

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ADVERTISING: A STUDY OF DHAKA CITY OF BANGLADESH

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Abstract: *This research investigates the attitudes of university students of Dhaka city towards advertising. The data were collected from randomly selected 200 students from both private and public universities in Dhaka city. The respondents were asked to answer a self-administered questionnaire consisting of 20 statements about advertising. R-mode factor analysis, frequency distribution were used to analyze data. The results of the study reveal that students have positive judgment about the economic impact of advertising. However, they have negative judgment about the ethical and social consequences of advertising. The students demand more regulations to control the advertising. The study recommends that advertisers should design fact-oriented, entertainment, excitement based advertising which may contain some sorts of emotional messages keeping in mind the traditions of Bangladesh. The advertising agencies should create successful advertising messages to reach the customers. Moreover, the study provides a useful benchmark for future research studies.*

Key words: *Advertising, University students, Attitude, Dhaka city*

1. Introduction

Advertising is one of the most important elements of marketing strategy. It is considered a powerful tool that affects purchasing decision of consumers to the greatest extent. It has a crucial role in making the product familiar to consumers and promoting brand quality. Organizations have spent huge amount of money each year on advertising to increase consumers' interest toward the advertised products, thereby triggering their purchase intention for achieving an enormous sales of products. Today, advertising of the product has been made through various communication means such as television, radio, newspaper, internet etc. The objective is to persuade the consumers to buy the products. Business organizations have always tried to find out new means of advertising their products. Recently, in Bangladesh, the companies are concentrating on developing emotion based advertising rather than facts to target the audiences. Mobile companies of Bangladesh have informed their customers' regarding their services by sending short message services (SMS) to them. To what extent people are influenced by advertising contents is a matter of debate. Thus, attitude of the consumers toward advertising is a matter of great interest for advertisers. Specifically, attitudes of university students who represent an important segment of the market are a matter of great interest for marketing researchers. Sometimes, advertising has been designed to target the students, such as mobile advertising, and the results have been proved positive.

The advertising business in Bangladesh is generally characterized by a lack of professional standards, high turnover in the workplace, the absence of a uniform code of

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conduct and low margins. There is no formal way of tracking of advertising agencies in the country. However, more than 70% of the formal market share is held by the top nine advertising agencies of the country. These agencies, in descending order of market share, are Adcomm, Asiatic, Bitopi, Unitrend, Grey, Interspeed, Popular, Madona, and Matra. Other advertising agencies claim only about 13% of the market share, while the rest is accrued to in-house advertisement of business firms and enterprises. Advertisement media in Bangladesh can be classified into two categories based on the placement strategy - Above the Line (ATL) category and Below the Line (BTL) category, each claiming about 50% of the total revenue. ATL includes newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and satellite and cable television. Placement strategies under BTL includes event management, in-house advertisement (company performing own advertisement) at point of purchase, outdoor advertisement (billboards, hoarding, neon signs, and bell signs), innovative activities (*jatra*, street drama) and advertisement on vehicle bodies or fliers (Anwar, 2008).

In the year 2007, print media remained the largest advertising vehicle with around 43% of spending, television advertising accounted for 36% of advertising spending, outdoor advertising accounted for 15% of advertising spending, radio advertising accounted for 4% of advertising spending, cinema and internet each accounted for 1% of advertising spending (Akter, 2008).

The clientele of advertising agencies primarily comprise private national companies (PNC), multinational companies (MNC) and non-government organizations (NGO). The MNCs comprise more than 60% of the media share followed by the PNCs comprising 25%. Also, the government has set an ethical code of conduct that urges the agencies to refrain from advertising products like alcohol, cigarette, undergarments for men and women, and contraceptives (except birth control pills) (Anwar, 2008).

2. Problem Statement

A search of literature has revealed that some works have been done that identified university students' attitudes towards advertising. However, there are at least some attempts by Larkin (1977) who was using five clusters resulting from Q-factor analysis of students, by Ramaprasad and Thurwanger (1998) who were using only five factors to describe attitude of students' toward advertising, by Munusamy and Hoo (2007) who were using seven factors to investigate the beliefs about advertising among students. Therefore, this study aims to investigate underlying attitudes of university students' of Dhaka city of Bangladesh toward advertising.

3. Objective of the Study

The objective of this research is to identify the attitudes of university students' of Dhaka city of Bangladesh toward advertising.

