

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON TURKISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD ONLINE ADVERTISING AND THEIR BEHAVIOURAL RESPONSE

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Abstract

This academic study aims to show the impact of social media on Turkish students' attitudes toward online advertising and their behavioural response. Therefore this study will reveal the influence of consumers' attitudes toward social media advertising and its impact on their advertising clicking and furthermore buying intention.

To create a statistically significant test pool, 400 university students of the Adnan Menderes university, Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences in Aydın/Turkey were randomly chosen and the data was analysed with SPSS version 18. A proposed model of belief, attitude and behavioural response, in the context of social media advertising, was tested along with the PCA (Principle component analysis) to support the model.

The following four factors, 'Belief about social media advertising', 'Attitude toward social media advertising', 'AdClicking' and 'OnlineBuying' were tested.

The aim of this study was to reveal that a positive belief about social media advertising leads to an affirmative attitude toward social media advertising which significantly influences consumers' advertising clicking behaviour which at the

same time can have a favorable impact on their buying behaviour from the internet.

The results of this study should be considered important for Turkish companys' marketing strategies which aim to go online to sell their products or services to their target customers through social media channels (e.g. facebook, twitter etc.).

Key Words: *Social Media Advertising, Consumer Beliefs, Consumer Attitudes, Consumer Behaviour*

JEL Classification: M31, M37

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology (IT) has changed the global structure of selling products and services in the world. According to Laura Maya companies can meet some of their very best potential customers on social networking sites. This author also says that one can also make friends and influence people there (Maya, 2011).

'It is well-established that more business is actually conducted in social settings than in an office: more deals are made on golf courses than in boardrooms'. (Maya, 2011).

According to Gary B. Shelly and Mark Frydenberg the use of the World Wide Web has changed the way people do business, communicate and share information with each other. 'The World Wide Web has evolved from a collection of Web sites containing pages of static or infrequently changing text, images, and hyperlinks to support interactive Web applications for performing business transactions, sharing and viewing photos and videos, chatting, and collaborating' (Shelly and Frydenberg, 2011:1). 'With the help of Web 2.0 interactive applications allow users to participate in contributing, organizing, and creating their content' (Shelly and Frydenberg, 2011:1).

In addition interactions of users of Web 2.0 have also changed the way about how consumers purchase their products or services. Companies use Social Media sites to persuade users to purchase their products or goods.

This study aims to show the impact of Social Media Advertising from a Turkish university students' point of view. To do so, first the Believe about Social Media

Advertising (BASMA) if favorable then the Attitude toward Social Media Advertising (ATSMA) needs to be analysed. If this factor is also favorable then their Behavioural Response (BR) toward Social Media Advertising will be measured which, if favorable, can lead to Buying of products or services online.

What makes potential costumers purchase goods and services from companies' internet presences is going to be shown in the following section about general Beliefs and Attitudes of consumers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

People do not like commercials, but they are keen to know what their friends' recommendations about products and services are (Maya, 2011). This very strong desire to gather more information makes potential customers go online and search on numerous social media pages.

Advertising has become a very firm tool to companies to promote their services and/or products. Curran has formulated advertising as follows: "Advertising is a paid, mediated form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action now or in the future" (Richards Curran, 2002:63). This means that "all paid space on a Web site or in an email is considered advertising. Internet advertising parallels traditional media advertising, in which companies create content and then sell space to outside advertisers" (Strauss, 2006:322). "Under Online advertising in its original sense the placement of advertising material, primarely banner, on web pages in order to support marketing and communication objectives is understood" (Lammenett, 2006:122).

"Past studies showed that attitudes toward social media had a positive and significant relationship with purchase intention" (Okazaki, 2011:182). Several studies of thinkers have been used to analyse and proof the outcomes. "Stevenson differentiated two kinds of agreement or disagreement in morals: one in belief the other in attitude" (Parkinson,1988:616) and found that there is a positive relationship between the attitude toward advertising on the Web and a purchase intention (Stevenson et al., 2000:29).

