Moderation effect of culture on the relationships among hedonism, product information, social integration and attitude towards advertising: an empirical study

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Abstract: This study investigated the impact of culture on attitude towards advertising of various brands according to hedonism or pleasure; product information; social integration with masculinity and power distance as cultural dimensions. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) analysis was used to test the overall significance of the model. Multiple regression analysis showed positive significant impacts of social integration ($\beta = 0.412$, $p < 0.000$), product information ($\beta = 0.208$, $p<0.000$) and hedonism ($\beta = 0.181$, $p < 0.000$) on attitude towards advertising. Results of the study confirmed the moderation effect of culture on relationships among product information, social integration, hedonism and attitude towards advertising. Study comprised sample size of 287 respondents.

Keywords: attitude; advertising; product information; social integration; hedonism; culture.

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Biographical notes: Vikas Gautam is a Doctorate in Marketing from The ICFAI University Dehradun, India. He received his graduate degree in Science from Himachal Pradesh University Shimla and post-graduate degree in Management (MBA) from Punjab Technical University, Jallandhar, India, MPhil in Management and Management Teachers Training Program (MTP) Certificate from The ICFAI University, Tripura, India, and declared successful in UGC NET with JRF score (76.57%). His areas of interest are services marketing, consumer behaviour, branding, business research method, quantitative methods, and allied areas. He published more than 26 research articles in national and international refereed journals. He presented papers in national and international conferences.
1 Introduction

Advertising is a type of communication proposed to convince viewers, readers or listeners to purchase goods or services. It includes the name of a good or service and how that good or service could earn profit for the consumer, to convince a target market to buy or to consume that scrupulous brand. The advertising messages are viewed by different media and are paid for by the various sponsors. Advertising can also work as a communication vehicle to persuade a large population to take an assured action. Modern advertising developed with the rise of mass production in the late 19th and early twentieth centuries.

Different types of media can be used to convey these messages include; newspapers, magazines, television, radio, direct mail, websites, etc. generally there are two types of advertisers namely; commercial and non-commercial. Commercial advertisers use branding to increase consumption of their goods or services, whereas non-commercial advertisers spend money to advertise religious organisations, government agencies, political parties, etc. Pollay and Mittal (1993) defined advertising as a major social event expresses a key alteration in values, beliefs, behaviour and buying patterns of the people which has a significant impact on their lifestyles.

Attitude towards advertising is a central part and fundamentally is one of the determinants of attitude towards any advertisement message (Munusamy and Hoo, 2007). Authors argued that much of the research has been conducted at macro level on mainly two dimensions; social and economic effect of advertising. Later, Pollay and Mittal (1993) proposed product information, social role, and hedonism as a personal dimension for attitude towards advertisement at micro level. Core reasons for the alteration in the lifestyle and purchasing pattern of a person are the economic change and definite market opportunities (Petrovici and Marinov, 2007).

Present study examined the cultural influence, general attitude and beliefs toward advertising combined with the observation of the consumer of advertising effectiveness. Muk (2015) found the evidences of cultural differences in media consumption patterns of consumers. Author conducted study to compare media consumption patterns of young consumers of America and Korea. Sandage and Leckenby (1980) differentiate advertising as instrument and institution. They defined institution component as the economic and social role that society has given to advertising institutions to implement, and advertisement instrument as carrying out qualities and the failures of advertisement.

Pollay and Mittal (1993) argued that advertisement messages are criticised for providing wrong information about products, breach of social norms and abusing consumer brainpower. Due to trends of liberalisation, globalisation, establishment of multi-national companies (MNCs) in India; advertisement has undergone radical changes in the recent times which has an immense impact on the attitudes and beliefs of the consumer. Attitude reflects the broad observation of good or service whereas beliefs are used to measure that assessment of that good or service on some feature (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Pollay and Mittal (1993) proposed determinants of advertising namely; product information, social integration, pleasure/amusement.
1.1 **Objective of the study**

In the light of above background, the main objective of the study was to examine the impact of culture on attitude towards advertising by establishing the relationship with product information, social integration and hedonism.

1.2 **Rationale for the study**

India is an emerging business market in global context due to trends of liberalisation, globalisation, and establishment of MNCs. Advertisement has undergone radical changes in the recent times which have an immense impact on the attitudes and beliefs of the consumer. This study will help domestic as well as foreign marketers to introduce their goods or services according to local culture of the country. They should take advantage of the behaviour of the consumers towards advertisement, which in turn will influence their purchasing behaviours.

2 **The literature review**

Past literature has found that attitude of a consumer towards advertising increasingly negative. Pollay and Mittal (1993) found it positive too. The Gallup organisation in early survey of consumer attitude towards advertising found that a lot of people like advertisement and found it informative. Elliot and Speck (1998) examined six key advertisement media namely; Television, broadcasting, magazines, newspaper, yellow pages and direct mail. MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) proposed that attitude towards advertising is a propensity to react in incessant favourable or unfavourable mode towards advertising.