4. Literature Review

University students representing a segment of the general public should receive special attention. Romani (2006) suggested that though advertising helped students to get product information but these did not necessarily increase their buying confidence and could not manipulate them.

Alam, Miah & Sadeque (2006) suggested that Bangladeshi students are sometimes irritated because of the demonstration of too much dance and music in the television advertising. Their study also revealed that a large number of students felt offended where television advertising uses women as a commodity and when sensitive products such as contraceptives and female hygienic products are advertised.

Dan & Sidin (2006) made a survey of 124 students in a Malaysian university which showed that students have positive attitudes on the economic effect, student effect and audience effect of advertising while showing attitudes in relation to the price effect and portrayal aspects of advertising. Their findings suggested that the students' attitudes towards advertising depend on possible consequences of advertising to them. The positive attitudes of the students suggest the important influence and the persuasive message effect of advertising.

Manusamy & Hoo (2007) had used regression analysis and examined the belief factors to see their ability to predict attitude towards advertising. Their result suggested that four out of the seven factors have significant correlation with attitude towards advertising. As per their study, 'Product Information' has the strongest positive correlation, followed by 'Consumer Benefit', 'Pleasure/Hedonic' and 'Good for Economy and Economic Role'. All negative belief factors proved to have no significant relationship with attitude towards advertising. Three factors out of seven significantly predict attitudes towards advertising namely 'Product Information', 'Pleasure/Hedonic' and 'Good for Economy and Economic Role'. The result showed that students' attitude towards advertising is very much influenced by one of their belief factors, Product Information. They believed that advertising is a useful tool for them to get product information.

Shen & Chen (2007) investigated the relationships among demographic variables and experiences, beliefs, and attitudes. They found that younger students have more positive beliefs and attitudes toward advertising and those with higher levels of education tend to have more positive attitudes and beliefs.

Beard (2003) indicated the salience of various beliefs that help determine attitudes toward advertising and provided a useful benchmark for future studies. He also mentioned that students' attitudes toward advertising were quite negative. Indeed, from 60% to 80% of Beard's sample of students agreed that more than half of all advertising presents misleading claims, insults people's intelligence, irritating and highly annoying, and persuades people to buy things which they do not need.

The findings of Chung-Chuan Yang (2000) suggested that advertising has negative effects on college students' attitude towards advertising. They found that college students in Taiwanese colleges considered advertising as a waste of national resources, which

encourages people to waste and persuades them to buy things they should not buy. The college students also agreed that advertising is misleading and deceptive. They also identified that students consider advertising as an important source of fashion information and helps them keep up with the products and services available in the market place.

Morton (2001) suggested that advertising attitudes consist of social and economic dimensions. The target audience judges advertisements on the basis of its social and economic impact.

Munusamy & Wong (2007) found the perceived socio-economic effects of advertising and consumer beliefs and attitudes toward advertising in Bulgaria and Romania. According to them, there was a common belief (more than 80 percent) that advertising promotes undesirable values and messages.

Ashill & Yavas (2005) suggested that advertisers in Turkey and New Zealand should create advertisements that are believable. The positive relationship between believability and overall attitudes towards advertising also suggests that advertisers should be sensitive to tactics that generate consumer disbelief.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Sampling and data collection

For this study, sample of 200 students from both private and public universities in Dhaka city were chosen with the aim of understanding their mind-set towards advertising. Out of them, 60% are male students and 40% are female students. These students were from the age of 18 years to 24 years. Students represent an important segment of consumers who possess considerable knowledge about market. The higher learning institutions in Dhaka were chosen as they represent the major institutions with high numbers of students. The data collection instrument is a self-administered questionnaire consisting of 20 statements about advertising.

5.2 Measurement of data collection

The questionnaire has been structured to investigate the students' attitude towards advertising with 20 statements in which students had been asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each item on a five-point scale with descriptive anchors ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (5) 'strongly agree'. This approach of measuring attitude toward advertising had been used in previous studies (Sandage & Leckenby, 1980; Andrews, 1989; Ramaprasad & Thurwanger, 1998; Manusamy & Hoo, 2007).

5.3 Method of Analysis

Data had been analyzed by using R-mode factor analysis which helps to identify underlying dimensions or factors that explain the correlations among a set of variables. Also, for each of the attitude statement, frequency distribution had been calculated. The 5% level of significance has been used in all the statistical techniques.

