Virtually all advertising contains claims that are matter to some degree of skepticism(Obermiller & Spangenberg, 2000).

Once a consumer starts disbelieving on advertising, it will spoil the all efforts of company of conveying its message, it can even make more problems when it is understood that message in ad was not relevant or was confusing. The objective of this research is to understand the relationship of relevance, confusion and entertainment with the skepticism by knowing the relationship companies may convey their message more effective.

Marketing budget allocations are optimized through brand loyalty, which is supported with customer retention (Blattberg and Deighton, 1996). But these repeat purchases or retention cannot be treated as brand performances which are created through repetition of ads. (Dall'Olmo Riley et al. 1997).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Skepticism

Skepticism is defined as the tendency toward disbelief in advertising claims(Obermiller & Eric, 1998). Consumer may vary in skepticism in adds i.e. print ads, radio ads and television ads. A person may be skeptical of truth claims in ads due to motives of advertisers, information value given to individual or society, appropriateness for target audience, cultural differences. Ad skepticism may vary in terms of lower skeptical consumers and higher skeptical consumers. Further Obermiller, C., & Eric, R. S. (1998) have cleared that ad escapticism does not mean that not to believe in any communication rather they have taken it as marketplace belief which are created through socialization or consumer experiences.

Skepticism crates many concerns in human lives even for green consumers who are known as well educated, young and urban inhabitants (Albayrak, Caber, & Moutinho) and as per their research results there is negative relationship between green consumers and ad escapism.

Human environment is being violated due to wrong corporate green claims by this credibility is decreased and green consumer do not become sustainable which cause for the destruction of physical and human environment. Obermiller et al., (2005) in study reflects that more involving products are influenced slightly stronger by ad skepticism and sometimes these products may be affected negatively due to higher skepticism. While in his second study, he suggest that high skeptics are persuaded by more through informational ads than emotional.

Relevance

Advertising may be relevant in terms of personal and context but when cognition and emotions are connected than personal and contextual efforts are combined. Personal relevance contains positive and negative resonance, long and short fixation time, slow or low cognitive engagement while contextual relevance contains, drawing of attention fast, positive emotional resonance, positive cognitive engagement (Insights, 2011).

Activity targeted advertising is considered as more relevant, and in this relevance means how well current activity is matched (Sala, Partridge, Jacobson, & Begole, 2007). Terminologies create better impact on advertising when consumer knowledge level is high, these terminologies becomes symbol for authenticity in advertising and consumer interest is developed by considering relevance in the advertising message (Chuang, Tsai, Cheng, & Sun, 2009).

Consumers watch the ads and marketers try to stimulate their feelings, in this regard feelings are regarded as representation of target, and that is evaluated on the basis of relevance of message in advertising. When individuals are concerned with the affective experience, perceived relevance feelings towards target should be high to capture more individual concentration in the message (Pham, 1998). Consumers with high knowledge can judge the relevance of product or service with their need and want, if the misinformation is provided by marketer in advertising message that will lead to distrust of consumer (Cowley & Janus, 2004). When the message is of great personal relevance, consumer pays more attention to the message, but at the same time if the transportation in the message is very high, this may lead to negative impact of ads (Wang & Calder, 2006).

H1: Relevance crates the trust in ads; this trust about the advertising will minimize the skepticism.

Confusion

In the process of advertising, ambiguity is checked and author has discussed that socio-psychological is the factors which motivate television viewers to see the commercials. (Hornik, 1976) Confusion may come from trademarks when brands are advertised; this confusion is

occurred on the basis of association. Association is divided in to three categories, direct confusion, indirect confusion, pure association or confusion (Li, 2010). Confusion may come from the alphabetic order (LeBlanc & Muise, 1985), which can be used in the advertising message. The terminology may also create confusion in advertising, it usually happens when accreditation is shown in advertising (Brinkmann, Czaske, & Bosch, 2003). Certification of reference materials and accreditation of reference material producers: Questionable terminology leads to confusion. Conceptual confusion often entrances our thinking and it encourages to over-generalize, to make more simplify (LeBlanc & Muise, 1985).

H2: Confusion creates vagueness in the ads, which reinforces the skepticism.

Entertainment

Emotions are understood through neuroscience, artificial intelligence, psychology and human-computer interactions; emotions help to understand the entertainment. Researchers associate emotions with the decision making and these human emotions are a compulsory part of behavioral and cognitive capabilities. There are five main emotions, first, anger, second, fear, third, disgust, fourth, happiness, fifth, sadness. Emotional triggers are provided to viewers for entertainment. Three major groups create the system of entertainment; first, explicit rendering, second, media and mode, third, realism (Salem & Rauterberg, 2005).