Attitude may be defined as cerebral way an individual can use to arrange the way they see their environment and direct them to act in response to that environment (Aaker et al., 1986). Antonides and van Raaij (1998) proposed that attitude or behaviour of an individual is interlinked with each other which result in change and advance their buying behaviour, which can be either positive or negative. Social and economic effects are related to institution dimensions of the advertising (Munusamy and Hoo, 2007). Instrument Dimension is the executional qualities of advertising that have long been the focus of study exploring the advertising effectiveness and attitudes held towards advertising. These executional qualities have been calculated, like; informational value of advertising (Durand and Lambert, 1985); poor taste in advertising (Larkin, 1977) and the requirement of the government instruction in advertising (Durand and Lambert, 1985).

Pollay and Mittal (1993) argued that the primary determinants like; entertainment, providing social image and information depict the personal viewpoints about benefit the consumer get from watching advertisements. Product information provided through advertisement plays an important role in changing the behaviour or attitude of the consumer towards advertising and also the buying behaviour by meeting their requirements after attainment information about that goods or services; advertised in television (Pollay and Mittal, 1993).

Advertising gives support to the improvement in consumers’ self-image and product meaning with many customers spending more for branded clothing featuring well-known logos, slogans and contemporary corporate designs. Product information is considered as
a basic personal trust factor which moulds the trusts of consumers about the informative disposition of the advertising.

Elliot and Speck (1998) found in their study that different people have different expectations about advertisement in different media; some people like to get information from the print advertising media, whereas some prefer television advertising media. According to Mittal (1994) customers generally do not believe advertising reflects their image. Research had showed that the hedonic function is significant in impacting favourable attitude towards advertising on the basis of the fact that more the pleasure and entertainment in advertising the more it will be liked by the customers (Mittal, 1994). Advertising helps customers in developing their own identity and style, which in turn will create optimistic image of advertising.

McCarty (1994) concluded from his empirical findings that each individual possesses few inimitable set of values, and there are also some particular values that focus on a culture, these values are differentiated from personal values because they direct to the base on which culture rests. Culture values can be transferred by family, school, church, media, and state (Samovar et al., 1998).

The purpose of advertisers will be challenging, if the variation in advertising contents is independent of culture values in multicultural context. Hong et al. (1987) proposed that the role of culture is important in transferring advertising strategy across the world, because communication patterns are closely related to culture values and customs in each country. In the present time, Asian markets are growing swiftly and efficiently across the world, and have the major growth market for MNCs (Shao et al., 1999). Under the assumptions of growing living standards of Asian consumers, advertising strategies in Asia are getting popularity (Tai, 1997). Gregory and Munch (1997) argued that consumers’ respond favourably to advertising if advertising message are analogous with the core culture values of that country’s advertisements. Petrovici (2007) found that advertising demonstrates a positive effect on general attitude, whereas image has a surprisingly negative effect on general attitude towards advertising, which distinguishes with expectations based upon developed countries.

Individual-level variables contribute a little bit to elucidate banner advertising effectiveness, which reinforces the importance of the direct effects of national-level cultural variables (Eisend and Moller, 2010).

Wang and Sun (2010) found five significant predictors of attitudes toward online advertising namely; information seeking, entertainment, economy, credibility, and value corruption. Further, in their empirical study, authors concluded that Romanians tended to hold a more positive attitude towards online advertising than Chinese, but Chinese were more likely to purchase online.

Erdener et al. (2011) examined relevant factors of consumers’ time orientations in Georgia and found factors like; action orientation, present orientation and consciousness of future, planning orientation, realisation of present in the light of past, and time saving.

Advertising made consumers aware about available product alternatives and enabled them to engage in comparative shopping (Erdener et al., 2013).

Cui et al. (2013) proposed a congruency activation model and adopted a 3 × 2 experimental design to observe Chinese consumers’ attitude towards diverse advertisements. Results of the study indicated that consumers prefer transformational and integrated advertisements to informational advertisements under both low and high involvement conditions. Chinese consumers engage in more affective processing than cognitive thoughts as per the protocol analysis. Product information, hedonism, and good
for economy are significant predictors of attitude towards advertising among young adults (Ting et al., 2015).

3 Theoretical framework

Based on existing literature about attitudes towards advertising and consumer behaviour models, a research framework has been constructed to exhibit the relationship among product information, social integration and hedonism/pleasure.

Figure 1 Primary determinant on advertising towards general attitude

![Diagram](image)

The figure exhibits the relationship between three constructs (product information, social integration and hedonism) and general attitude towards advertising graphically. Three sets of hypothesis are developed from the above framework as guided by Pollay and Mittal (1993).