6. Results of Survey

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.514
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	276.651
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

Table 1 shows the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy indicates that factor analysis is appropriate as the result of 0.514 is greater than 0.5 (values between 0.5 and 1 shows that factor analysis is appropriate). Bartlett's test of sphericity tests the null hypothesis that the variables are uncorrelated in the population. Here, Bartlett's test of sphericity produces a Chi-square of 276.651 with a significant value of .000. The significant value of .000 is less than the threshold value of 0.05. This suggests that null hypothesis can be rejected. Thus, variables are correlated in the population. The results obtained from KMO and Bartlett's test are good indication of the suitability of the application of factor analysis.

All the items have been factor-analyzed using principal component analysis with a varimax rotation. Table 2(Appendix) represents eigenvalues and percentage variance. Twenty items have been included in the factor analysis. Eight factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 have been emerged from the Varimax-rotated factor matrix that accounted for 55.419% of the overall variances. Items that have high loadings (0.3 or greater) on single factors are considered acceptable (Hair et al., 1992). As revealed by the factor analysis, 8 underlying factors of the variables with high loadings have been retained for interpretation. Only variables with loading equal to or greater than 0.5 are considered meaningful and extracted for factor analysis. Table 3 represents varimax-rotated factor matrix.

Factor 1: Factor 1 is a good fit on the data from the statements given below:

- (1) Sometimes, advertising contains emotional messages rather than facts
- (2) In general, advertisements present a true picture of the product
- (3) Sometimes, the contents of advertising are even more enjoyable than other media contents.

This indicates that statements mentioned above are probably measuring the same basic attitude or value system; and it provides with evidence that a factor exists. Because of the contents of the statements above, it can be subjectively concluded that 'Information value of advertising content' is the factor that ties these statements together in the minds of the respondents. Factor 1 has an eigenvalue of 1.521 and accounted for 7.603% of the overall variances.

Table 4 represents percentage agreement and disagreement of university students' attitudes towards advertising. If we look at the 200 standardized responses to each of the statements mentioned above, the study has revealed that majority of the students agrees that advertising contains emotional messages rather than facts. However, strong disagreement with the statement that advertising presents a true picture of the product was also especially salient for the students in Larkin's (1977) sample. Also, 46% of the students favors that advertising contents are enjoyable.

Factor 2: Factor 2 is a good fit on the data from the statements given below:

- (1) Advertising leads children to make unreasonable purchase demands on parents
- (2) Advertising should contain some sort of excitement and entertainment

The factor has been named as 'Persuasive message and enjoyment effect' that ties these statements together in the minds of the respondents. Factor 2 has an eigenvalue of 1.468 and accounted for 7.341% of the overall variances. Also, if we look at the 200 standardized responses to each of the statements mentioned, the study has revealed that majority of the students view advertising as unhealthy influence on children who are making unnecessary purchase demands on parents because of advertising. However, majority agree that advertising should contain some sort of excitement and entertainment.

Factor 3: Factor 3 is a good fit on the data from the statement given below:

- (1) A judicial regulatory body should be there to enforce ethics in advertising

The factor has been named as 'Regulation of advertising' that ties the statement in the minds of the respondents. Factor 3 has an eigenvalue of 1.464 and accounted for 7.321% of the overall variances. If we look at the 200 standardized responses to the statement mentioned above, the study has revealed that almost 50% of the students agree that a judicial regulatory body should be there to enforce ethics in advertising.

Factor 4: Factor 4 is a good fit on the data from the statements given below:

- (1) Advertising provides updated information about product and service
- (2) Advertising helps raise standard of living

The factor has been named as 'Product information and living standard' that ties these statements together in the minds of the respondents. Factor 4 has an eigenvalue of 1.458 and accounted for 7.288% of the overall variances. Also, if we look at the 200 standardized responses to each of the statements mentioned above, the study has revealed that students consider advertising as a useful tool for them to get product information as it provides updated information about product and service and helps raise standard of living. These suggest that students have positive attitude toward these aspects of advertising.

Factor 5: Factor 5 is a good fit on the data from the statement given below:

- (1) In general, advertising helps our nation's economy

The factor has been named as 'Economic value' that ties the statement in the minds of the respondents. Factor 5 has an eigenvalue of 1.38 and accounted for 6.9% of the overall variances. Also, if we look at the 200 standardized responses to the statement mentioned above, the study has revealed that 46.5% of the students agree that advertising helps the nation's economy. This statement suggests the economic value of advertising.

