

BE-ci 2016 : 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Business and Economics, 21 - 23 September, 2016

## Relationship and Effect of Entertainment, Informativeness, Credibility, Personalization and Irritation of Generation Y's Attitudes towards SMS Advertising

Nik Mohamad Nik Najib<sup>a\*</sup>, Jati Kasuma<sup>b</sup>, Zainon Binti Haji Bibi<sup>c</sup>

\* Corresponding author: Nik Mohamad Nik Najib, [nickharh@gmail.com](mailto:nickharh@gmail.com)

<sup>a</sup>Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak, 94300, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, [nickharh@gmail.com](mailto:nickharh@gmail.com),

<sup>b</sup>Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak, 94300, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, [jati@sarawak.uitm.edu.my](mailto:jati@sarawak.uitm.edu.my)

<sup>c</sup>Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak, 94300, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, [zainon@sarawak.uitm.edu.my](mailto:zainon@sarawak.uitm.edu.my)

### Abstract

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2016.11.02.20>

With the fast growth of mobile phone usage especially among generation Y, companies have taken this opportunity to advertise their products and services through this new medium of interactive marketing. SMS advertising is a good advertising medium or tool to advertise products and services. The objective of the research is to explore how generation Y in Kelantan, Malaysia cope with SMS advertising and to find out which factors among Entertainment, Informativeness, Credibility and Personalization affect generation Y's attitudes towards SMS in Kelantan. A total of 300 respondents were selected using convenience sampling technique. Questionnaires were distributed at two public universities in Kelantan; UiTM, Kota Bharu campus and Universiti Malaysia Kelantan. The purpose of this paper is to explore generation Y's views and perceptions towards SMS advertising. In the light of the overall findings in the current research, this study concludes that the respondents held negative attitudes about receiving mobile advertisements. Entertainment, informativeness, creditability and personalization share the same significance among the factors affecting generation Y's attitudes. Overall, the findings show that perceptions of SMS advertising are rather negative among generation Y.

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**Keywords:** Generation Y; SMS Advertising; Attitude; Entertainment; Informativeness; Personalization; Credibility.

## 1. Introduction

Today, we live in a world with filled with advertising. Anywhere we go and every moment of the day in our life, we would encounter at least one advertisement. From traditional advertising methods for example billboards, newspapers, radio or magazines, advertising has evolved into something more complex and rich. Nowadays, with the fast growth of mobile phone usage especially among generation Y, companies selling goods and services have taken this opportunity to advertise their products and services through this new medium for interactive marketing. According to the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), based on their research on hand phone users' survey 2014, throughout Malaysia; the total number of mobile phone users in 2014 was 8.40 percent or 4,164,237 users. Of these, 38,167, 300 were from young adult age group of 20 – 29 years old. In Kelantan alone, the number of mobile phone users in 2014 was 4.6 percent which the population is 6.8 percent. The dramatic revolution in mobile technology has provided companies with new promotional opportunities for reaching their consumer groups (Radder, et al., 2010; Carter, 2008; Xu et al., 2008; International Advertising Bureau, 2008).

### 1.1. Research Problem and Research Objectives

Generation Y were chosen for this study because they are one of the important target market groups as they are the most active mobile phone users compared to other generations in Malaysia (Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), 2014). Due to mobile phone popularity among the generation Y, companies selling goods and services have made use of this growing trend as a marketing program for their sales promotion. Some research has been done to explore consumers' perceptions of SMS advertising and also the impact of sending advertisements to consumers' via SMS (Haghirian et al., 2005). This is particularly important as it decides the success and failure of SMS advertising acceptance of consumers. Due to the differences in consumer feedback to SMS advertising and marketers' view of the effectiveness of SMS advertising, how consumers feel about advertising messages that ram their mobile phones and their reaction and their attitudes towards such advertising is ambiguous. Although most consumers' attitudes toward SMS advertising tend to be gloomy and negative, marketers still believe that SMS advertising is an effective marketing tool. The negative attitude towards SMS advertising implies that the marketers have to think of various strategies and plans to make SMS advertising and service more attractive. Thus, until now, marketers have kept on searching for ways on how to make SMS advertising more effective and gain customers' attention and acceptance in SMS advertising. The objective of the research is to examine the relationship as well as the effect of Entertainment, Informativeness, Credibility, and Personalization on generation Y's attitudes towards SMS Advertising.