H$_{01}$ There is no positive impact of product information on general attitudes towards advertising.

H$_{02}$ There is no positive impact of social integration on general attitudes towards advertising.

H$_{03}$ There is no positive impact of hedonism/pleasure on general attitudes towards advertising.

Petrovici and Marinov (2007) adopted primary determinants (product information, social integration, hedonism/pleasure) of general attitude towards advertising from the model of attitude towards advertising proposed by Pollay and Mittal (1993). The present study focuses on these primary determinants. Understanding of core cultural values of a country is very important in the context of international marketing and advertising. Watson et al. (2002) argued that core cultural values of a country have a powerful impact on characteristics and behaviours of the consumers.

Many researchers in the past had made sincere efforts to develop universal values of cultures across different countries. Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions provided the
first conceptually based set of value dimensions to compare different cultures on the basis of empirical study. Present study focused on two dimensions of culture i.e., power distance which indicates the degree to which the power differences are acknowledged and approved by society, and the masculinity dimension shows the degree to which common male values are imperative to a society. According to Hofstede (1980), the power distance index explains how diverse societies deal with basic human inequalities in social status and prestige, wealth and source of power. People with power are supposed to have privileges. In countries with large power distance, the exercise of power gives fulfilment and powerful people endeavour to sustain and amplify power differences (Hofstede 1980).

H04 There is no moderation effect of culture on the relationship among hedonism, product information, social integration and attitude towards advertising.

4 Research methodology

The empirical phase of this research is to measure general attitude of consumers towards advertising. Five-point Likert’s scale was employed to measure dependent variable, independent variables, and moderating variables.

4.1 The survey instrument

The survey instrument was structured questionnaire. The variables included in the study have been taken from study conducted by Pollay and Mittal (1993). For the suitability in Indian context, the questionnaire was further refined based on a pilot test among management students of a private management institution.

4.2 The sample

To meet the objectives of the present study, a field-based survey design is used as data collection method. The data were collected through a mall intercept method in Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) of India. A total of 310 respondents were contacted for participation in the field survey. Out of 310 questionnaires, 287 completely filled questionnaires were considered for the analysis.

4.3 Data presentation

4.3.1 Demographic profile

The questionnaire included a section on respondent’s profile, as various demographic and other socio-cultural variables. Information on demographic features may also be helpful to get a representative sample out of the population. A demographic profile of the respondents consisted of age, gender, marital status, educational qualifications, employment status, and monthly household income. Among the respondents 53.25% were of the age group 28 to 35 years, and 26.50% of 27 years and below age group. Majority of respondents were males with 58.60% and females respondents were of less percentage of 41.40%. The majority of the respondents were married (60.30%), as percentage of unmarried was 39.70%. There were more post graduate respondents
than graduate and others. Moreover the occupational variables showed that the respondents had major portion of professionals (56.50%), where as the percentage of self-employment, wage employment, others were 8.50%, 11.70%, 23.30% respectively. In the survey it was also found that the respondents came from different income backgrounds; a major part of them (62.70%) earned more than Rs. 30,000 but above Rs. 40,000 were only 28.25%.

4.4 Data analysis and findings

The SPSS software package 17.0 version was used to analyse the data collected for this study. The Microsoft Excel software package was also used to make some basic computations like calculation of the mean/average values, etc.

4.5 Reliability analysis

To test the reliability of the set of items forming the scale a measure of construct reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) was computed. Cronbach’s alpha is useful in measuring how well a set of variables or items measure a single, one-dimensional latent construct. The alpha values of 0.70 or greater represent satisfactory reliability of the items measuring the construct. These alpha coefficients were found to be ranging from 0.731 to 0.923 for individual constructs and 0.843 for the survey instrument making the items measuring the dimensions satisfactorily reliable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sr. no.</td>
<td>Construct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Attitude towards advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Product information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Social integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hedonism/pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6 Analysis of variance analysis

To investigate the overall significance of the model, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. Results (from Table 2) show that all the independent variables (product information; social integration; hedonism/pleasure) have significant direct impact on consumers’ attitude towards advertising (high F-value = 11.014, significant at 0.000 level).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>ANOVA results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Sum of squares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>7.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>62.347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69.615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7 Multiple regression results

Multiple regression equation was developed to examine the individual impact of independent variables (product information; social integration; hedonism/pleasure) on the level of customers’ general attitude towards advertising. For the purpose of developing the multiple regression results, product information, social integration, and hedonism/pleasure are taken as independent variables and customers’ general attitude towards advertising as the dependent variable.