As analysed earlier belief and attitude is closely linked "A belief is a descriptive thought that a person holds about something. An attitude is a person's enduring favorable or unfavorable evaluation, emotional feeling, and action tendencies toward some objects or ideas" (Kotler and Keller,2006:194)

There are many thinkers who have developed different belief dimensions about advertising over the years as it is a multi-dimensional construct. Bauer and Greyser identified two dimensions about consumer belief: “economic” and “social” underlying the general belief that advertising raised the standard of living and led to better products that contributes to a positive attitude towards advertising in general (Bauer and Greyser, 1968:136).

Pollay and Mittal have split consumers’ belief about advertising into two dimensions: “Personal uses” and “social effect”. Personal use factors include: product information, social role and image, and hedonic/pleasure. Societal effects include the following four factors: good for the economy, materialism, value corruption, and falsity/no sense (Pollay and Mittal, 1993:99-144).

Ducoffe’s approach is made of four factors: “Informativeness”, “deceptiveness”, “irritation”, and “entertainment” (Ducoffe, 1996:1-18).

Whereas Wang and Sun categorised five belief factors: “information”, “entertainment”, “credibility”, “economy” and “value” (Wang and Sun, 2010:333).

As researched most traditional belief dimensions in the interconnection of online advertising are “information”, “entertainment”, “good for economy” and “value corruption”.

This study focuses on these four factors of consumer beliefs about advertising through social media.

The information factor examines the the personal use of advertising as source of information (Ju-Pak, 1999:207-231). As mentioned earlier Ducoffe has found a significant and positive correlation between consumers’ value of advertising and on the web and the informativeness of that advertising. Therefore it can be said that social media provides internet users with information.

Watson, Akselsen and Pitt (1998) agree on that online advertising entertains and motivates customers. Social media gives opportunity for lively interactions with other users which provides enjoyment.

Good for economy is a belief factor designed by Pollay and Mittal’s (2003) model. The emergence of E-commerce has led to a global economic growth. People can purchase from the internet without regional or time boundaries.

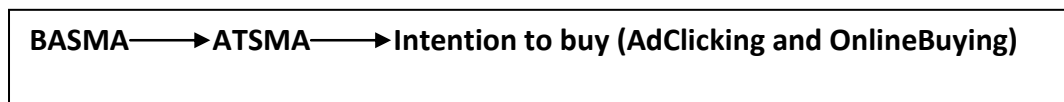
The last belief factor this study is dealing with is value corruption. Advertising messages are linked to user values and might influence their values positively or negatively.

This study assumes that consumers' belief of social media advertising affects their attitudes toward social media advertising positively.

3. PROPOSED MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

This study assumes that consumers' belief of social media advertising affects their attitudes toward social media advertising positively. It advances that consumers' belief about social media advertising (BASMA) influence their attitudes toward social media advertising (ATSMA). This model is a derivation of Mir's study from 2012 and this study was applied to an example in Turkey.

Figure-1: The BASMA and ATSMA Model



Source: Mir: 2012:272.

This study's Hypotheses are:

H1: Consumers' beliefs about social media advertising is based on a multidimensional structure.

H2: Consumers' positive beliefs about advertising influences their attitudes toward social media advertising positively.

H3: The more favorable attitudes toward social media advertising, the higher the intention toward AdClicking and OnlineBuying

4. METHODOLOGY

In this study quantitative techniques were used and with the help of questionnaires, students' habit towards the use of social media, their behaviour and their attitudes toward social media advertising were examined. At the same time demographic data was collected. The questionnaires were applied between March and May 2013 on a face-to-face basis.

Respondents of the current study were students enrolled in the Adnan Menderes university, Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences in the Aegean

region in Aydın, Turkey. Through a survey, questionnaires were distributed among a random sample of 400 students. Responses were measured on a fivepoint Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

To measure the respondents' belief about social media advertising items were adapted from Pollay and Mittal (1993), Wang and Sun (2010), Chi (2011) and Mir (2012).

Two questions adapted from Wang and Sun (2010) were used to measure the consumers' responses toward social media advertising in Mir's (2012) study.

5. FINDINGS

Outcomes of the study, in general the presentation of descriptive statistics and habits while using social media are going to be shown with the help of a theoretical model applied in an empirical way and will be discussed in the following sections.