Factor 6: Factor 6 is a good fit on the data from the statement given below:

- (1) There should be a ban on advertising of harmful or dangerous products such as cigarettes

This factor has been named as 'Embargo on advertising' that ties the statement in the minds of the respondents. Factor 6 has an eigenvalue of 1.347 and accounted for 6.736% of the overall variances. Also, if we look at the 200 standardized responses to the statement mentioned above, it is interesting to note that the use of advertising to promote potentially harmful products is much more salient issue for the students today where the substantial agreement with the statement that advertising for harmful products should be banned.

Factor 7: Factor 7 is a good fit on the data from the statements given below:

- (1) Advertised brands are better in quality than unadvertised brands
- (2) Sometimes, I feel confused by the content of advertisement

The factor has been named as 'Product quality and perception of consumer' that ties these statements together in the minds of the respondents. Factor 7 has an eigenvalue of 1.283 and accounted for 6.415% of the overall variances. Also, if we look at the 200 standardized responses to each of the statements mentioned above, there is mixed opinion among the students regarding whether the advertised brands are better in quality than unadvertised brands or not. The study revealed that 37.5% of the students agree that there advertised brands are better in quality than unadvertised brands, whereas 28.5% disagree in this respect. However, majority of the students agree that they feel confused by the content of advertisement as shown in the newspaper titled 'conditions apply'.

Factor 8: Factor 8 is a good fit on the data from the statement given below:

- (1) Advertising adds cost to the product, thereby increasing the price of product

The factor has been named as 'Price effect of advertising' that ties the statement in the minds of the respondents. Factor 8 has an eigenvalue of 1.163 and accounted for 5.815% of the overall variances. Also, if we look at the 200 standardized responses to the statement mentioned above, the study has revealed that majority of the students agree that price of product is high as advertising adds cost to the product. Thus, it is important to note that students continue to believe that advertising is a direct and substantial cause of higher prices, consistent with Haller's (1974) findings.

7. Recommendations

The overall findings of both positive and negative attitude towards advertising for the present sample suggest several recommendations regarding the use of advertising to reach university students. Advertisers should design fact-oriented advertising which may contain some sort of emotional messages. The advertising should provide real picture of the products so that students may take right decision at the time of purchase. The advertising should contain some sort of entertainment which excites the students most. The advertising agency should restrain them from preparing the advertising of dangerous and harmful products. Otherwise, it may induce students to take harmful products. In preparing child-centric advertising, the advertising agencies should be cautious. It is better to include traditions of Bangladesh in advertising which may make the students familiar with the country's heritage. Students have the belief that advertised products cost more. In determining price of the product, the company should keep this point in mind. In designing the content of advertising, the advertising manager should try to include all relevant information regarding the product so that students may not be confused at the time of purchase.

8. Limitations of the Study and Guidelines for Future Research

The study has several limitations that should be considered in evaluating the results. This study is limited by the fact that the students have been selected from different universities in Dhaka City. Future research could address this limitation by considering this study with a national sample of university students and producing results that would be generalizable to a national population. Use of students for measuring attitude toward advertising may be questioned in generalizing to non-student segments. Therefore, extension of this research to other segments of the society around the country is required for generalization of the results found here. As sample size could affect study results, future research should ensure that sample size is large and is selected from more universities. The study of new forms of communication technology and their impact on advertising could be researched in the future. Given the wide scope of study available and the rapid changes in e-commerce, further and more frequent research is needed to identify the other factors that could affect students' attitude towards advertising.

9. Conclusion

This research study is an effort to understand the attitudes of students of Dhaka city towards advertising. It can be said that the propositions of the dimensions of students' attitudes towards advertising provide an alternative framework of consumers' attitudes towards advertising in a developing country like Bangladesh. The outcome of the study evidently discloses that the majority of the respondents opined that advertising contains emotional messages rather than facts, should contain some sort of excitement and entertainment. At the same time, students considered advertising as a useful tool as it provides updated information about product and service and enhance their standard of living. Majority of the students have replied that the advertised brands are better in quality than unadvertised brands. However, majority of the students agree that they feel confused by the content of advertisement as shown in the newspaper titled 'conditions apply'. Most of the respondents believe that advertising is imperative for economic