In advertising popular appeal is used to deal the taste of ordinary customer, when marketers intend to capture large common markets, in this regards, entertainment is used for ordinary customer and high art and higher complexity is used for professional critics. Considering certain cultural preferences, art and entertainment have been very contradictory in advertising message, but researchers have agreed that popular appeal is negatively correlated with artistic integrity (Holbrook, 1999).

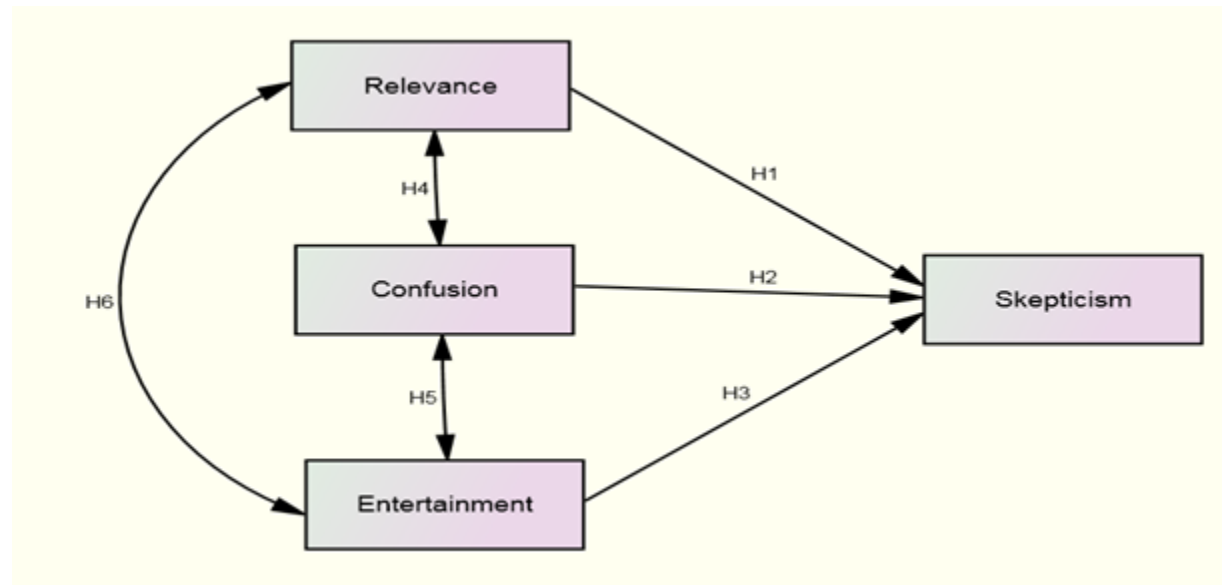
Children get advertising message in the form of entertainment, particularly older children are found interested in consumption advertising message in the form of entertainment. But this also leads to threat that commercials are viewed as image creation and are less focused on product itself (Moore & Lutz, 2000).

Mythological advertisements contain entertainment (Thompson & Tian, 2008), various forms of entertainment are used by the marketers such as concerts, sports, drams, movies, and narratives. Marketers focus on the entertainment message as consumers consume more on it, in America 8.5 percent of their total income is spent on advertisement (Argo, Zhu, & Dahl, 2008). When MNCs advertise their message they have to consider the language, because the study of (Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008) confirms that consumer may be fluent in native (i.e. Hindi) and English but would prefer to have or seek entertainment in native language. Nature of advertising

message may be divided into three major categories, first is product placement, product integration and third is branded entertainment. This branded entertainment is used when sponsor owned shows are conducted and this will work when brand is woven in the entertainment content (Russell, 2007).

H3: More the entertainment in advertising will lessen the skepticism

Figure 1: Research Model



METHODOLOGY

This is an empirical study, which examines the ad skepticism of brands and services; data is collected from the Pakistan. Response is checked of ad viewers and data is analysed to reduce the skepticism. Primary data is collected to see the skepticism level of respondents who use either brand or a service of a company. The reason to use the same instrument of (Obermiller & Eric, 1998) and (Lastovicka, 1983) is that both studies have studied the variable influence on consumer behavior. The study of (Obermiller & Eric, 1998) have only developed the scale to measure the consumer skepticism in advertising while the study of (Lastovicka, 1983) have focused on the viewer reaction to television commercials. This study have combined the both instruments and have tried to analysis the relevance, confusion, entertainment influence on consumer behavior and effect of these factors in skepticism in advertising.