### 1.2. Literature Review

#### *Generation Y (Gen Y)*

Gen Y consumers, born between 1980 and 1994, are often early adopters of new technologies and are extensive users of the internet and they are substantial users of mobile services (Archana,

Heejin, 2008). Supported by Bennett et al., 2008; Wesner and Miller, (2008), gen Y is the first generation to have spent their entire lives in the digital environment with information technology profoundly affecting how they live and work. A key formative characteristic for Gen Y is early and frequent exposure to technology, which has advantages and disadvantages in terms of cognitive, emotional, and social outcomes (Immordino-Yang et al., 2012). According to the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), (2014), Gen Y users' behaviour demonstrates that they have a strong attachment to their hand phone; especially the younger users.

#### *Attitudes toward SMS Advertising*

Fishbin (2004) defined attitude as "learned predisposition of human beings". For instance, the technology acceptance model that predicts the utilization of information system comprises of five noteworthy aspects: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude, intention, and use (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989). Consent-based advertising contrasts with conventional irritative advertising in that messages about particular products, services, or content are sent just to people who have expressly shown their readiness to get the message (Tsang, 2004). Moreover, Barwise found that 82% of respondents said that accepting three permission-based advertising texts every day was "about right" as more youthful customers are more open to more continuous advertisement, and the mobile channel can possibly give advantage to both advertisers and customers (Barwise, 2002). Informativeness is portrayed as "the capacity to educate clients of item options for their most noteworthy conceivable fulfilment" (Gao, 2006). The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) recommends that attitudes impact conduct through expectation. Intention is defined as "the strength of a person's conscious plan to perform the target behaviour (Fishbein, 1975). Thus, to associate with this research, the term for positive attitudes refers to customers' favourable evaluation while negative attitude refers to unfavourable evaluation, both towards SMS advertising. The major aim of any advertiser is to positively influence consumers' attitudes and buying behaviour (Ducoffe, 1996).

#### *Entertainment*

Entertainment can be defined as the ability to fulfil an audience's needs for escapism, diversion, aesthetic enjoyment, or emotional enjoyment (Ducoffe, 1996). In this context, similarly these days, cell telephones have been recognized as a critical networking and excitement platform, which marketers ought to use as a publicizing system. Entertainment Services can increase customers' loyalty and add value for the customers. As most people have a playful nature, providing games and prizes via text messaging (SMS) yields high participation. Delivering games and prizes to the customer's cell phone is a successful way to attract and keep customers. Interactive games for example can also be played via text messages.

These features can be used to involve customers more deeply and make them more familiar with the advertised service or product (Lehmkuhl, 2003). Therefore, it is concluded that an entertaining advertising message is being perceived more positively by the recipient. Mitchell and Olson (1981) found that entertaining advertising puts the audience in a good mood, and thus, has a positive impact on consumers' attitudes towards advertising and even toward those promoted brands. This is also supported by Hoffman and Novak (1996). In mobile phone entertainment industry, a variety of

entertainment services for example games, sport matches, gambling and prizes are delivered to consumers' mobile phones through SMS messages. In fact, the entertainment component in advertising can satisfy purchasers' requirements for tasteful satisfaction and passionate discharge (Ducoffe, 1996). Bauer (2005) found that hedonic joy (excitement, esteem) positively affected attitudes towards advertising; the perceived entertainment value of mobile advertisements will be one of the critical components influencing consumers' attitudes toward advertising. If such is advertising conveyed on a charming format, it will promptly attract customer's attention and make them accept the advertisement (Leung & Cheung, 2004; Katterbach, 2002).

#### *Informativeness*

Informativeness refers to the ability of advertising to inform consumers of product alternatives so that purchases yield the greatest possible satisfaction. In short, the informativeness of an SMS advertisement is defined as the amount of useful and helpful information provided by the advertising medium (Duccoffe, 1996). There is even the possibility that information may be delivered automatically to the consumer (Kaasinen, 2003), In any event, consumers want the content of mobile services to be tailored to their interest (Robins, 2003). On top of this, they are interested in getting messages that are relevant for them (Mline, 1993). Not surprisingly, informativeness of advertising information is therefore strongly related to the advertising value when it is transferred via traditional media channels (Ducoffe, 1995). Informativeness can be interpreted as the ability of advertising to deliver information to customers in order to satisfy their needs. The Optimum Stimulation Level Theory states that people aspire to accomplish a certain degree of stimulation and collect information with intrinsic motivation (Hoffman, 1996). Informative content is also essential for Internet advertising; a study found that the majority of respondents regard the internet as an information source rather than as an environment source (Shavitt, 1999). Plus, according to Gao and Koufaris (2006), informativeness can be defined as the fulfillment consumers want and is a chance for marketers to expand to present alternative products and services by distributing the bulk of the information through advertising. As information is a cornerstone of advertising, marketers have created bounteous advertising messages in order to provide sufficient, useful, and interesting information of products and services (Gordon & DeLima-Timer, 1997).