growth of the country. The result also portrays that students demand judicial regulatory body to enforce ethics in advertising. Students have also mentioned their belief that advertising is a direct and substantial cause of higher prices of products. The results of the study explain very significant negative feelings of the respondents about social consequences of modern advertising. Advertising may have unhealthy influence on children who are making unnecessary purchase demands on parents because of advertising. It is important for managers to maintain proper focus on the attitude of Bangladeshi students about advertising. While concentrating more effort on building a message that is inclined to favorable beliefs, managers will also need to watch out for the unfavorable factors that may lead to negative attitudes towards their advertisements. Advertisers should be sensitive to the negative attitudes and develops new ways of advertising to resolve the unfavorable image effects of advertising. It is vital to have a strong understanding to improve communication in advertising activities by getting the right people to use the right message. Thus, knowing more about students' attitudes towards advertising will surely put them ahead of the game.

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Appendix

Table 2. Eigenvalue and Percentage Variance

Factors	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Factor 1	1.521	7.603	7.603
Factor 2	1.468	7.341	14.943
Factor 3	1.464	7.321	22.264
Factor 4	1.458	7.288	29.552
Factor 5	1.380	6.900	36.452
Factor 6	1.347	6.736	43.188
Factor 7	1.283	6.415	49.603
Factor 8	1.163	5.815	55.419

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 3. Varimax-rotated Factor Matrix

Variable name	Factor							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Advertising provides updated information about product and service				.732				
Advertised brands are better in quality than unadvertised brands							-.747	
Sometimes, I feel misled by advertising								
Sometimes advertising contains emotional messages rather than facts	.603							
Advertising helps raise standard of living				.502				
Sometimes, advertising persuades people to buy unnecessary things just to show off								
There should be a ban on advertising of harmful or dangerous products such as cigarettes						.725		
Sometimes, advertising is irritating because of its repeated presence in the media								
In general, advertisements present a true picture of the product	.590							
Sometimes, the contents of advertising are even more enjoyable than other media contents	-.579							
In general, advertising helps our nation's economy					.718			
Advertising leads children to make unreasonable purchase demands on parents		.750						
A judicial regulatory body should be there to enforce ethics in advertising			.689					
Advertising should contain some sort of excitement and entertainment		.546						
Advertising adds cost to the product, thereby increasing the price of product								.861
Sometimes, I feel confused by the content of advertisement							.686	
I prefer advertising with music and/or song								

University Students' Attitudes Towards Advertising: A Study of Dhaka City of Bangladesh

People have more confidence in advertised products than in unadvertised products When I have gone to market, I often look for advertised products Advertising regulation should be done by the independent advertising authority rather than by the government							
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Table 4. Percentage Agreement and Disagreement of University Students' Attitudes towards Advertising

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
Factor 1: Information value of advertising content					
(1) Sometimes advertising contains emotional messages rather than facts	2	12.5	24	41	20.5
(2) In general, advertisements present a true picture of the product	20.5	35.5	24.5	14	5.5
(3) Sometimes, the contents of advertising are even more enjoyable than other media contents.	6.5	17.5	30	30	16
Factor 2: Persuasive message and enjoyment effect					
(1) Advertising leads children to make unreasonable purchase demands on parents	5	15.5	21	34	24.5
(2) Advertising should contain some sort of excitement and entertainment	3	10.5	26.5	43	17
Factor 3: Regulation of advertising					
(1) A judicial regulatory body should be there to enforce ethics in advertising	2.5	14	33	29.5	21
Factor 4: Product information and living standard					
(1) Advertising provides updated information about product and service	5.5	7	21	37.5	29
(2) Advertising helps raise standard of living	4.5	14	30	36	15.5
Factor 5: Economic value					
(1) In general, advertising helps our nation's economy	5	18.5	30	32.5	14

Factor 6: Embargo on advertising (1) There should be a ban on advertising of harmful or dangerous products such as cigarettes	2.5	9.5	20	37	31
Factor 7: Product quality and perception of consumer (1) Advertised brands are better in quality than unadvertised brands (2) Sometimes, I feel confused by the content of advertisement	5.5	23	33.5	28.5	9.5
Factor 8: Price effect of advertising (1) Advertising adds cost to the product, thereby increasing the price of product	3	10.5	30.5	34.5	21.5