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

Out of 400 respondents, 45,5 percent were male and 54,5 percent were female. 8.7 percent of the respondents are between 17-19 years old. 63.3 percent are between 20-22, 21.3 percent are 23-25, 3 percent are 26-28 and 4.3 percent are 29 years old and older. 95.3 percent of the respondents are single, 3.8 percent are married and 1.0 percent is divorced. 77.50 percent are students enrolled in the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences. 7.0 percent are Master students of the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences and only 15.25 percent college students of Adnan Menderes. The majority of 42.8 percent receives TL 251-500 each month followed by 20.0 percent receiving TL 501-750. Only 18.3 percent of the participants gets between TL 751-1000 and 4.0 percent of the asked students can even spend between TL 1001-1250 each month while still 6.3 percent have to live on a payment of TL 250 or even less each month. 86.3 percent of the respondents aren't employed whereas 8.0 percent work full-time and 5.8 percent work part-time. 74.0 percent of all respondents own a cell phone which can connect to the internet whereas 26.0 percent don't. 50.3 percent of all respondents with an internet connection on their cell phone have wireless contracts to go online whereas 49.8 percent don't. 92.0 percent of all respondents stated to use social media. 81.8 percent indicated to have their own computer. 92.5 percent are members of facebook and again 65.3 percent of them are connected to more than

200 friends. 60.5 percent are members of twitter and again 56.8 percent of them are following about 50 institutions or people whereas 64.8 percent of the twitter users have about 50 institutions or people following them.

Table1:Time following social media

How long have you been following social media?	Number	Percent
1 year and less	20	5
2 years	26	6.5
3 years	53	13.3
4 years	85	21.3
5 years and more	216	54
Total	400	100

Table 2:Frequency using social media

How often do you use social media?	Number	Percent
Several times a day	257	64.3
Once a day	56	14
Several times a week	66	16.5
Once a week	6	1.5
Several times a month	15	3.8
Total	400	100

Table 3: How much time spent on social media each day

How much time do you spend on Social Media each day?	Number	Percent
Less than an hour	103	25.8
1-2 hours	167	41.8
3-4 hours	93	23.3
5-6 hours	20	5.0
7 hours and more	17	4.3
Total	400	100

54.0 percent of the respondents have been following social media pages for more than 5 years. 64.3 percent are using social media pages several times a day, 41.8 percent spend 1-2 hours on social media pages each day (table 2, 3 and 4)

5.2. Measurement Model

The principle component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was conducted on 17 measurement items (table 4) to screen them and identify the underlying dimensions of consumers' beliefs about social media advertising. The former PCA model about social media beliefs was designed with 4 factors (Mir,2012:275). This model was adopted for Turkish students with 3 factors produced by the PCA model, combining the Information and Economic factors. Entertainment (F1) with eigen value 5.949, Value (F2) with eigen value 2.694, and Information and Economic (F3) with eigen value 1.631. The rule of minimum eigen value of 1.0 was applied. PCA produced KMO value .871 and Bartlett's test of sphericity 000($p < .05$). The three identified factors underlying consumers' beliefs about social media advertising explained 60.439 of the total variance. Table 1 shows the factors underlying the consumers' beliefs about social media advertising with factor loadings and Cronbach α (reliability). These items were used for the confirmatory factor analysis and the structural equation modeling.