#### *Credibility*

According to Mac-Kenzie and Lutz (1989), advertising credibility can be defined as consumers' perception of the truthfulness and believability of advertising in general. Credibility in advertising is tied up with a consumer's confidence regarding a certain brand in an advertisement. Furthermore, credibility in advertising assumes a vital part to foresee customer states of mind toward advertising. Purchasers assess the noteworthiness of a notice with two viewpoints which are advertiser believability and advertising validity (Mac-Kenzie and Lutz 1989). This means that the person who conveys the ads and the substance of the ads are crucial to get shopper trust. In this manner, so as to get positive reaction towards SMS advertising, publicizing messages need to satisfy consumer requirement for credibility. (Waldt et al., 2009). Credibility of an advertisement is influenced by different factors, especially by the company's credibility and the bearer of the message (Goldsmith, 2000). It is also

influenced by the advertising medium. For example, Marshall and Yang, (2007) found out that a message on the Internet achieves less credibility than a printed message unless the message is communicated by a strong brand. There is no empirical evidence on the overall credibility of messages transferred to mobile devices and their influencing factors. Considering the findings cited above, we conclude that the credibility of a mobile advertising message has a positive influence on consumers' attitude toward advertising via mobile devices and on the perceived advertising value of the consumer.

### *Personalization*

Personalization can be illustrated as customizing by the users to meet their specifications which satisfy them (Barkhus and Dey, 2003). According to Ricken (2000) it is an effort to fabricate consumer devotion by building an important balanced relationship by comprehension, the buyer needs to fulfill an objective that productively and proficiently addresses every individual's need in a given connection. Since there are assortments of SMS advertising received by customers, it might be taken as aggravating and disturbing by the consumers (Zhang, 2000) thus, resulting in a negative attitude toward SMS advertising (Zanot, 1981). So as to overcome this issue, personalization is an unquestionable requirement in SMS publicizing in light of the fact that buyers are inclined toward SMS promotion in the event that they can modify as indicated by their necessities and wants (Dezoysa, 2002; Milne & Gorden, 1993; Robins, 2003). Yan et al. (2004) found that by personalizing their SMS advertising, advertisers might have a chance to precisely focus on certain gathering of consumers by advertising specifically to their inclinations.

In other words, through personalization, advertisers can get to customers personally and accordingly develop and enhance the relationship between advertisers and consumers. In order to accomplish this, advertisers need information that contains customers' demographics, area and inclinations. Some studies found that localised time and area, likewise is important to get consumers' consideration with regard to SMS advertising. (Watson, 2000; Balasubramanian et al., 2002). If the advertisement meets consumer's preferred time and location, it is likely to receive a positive feedback from consumers (Watson et al., 2000).

### *Irritation*

Irritation in SMS advertising refers to annoyance that intervenes with the SMS advertising messages. When consumers received a SMS advertising message, they may feel irritated and ignore it (Altuna & Konuk, 2009). This happens when the advertiser connects with advertising system that irritates, affronts, or is excessively manipulative. Therefore consumers' take that as undesirable and aggravated advertising (Ducoffe, 1996). Irritation has been a significant issue in advertising. As a result of the irritation, the promotion may lose its adequacy, thus consumers will be negative ly disposed toward the ad because of the immaterial and diverting data as an interruption into their security, which might make them feel confounded and irritated about the message (Stewart & Pavlou, 2002).

One approach is by giving customers some control over the advertisement. This method is called permission-based advertising. It refers to consumers' control over time, location, what and how SMS advertising is made (Carroll, Barnes, Scornavacca & Fletcher, 2007). Furthermore, "when advertising

employs techniques that annoy, offend, insult or are overly manipulative, consumers are likely to perceive it as unwanted and an irritating influence” (Ducoffe, 1996).