One thousand questionnaires were distributed in Pakistan, six hundred and sixty five were received, data analyzed on six hundred forty questionnaires, which are collected with random sampling technique. Low response rate was observed, twenty five questionnaires were excluded due to missing values. The survey questionnaire contains 25 items for measuring

advertising skepticism and influence of relevance, confusion, entertainment on ad skepticism. A five point likert scale is used to measure the above variables from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Table 1: Sample distribution

Age	Sex	Area	Education
Less Than 18	55	Male	409
From 19 to 25	572	Female	231
From 26 to 30	10		
More Than 35	3		

The age groups which represent were from below eighteen years to more than thirty five years, from nineteen to twenty five years age group has responded in the survey most with the response of five hundred and seventy two. In sex comparison, male has responded more than the female, male response is four hundred and nine while rest is women. Population in Pakistan is divided in to two divisions, rural and urban; from rural areas response is very low which is eighty three while five hundred and seventy seven five are from urban area. Graduates have participated most the three hundred and seventy four while masters holders are two hundred and forty five while rest are below than graduation respondents.

ANALYSIS

The reliability of the data is found 86 percent through Conbach's alpha. In table 2, correlation of variables is significant, the mean of variable is from 14.83 to 29.12 and standard deviation is from 2.67 to 5.65. Results show the significant relationship between independent variables, relevance and confusion is recorded as .243, confusion and entertainment is found .342 while entertainment and relevance is .371.

Table 2 : Correlation matrix

	Relevance	Confusion	Entertainment	Skepticism
Relevance	—	.243**	.371**	.326**
Confusion	.243**	—	.342**	.196**
Entertainment	.371**	.342**	—	.296**
Skepticism	.326**	.197**	.296**	—
Mean	20.05	14.83	17.02	29.12
Std. Deviation	3.63	2.67	3.34	5.65
N	602	616	625	605

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 results supports the hypothesis one that Relevance minimizes the skepticism ($\beta_1 = 0.36$, $t = 5.73$, $P = 0$) and confusion hypothesis is also supported that it has negative influence on ad skepticism ($\beta_2 = 0.14$, $t = 1.76$, $P = .078$). Ad skepticism effect is lessen with more inclusion of entertainment is also supported with ($\beta_3 = -0.29$, $t = 4.24$, $P = 0$).

Table 3 : MLS Regression Estimates^a

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Regression Coefficient ^b	t	P Values	Support
(Constant)	Bo	14.54	9.2		
H1	β_1 Relevance	0.36	5.75	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
H2	β_2 Confusion	0.14	1.76	.078	<input type="checkbox"/>
H3	β_3 Entertainment	0.29	4.24	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
R^2		0.13			

aDependent variable is loyalty (LOYT).

bUnstandardized coefficients. cAdj. $R^2 = 0.44$

Results shows that relevance is the variable which impact a lot on advertising skepticism, relevance is having t score 5.75 which reflect that advertising viewers of Pakistan consider the relevance factor more important. This may be due to floating of second copy of products in market which is mostly done in developing countries. It was the research first hypothesis that relevance is the factor which can minimize the ad skepticism and build the customer trust in the advertising.

Entertainment is the second most influencing variable on ad skepticism having t values of 4.24. Though there is a large cultural difference in Pakistan, even within the provinces. The literature argues that marketers use popular appeal with entertainment message, but cultural differences may create negative influences of the popular appeal. Instead of it results supports the hypothesis that entertainment can reduce the ad skepticism and will strengthen the message appeal.

Confusion may increase the ad skepticism is the second hypothesis in this study, response has supported that confusion will create the vagueness and will increase the ad skepticism, the t score of this variable is 1.76 which is the lowest of regression model.

CONCLUSION

Advertising is the method to communicate the product or brand message, but today consumers are going towards the skepticism. The most influencing variables on advertising are message relevance, confusion and entertainment. Three hypotheses were tested to see their influence on

skepticism on advertising in Pakistan. Results show that relevance of message will generate the viewer interest and trust which will lessen the skepticism, while reducing the confusion in message will weaken the influence of skepticism in advertising. However the entertainment plays a vital role in communicating the message to end user. Entertainment is searched by the viewers in media and same they find in the ads of a brand. All hypotheses have been supported by the data within the hetero culture country.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Marketing truly believe that it's the advertising tool which can promote and sustain their products or services in the market but if the same tool is ignored by the consumers, marketer cannot gain their goals. This research is helpful for all marketers and advertising agencies to clearly understand the skepticism and influence of relevance, entertainment and confusion in advertising the products or services.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This research work is conducted at a less developed country, which results may not be as per developed countries, where customer has more knowledge. Further just one industry is tested which may not be the same situation at different industries and with different brands. This research is conducted to analyze the relationship of confusion, entertainment and relevance with ad skepticism as a whole brand and industry-wise but this work may be forwarded to see the differences industry-wise and their brands either of low involvement or high involvement separately which will further clear the reasons of ad skepticism and will help to identify the most and less affecting variable to ad skepticism.

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