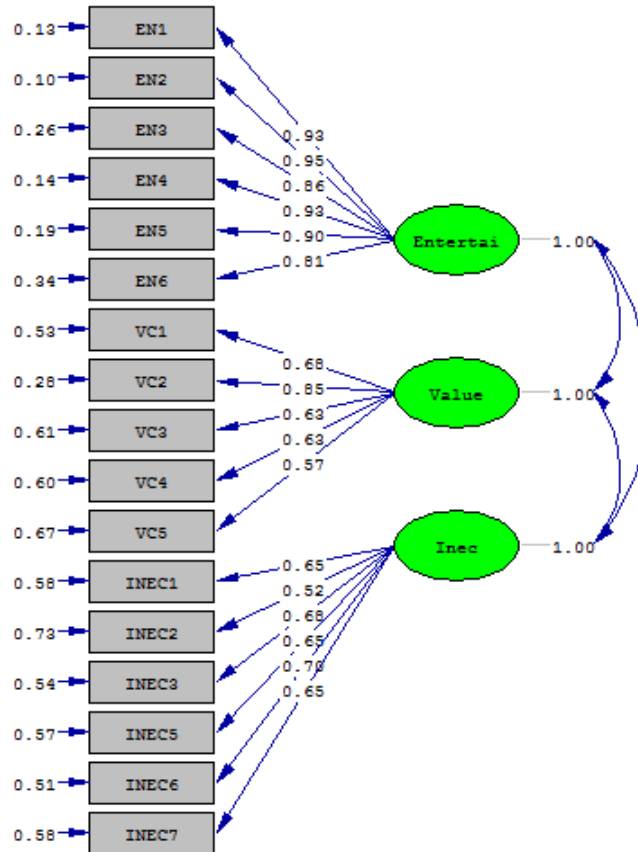
Table 4: Items of Belief factors

	Items	Factors			Reliability
		1	2	3	
En1	Social media advertising is entertaining	.880	.212	-.043	.940
En2	Social media advertising is pleasing	.911	.176	-.054	
En3	Social media advertising is interesting	.810	.250	.100	
En4	Social media advertising is enjoyable	.870	.247	.015	
En5	Social media advertising is fun to use	.828	.336	-.062	
En6	Social media advertising is exciting	.764	.221	-.018	
Vc1	Social media advertising promotes undesirable values in our society	.034	-.010	.694	.775
Vc2	Social media advertising distorts the values of youth	.039	.056	.819	
Vc3	There is too much sex in social media advertising	-.019	-.045	.710	
Vc4	Some products/services promoted in social media advertising are bad for society	-.055	-.052	.720	
Vc5	Social media advertising isolates children from their parents	-.041	.075	.670	

InEc1	Social media advertising tells me which brands have the features I am looking for	.214	.670	.056	.784
InEc2	Social media advertising helps me keep up to date about products/services available in the marketplace	.145	.615	.083	
InEc3	Social media advertising is a convenient source of product information	.137	.754	.085	
InEc5	Social media advertising has positive effects on the economy	.198	.678	-.013	
InEc6	Social media advertising raises our standard of living	.220	.678	-.086	
InEc7	Social media advertising results in better products for the public	.311	.571	-.164	

The outcomes of this model are as follows: Chi-square (χ^2) =709,44, *d.f.*=116 P=.000 ($p < .05$). $\chi^2 / d.f. = 6.12$. The value of $\chi^2 / d.f. approx. 5$ is considered satisfactory to accept the model (Thomson, MacInnis, and Park,2005:83). In the current study, GFI=0.83 IFI=.86, CFI=.86, NFI=.84, AGFI=.77 and RMSEA=.113 (Figure2).

Figure-2: Measurement Model



Chi-Square=709.44, df=116, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.113

Therefore hypothesis H₁ can be accepted. Consumers’ beliefs about social media advertising are based on a multi-dimensional structure with the factors Entertainment, Value and Information-Economic.

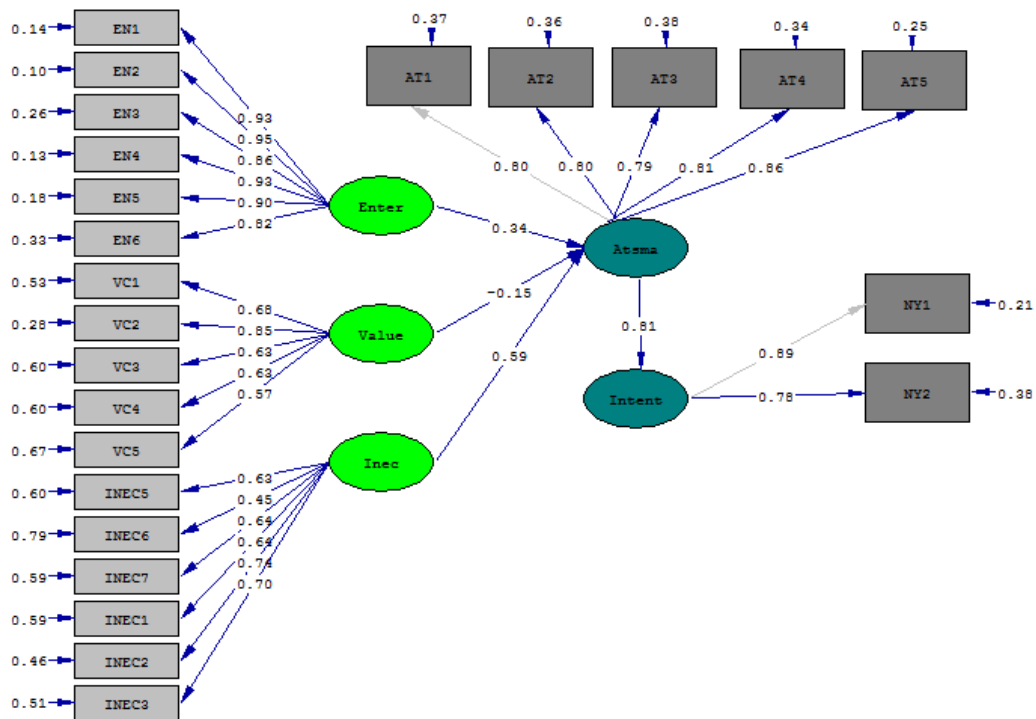
6. ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