## 2. Research Methodology

For this study, descriptive and causal research designs were used in order to determine the relationship of the sets of variables investigated in this study. Based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) due to the combined population of UiTM Kota Bharu and UMK of 7000 sample size, 364 is achievable to acquire minimum sampling. From the 450 questionnaires distributed, 300 questionnaires were returned as usable. To support this statement, Sekaran (2000) and Roscoe (1975), both agreed that for most studies, a sample size range from 30 to 500 would be sufficient.

### 2.1. Findings and Analysis

#### *Frequency Distribution of Respondents*

Table 1 below shows that most of the respondents (241, 80.3%) are female while the rest (59,19.7%) were male.

The majority of the respondents (175) were aged from 18 – 21 years old followed by those ranging between 22 – 25 years old (120). The least frequency was from those ranging from 26 – 30 years old, which has a total frequency of 1.7% or approximately 5 respondents. There was no respondent in the age range of 31 -33 years old.

**Table 1.** Respondents' Demographic Profile (N = 300)

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	59	19.7
Female	241	80.3
Age		
18-21	175	58.3
22-25	120	40
26-30	5	1.7
31-33	0	0
Race		
Malay	244	81.3
Chinese	37	12.3
Indian	15	5
Others	4	1.3
Education Level		
Diploma	18	6
Degree	281	93.7
Master	1	0.3
Doctorate (PHD)	0	
Monthly Income		

less than 1000	281	93.7
1000-1999	13	4.3
2000-2999	6	2
3000-3999	0	0
more than 4000	0	0
Own Mobile Devices		
Yes	300	100
No	0	0
Received SMS Advertisements		
Yes	270	90
No	30	10

The majority of the respondents were Malays which represents 81.3% of the sample size. Meanwhile, Chinese respondents represented the second highest frequency with 12.3% followed by 5% Indians. As for the other races, 1.3% represented 4 respondents who were Punjabi, Bidayuh and two Iban. The highest percentage (93.7%) have a degree, followed by those (6%) who have a diploma level. 1 respondent (0.3%) had a Masters.

In terms of income, the highest frequency (93.7%) had an income below RM1000 per month, followed by 4.3% with an income level ranging from RM1000 - RM1999 per month. The least frequency (2%) had an income ranging from RM2000 - RM2999 per month. There was no respondent for the category of income ranging from RM3000 – RM3999 and more than RM4000.

All the respondents own at least one mobile device. Approximately 270 respondents said that they received SMS advertisement and the other 30 respondents said no

Research Objective 1: To examine the relationship between Entertainment with Gen Y's attitudes towards SMS Advertising

**Table 2.** Pearson Correlation Coefficients of Entertainment and Attitudes

		Entertainment	Attitudes
Entertainment	Pearson Correlation	1	.605**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Attitudes	Pearson Correlation	.605**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

Table 2 shows a positive relationship between Entertainment and Gen Y attitudes towards SMS advertising, as mentioned by Kotler and Keller (2006) “an attitude is a person’s enduring favourable and unfavourable evaluations, emotional feelings and action tendencies toward some object or idea”. This statement is also supported by Mitchell and Olson (1981) who affirmed that entertaining

advertising will put the audience in a good mood and thus, has a positive impact on consumers' attitudes toward advertising and even toward those promoted brands.

Research Objective 2: To examine the relationship between credibility with Gen Y's attitudes towards SMS Advertising.

**Table 3.** Pearson Correlation Coefficients of Informativeness and Attitudes

		<b>Informativeness</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>
Informativeness	Pearson Correlation	1	.518**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Attitudes	Pearson Correlation	.518**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

Based on Table 3, the result has proven that informativeness and Gen Y's attitudes have a strong positive relationship. Thus, information is considered a very valuable incentive in mobile marketing because the recipients react very positively to advertisements that transfer incentives (Varshney, 2003). Aitken et al., (2008) affirm that whenever advertisements meet all of the qualitative features, then consumers will react positively to it.

Research Objective 3: To examine the relationship between Personalization with Gen Y's attitudes towards SMS Advertising

**Table 4.** Pearson Correlation Coefficients of Personalization and Attitudes

		<b>Personalization</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>
Personalization	Pearson Correlation	1	.627**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Attitudes	Pearson Correlation	.627**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

Based on Table 4, there is a moderate positive relationship between personalization in SMS advertising and Gen Y's attitudes toward SMS Advertising. According to Ricken (2000), it is an effort to fabricate consumers' devotion by building an important balanced relationship, by comprehension of buyers' needs and fulfils an objective that productively and proficiently addresses every individual's need in a given connection. In order to accomplish this, advertisement needs information which contains customer's demographic, area and inclinations. If the advertisement meets consumer's

preferable time and location, it is likely to have a positive reaction from consumers (Watson et al., 2000).

