

Chapter 37

Influence of SMS Advertising on Consumer Behavioral Intention

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ABSTRACT

Mobile marketing has become an effective medium for advertisers. Effective mobile advertising could greatly improve customers purchase intention in this context. This study focuses on the prevailing form of mobile advertising, i.e., SMS advertising. Based on the theory of planned behavior, the authors explore the influence of SMS advertising on the consumer behavior in China. Participants are Chinese students and office workers. The results indicate that (a) the perceived infotainment and credibility have a positive significant effect on consumer attitudes, whereas irritation has a negative significant effect on consumer attitudes; (b) attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control have significant effects on the intention to use; (c) attitudes also mediate the relationship between subjective norms and intention to use; and (d) men and women pursue different paths to influence the intention to use. Based on the above results, theoretical and practical implications are also discussed in this study.

INTRODUCTION

The advanced mobile network technology has enhanced mobile commerce (MC). It has initiated the development of service activities based on MC (Barwise and Strong, 2002; Laszlo, 2009; Venkatesh, 2003). Combined with the gradual increase in mobile device penetration (Paul, 2010), mobile advertising is not only an advertising form, but also a medium with the greatest potential for business opportunities (Chen and Hsieh, 2012). Advertisers have invested heavily in mobile advertising. The global spending on mobile advertising is estimated to be \$26.26 billion by the end of 2014 and expected to reach \$62.8 billion by 2017 (eMarketer, 2013).

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The most prevalent form of mobile advertising is text messaging or Short Message Service (SMS), which is a standard for telephony messaging systems that allow the sending of messages between mobile devices; the messages are short, normally with text-only content (MMA, 2006; MMA, 2010). Empirical research indicates that SMS advertising is particularly successful (Xu, 2006; Muk, 2007), and investment in it would continuously grow (Ashdown, 2011). The penetration rate of SMS advertising is high, but studies that have tested the determinants of consumer attitude toward SMS advertising are limited. Advertisers could construct strategies and conduct creative and effective mobile marketing campaigns based on a deep understanding of consumer behavior (Tian, 2000). That is, exploring the major influencing factors of intention to use SMS advertising is a practical demand.

Research on consumer intention to use SMS advertising primarily includes two views. On the one hand, psychology and behavior researchers have discussed that attitude is the major factor that influences consumer behavioral intention (e.g., Drossos, Giaglis, Vlachos, Zamani, and Lekakos, 2013). Based on the theory of reasoned action (TRA), Tsang, Ho, and Liang (2004) argued that attitudes positively influence consumer behavior. With computing undergraduates as participants, Xu, Oh, and Teo (2009) suggested that consumer attitude significantly affects intention to use and to purchase. Radder Pietersen, Wang, and Han (2010) explored the acceptance of SMS advertising among high school students in South African universities. Their results indicated that attitudes and social norms significantly affect behavioral intention. With the stimulus–organism–response paradigm, Drossos, Giaglis, Vlachos, Zamani, and Lekakos (2013) revealed a clear link between attitudes and behavioral intention.

On the other hand, information and Internet technology researchers have argued that perceived usefulness and ease of use are the major determinants of behavioral intention (e.g., Muk, 2014; Zhang and Mao, 2008). Wu and Wang (2005) presented an extended technology acceptance model (TAM) to investigate the factors that determine user MC acceptance. Their findings suggested that perceived usefulness significantly affects the intention to use. Zhang and Mao (2008) developed a modified TAM to test the intention to use SMS advertising among young Chinese. Their results indicated that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of SMS advertising messages predict the intention to use them. With the modified TAM, Muk (2014) argued that attitude is the direct factor that influences consumer intention to use SMS advertising both in the United States and Korea.

Nonetheless, a few studies have focused on the theory of planned behavior (TPB), although several studies have investigated the consumer behavioral intention to use SMS advertising. TPB holds that the behavioral intention of individuals is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control. This study focuses on SMS advertising because it is by far the most prevalent form of mobile advertising. Moreover, the number of mobile users in China is significantly increasing.

We explore the mechanism of Chinese consumer behavioral intention to use SMS advertising based on the TPB. Our research would be helpful in identifying new influencing factors in behavioral intention and in gaining a better understanding of the different characteristics of male and female consumers. It can also help us understand how people change their behaviors after receiving the SMS advertising. In Section 2, we review the related literature on SMS advertising and consumer attitudes and behavior, and then propose our hypotheses and model. In Section 3, we discuss our measurement, participants, and procedure. In Section 4, we present our data analysis, which was conducted to examine the reliability of our model and test our hypotheses. Finally, in Section 5, we discussed the implications of our results and the limitations of our study.

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