To measure the respondents’ attitudes toward social media advertising 5 items were adapted from Pollay and Mittal (1993) and Wang and Sun (2010), and Mir (2012). According to the analysis the reliability (Cronbach Alpha) of attitude towards social media (ATSMA) was sufficient enough to be shown in the mode (table 5).

Table 5: Items of Attitude factors

	Items	Reliability	The overall Reliability
At1	Overall, I consider social media advertising a good thing	.707	.879
At2	Overall, I like social Media advertising	.703	
At3	I consider social advertising very essential	.700	
At4	I would describe my overall attitude towards social media advertising very favorably	.692	
At5	My general opinion about social media advertising is favorable	.753	

Figure-3: Structural Model



Chi-Square=1391.33, df=245, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.108

The model provides the good fit to the data with a Chi-square (χ^2)=1556.22, d.f.=245, P=.0. The value of χ^2 /d.f. approx. 5 is considered satisfactory to accept the model (Thomson et al.,2005:83). In the study GFI=.77, IFI=.83, CFI=.83 NFI=.80, AGFI=.72 and RMSEA= 0.11.

The values obtained with these statistic tests have provided fits suggested by literature. These fits have either been eligible or have been very close to the suggested values. These values of the AT SMA model along with the value set gathered for BASMA show a moderate outcome.

Figure 3 shows the standardized path coefficients of the three factors under investigation. All the path coefficients were significant at the level of 0.01 with the direction of influence as hypothesized (+ or -). Information-Economic and Entertainment were positively associated with attitudes about social media (AT SMA) whereas value is negatively associated with attitudes about social media; thus H2 framed is statistically supported. It can be said that peoples' attitudes towards social media advertising have a positive and strong impact on their ad clicking and buying behaviour which proves that H3 can be accepted as well.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current study was aimed to identify the underlying dimensions of belief about social media advertising and their influence on consumers' AT SMA. In addition, it aimed to identify the influence of consumers' AT SMA on their behavioural response. Most of the previous studies (e.g. Bauer and Greyser,1968; Ducoffe,1995; Polly and Mittal,1993; Wang and Sun,2010; Wolin et al.,2002; Yaakop et al.,2011) and Mir (2012) found information, entertainment, economy, and value important belief dimensions that affect consumer attitudes toward advertising in traditional and online contexts. Contrary to past studies, this current study found Consumers' beliefs about social media advertising are based on a multi-dimensional structure with three major factors Entertainment, Value and Information-Economic combined. These three factors are significant predictors of consumers' attitudes toward advertising in social media context. In addition, previous studies provide consumers' views from Western perspective accept Mir's study whereas this study shows consumer insights in an emerging country like Turkey. This study found, like the once before, that a favourable AT SMA

influences consumers' ad clicking behaviour that in turn affects their online buying behaviour.

The findings of this study are useful for multinational companies, which intend to advertise their products through social media. It is hoped that the results from the current study will help companies in Turkey identify strategies and tactics for their potential customers, because social media has become the foci of marketing communication. Social media enables companies to interact with their target customers directly and timely at lower cost (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010:64).

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