Table 3 Multiple regression coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Unstandardised coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Collinearity statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Unstandardised coefficients</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>Collinearity statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.027</td>
<td>0.143</td>
<td>21.207</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product information</td>
<td>0.208</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>3.925</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social integration</td>
<td>0.412</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>10.049</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonism/pleasure</td>
<td>0.181</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>5.324</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the present study, multiple regression analysis was used to test the null hypotheses (H01; H02; H03). Results (from Table 3) show that un-standardised beta coefficients for all the three independent variables (product information −0.208; social integration −0.412; hedonism/pleasure −0.181) are significant at 0.000 level.

Multiple regression equation:

\[
\text{Attitude towards advertising} = 3.027 + 0.208(\text{product information}) + 0.412(\text{social integration}) + 0.181(\text{Hedonism Pleasure}).
\]

4.8 Moderation analysis

To test the null hypothesis H04, moderator analysis was employed. The significant F-value for all the three independent variables (from Tables 4, 5, and 6) provides evidence to reject the null hypothesis that culture does not moderate the relationship among hedonism, product information, social integration and attitude towards advertising. Study included three interaction terms (CultureProduct_Information; CultureSocial_Integration; CultureHedonism). Culture has been playing a significant moderating role with product information (β = 0.367, p<0.000), social integration (β = 0.341, p<0.000), and hedonism/pleasure (β = 0.372, p<0.000).

Table 4 ANOVA analysis results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F-value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>2.3492</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1746</td>
<td>4.886</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>68.2658</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>.2404</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69.6153</td>
<td>286</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Dependent variable: attitude towards advertising. Independent variables: Product_Information, CultureProduct_Information (interaction term).
Results from the study show that advertising helps consumers to find products and brands according to their tastes and preferences. The contribution of advertising for consumers comes in the form of awareness about the quality of products and after sales service which helps in developing positive attitude towards advertisements. Consumers have positive attitude towards advertisements if they succeed in creating pleasant memories in their minds. Exhilarating advertisements draw attention of consumers and craft positive purchasing attitude towards the advertised good or service.

Generally, consumers exhibit positive attitude towards those particular advertisements which are focused on education. Multiple regression results revealed that product information has a weak impact on attitude towards advertisement as compared to hedonism or social integration, which means that advertisements are not able to communicate comprehensive information about a particular good or service to consumers.

Therefore it is of utmost importance for the managers to develop such type of advertisement, which can communicate complete information about the product. In the study it was found that while making advertisements, culture plays an imperative role. Moreover, moderation effect of culture on the relationship among hedonism, product information, social integration and attitude towards advertising has been found.

6 Conclusions

In the present competitive environment, companies need to study the perceptions of customers about effects of new advertising trends based on their cultures and attitudes.
The main objective of the current study was to examine the impact of culture on attitude towards advertising by establishing the relationship with product information, social integration and hedonism. Culture and traditions of our society have been influenced largely by various sources like; trends of liberalisation, globalisation, advent of internet technology, access to global education, abundance of information, etc. We found positive significant impact of product information, social integration and hedonism/pleasure on consumer’s attitude towards advertising. Further, this study results confirmed the moderation effect of culture on the relationship among hedonism, product information, social integration and attitude towards advertising.

6.1 Implications of the study

This study contributes to the literature as a model testing for moderation effect of culture in the relationships among product information, social integration, hedonism and attitude towards advertising in a developing country context. Culture of the society includes ethical and moral values. This study had tested moderation role of culture to assess attitude of consumers toward advertising. Based on study findings, it is highly recommended that advertising agencies, strategic managers, and all the stakeholders should make sure that all advertisements must include social values, norms, traditions, and ethics.

Marketers should always remember that business can only prosper if the consumers are satisfied with the products. India (a developing nation) is undergoing many changes due to liberalisation, globalisation; exposure to reflect in the current advertising affects the younger consumers in our society whereas many consumers assume that advertising is simply an embellishment of the good or service. In this study, social integration has been proved most important predictor of attitude towards advertising in comparison to product information and hedonism. Therefore, marketers should not forget this aspect, while designing advertisements for their products. More or less consumers are attentive of the informational and hedonic function of advertising but also it influences the children in the society. In the present time, consumers are following the new trends of fashion to build their image in the society.

6.2 Limitations and future scope of the study

The results of the present study are not free all types of limitations. First limitation is related to data used for analysis in this study. The results of the study are based on cross-sectional primary data, which may lead to measurement error. Respondents for this study were expected to respond to close-ended questions. Moreover, study model was tested with the help of primary data collected from the respondents residing in a small geographical area in India. These limitations restrict generalisation of study results to wider geographical areas. Similar types of studies should be conducted to validate the findings of this study. Future study can check for impact of socio-demographical variables (age, gender, income groups, education backgrounds, etc.) as other set of moderators in the relationships among study constructs. In addition, future studies may focus on comparison of these constructs across cultures (Asian vs. Hispanic, etc.).
References


Moderation effect of culture on the relationships