Research Objective 4: To examine the relationship between Credibility with Gen Y's attitudes towards SMS Advertising.

**Table 5.** Pearson Correlation Coefficients of Credibility and Attitudes

		Creditability	Attitudes
Credibility	Pearson Correlation	1	.627**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Attitudes	Pearson Correlation	.627**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

Table 5 shows that credibility and Gen Y attitudes have a strong positive relationship with each other. There is a positive influence between credibility of SMS advertising and Gen Y attitudes toward SMS advertising. Thus, this answers the first objective for this research which is to determine the relationship between credibility (independent) and Gen Y's attitudes toward SMS advertising (dependent). Siau and Shen (2003) affirm that credibility can be an effective instrument for the advertisers to increase client trust, which is significant for the accomplishment of SMS advertising.

Research Objective 5: To examine the relationship between Irritation with Gen Y's attitudes towards SMS Advertising

**Table 6.** Pearson Correlation Coefficients of Irritation and Attitudes

		Irritation	Attitudes
Irritation	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.326
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Attitudes	Pearson Correlation	-0.326	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

Table 6 shows irritation and Gen Y attitudes have a medium negative relationship. Ahmadi et al. (2013) mentioned that SMS advertising can give the consumers information which makes them uncertain and irritated which demonstrate consumers' negative states of mind toward it. Consumers

may feel confused and react negatively. Another point of possible annoyance is unwanted messages, commonly known as spam (Dickinger, 2005). Spam intrudes into consumers' privacy and stifles consumer acceptance.

Research Objective 6: To identify whether entertainment, Informativeness, Personalization, Credibility and Irritation has a significant effect on Gen Y's attitudes towards SMS Advertising

Regression analysis was used to obtain results for the sixth objective which measures the strength of the relationship between entertainment, informativeness, personalization, credibility and personalization with Gen Y's attitudes towards SMS advertising.

**Table 7.** Model Summary Attitude of generation Y toward SMS advertising

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.742 <sup>a</sup>	.550	.543	.51478	2.130

Predictors: (Constant), irritation, Informativeness, Creditability, Personalization, entertainment

Dependent Variable: attitudes

Table 7 shows that R Square is 0.550 for the regression of attitudes of 0.742. This means that 55% of the variation in Gen Y's attitudes towards SMS advertising is explained by the five independent variables which are entertainment, informativeness, creditability, personalization and irritation. The other 45% remained unexplained (R square = 0.550)

**Table 8.** Multiple Regressions

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.724	.224		3.230	.000
	entertainment	.167	.046	.202	3.669	.001
	Informativeness	.170	.043	.183	3.927	.001
	Creditability	.280	.052	.282	5.369	.001
	Personalization	.228	.054	.226	4.234	.001
	irritation	-.048	.036	-.058	-1.343	.180

Table 7 shows the standardized coefficients beta used to get the strength of the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. The value of coefficients beta shows the strength of effect of the independent variables towards the dependent variable. The highest beta coefficient has the credibility with coefficient beta of 0.282 which indicates the strongest relationship. The second highest beta coefficient is personalization which has the coefficient beta value of 0.226, followed by

entertainment and informativeness with beta coefficient values of 0.202 and 0.183. Lastly, the weakest of relationship is irritation with beta coefficient of -0.58.

### **3. Conclusion**

This research investigated Gen Y's attitudes with regard to receiving SMS advertisements. In the light of the overall findings, this study concludes that Gen Y's possess positive attitudes when receiving mobile advertisements, and negative attitudes towards irritation attitudes. The negative attitudes towards SMS advertising, especially disagreement, implies that the marketers have a lot of improvement to make SMS advertising be more popular and attractive. Furthermore, the research opens another channel of communication on various unexamined matters, concerning the mobile advertising industry. The outcomes demonstrate that the attitude towards advertising via mobile devices unequivocally relies on upon message attributes. The message qualities should be created precisely. Advertisers cannot just depend on the way that an advertising message is sent by the means of mobile phones which will be perused and recalled consistently. The mobile phone might be an enticing device but is irrelevant if the message is not able to pull customers' to buy the product or to hire the service. This imposes new challenges and difficulties for advertisers in the future.

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