



Full length article

The effect of web advertising visual design on online purchase intention: An examination across gender

Abubaker Shaouf^a, Kevin Lü^{a,*}, Xiaoying Li^b^a Brunel University London, UK^b Keele University, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 18 November 2015

Received in revised form

11 February 2016

Accepted 18 February 2016

Available online xxx

Keywords:

Web advertising
Advertising attitudes
Brand attitudes
Purchase intention
Gender differences

ABSTRACT

With web advertising growing to be a huge industry, it is important to understand the effectiveness of web advertisement. In this study we investigate the effects of web advertising visual design (WAVD) purchasing intention within the framework of an integrated model. Nine hypotheses were developed and tested on a dataset of 316 observations collected via a questionnaire survey. The results of structural equation modeling (SEM) indicate that while web advertising visual cues influence consumers' purchasing intention through advertising attitudes and brand attitudes, they do not have direct effects on purchasing intention. Further results on the moderating role of gender suggest that web advertising visual cues have direct effect on consumers' purchasing intention for male groups but not for female groups. This study contributes to the understanding the role of visual dimensions in forming online purchase intentions.

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The use of web advertisements began in 1994, when the first banner advertising was displayed on Hotwired.com for AT&T (Holis, 2005), and since then the internet has become an important medium through which companies advertise their products and services. According to a recent report released by the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB, 2014), web advertising revenue surpassed \$23 billion in the first half of 2014, up 15% on the same period in 2013. In the coming years, web advertising expenditure is projected to overtake all advertising media, including TV advertising. Advertising is often considered as the main marketing tool in terms of influencing consumer purchase decisions (Kiang, Raghu, & Shang, 2000). In an internet context, most scholars agree that more careful consideration needs to be given to web advertising visual design (WAVD) in order to achieve its goals (Cho, 1999; Duffett, 2015; Méndez & Leiva, 2015; Pieters, Wedel, & Batra, 2010). This may be because of the sheer numbers of site stimuli competing for consumers' visual attention. Online users have been found to spend on average only 6.4 s on each search engine results

page (Hotchkiss, 2006), and they usually decide to stay or leave the website within the first 2 min (Dahal, 2011). Thus, it is increasingly essential to measure the efficiency of web advertising and its design because the beauty of advertising is in the eye of the beholder.

Against this backdrop, web advertising has gained a great deal of attention in recent years due to its potential effect on online shoppers' responses (Almendros & García, 2014; Ching, Tong, Chen, & Chen, 2013; Flores, Chen, & Ross, 2014; Goodrich, 2011; Kuisma, Simola, Uusitalo, & Öörni, 2010; Saadeghvaziri, Dehdashti, & Askarabad, 2013; Sajjacholapunt & Ball, 2014; Sokolik, Magee, & Ivory, 2014). While previous studies have identified the impacts of web advertising on basic consumer reactions such as click-through rates and consumer recall, a significant gap remains in the theoretical understanding of how WAVD influences online purchase intention (Cyr, Head, Larios, & Pan, 2009; Goodrich, 2011). This study sets out to fill in the gap by investigating effects of WAVD on consumers' purchase intention. In addition to the potential direct impact of WAVD on purchase intention (Goodrich, 2011), this study also establishes the role of attitudinal effect as an important mediator in the relationship between WAVD and purchasing intentions (Ha & Janda, 2014; Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006).

Moreover, we examine the moderating role of gender in the relationships between WAVD, consumers' attitude and purchasing. Gender is considered a key segmentation variable in the field of

* Corresponding author. Business School, Brunel University, Uxbridge, UB8 3PH, UK.

E-mail addresses: Abubaker.Shaouf@brunel.ac.uk (A. Shaouf), kevin.lu@brunel.ac.uk (K. Lü), Xiaoying.Li@keele.ac.uk (X. Li).

marketing (Darley & Smith, 1995), and plays a key role in moderating consumers' evaluative judgments (Holbrook, 1986). Based on gender-based research, differences between the sexes have been uncovered related to attitudes toward web advertising, attitudes toward online shopping (Hasan, 2010; Rodgers & Sheldon, 1999), information searching and processing styles (Krugman, 1996; Richard, Chebat, Yang, & Putrevu, 2010), visual design preferences (Cyr & Head, 2013; Mahzari & Ahmadzadeh, 2013), attention to web advertising (Goodrich, 2014; Park, 2015), satisfaction with online shopping (Rodgers & Harris, 2003), online communication strategies (Holmberg & Hellsten, 2015), and purchase intention (Davis, Lang, & Diego, 2014). These differences between men and women may moderate the effects of web advertisements (Goodrich, 2014). Although some studies focus on the importance of gender in the online shopping context, empirical evidence regarding the moderating role of this variable remains scarce. According to Goodrich (2013), such investigation may be beneficial with regard to providing a link between web advertising design elements and marketing goals. Thus, this investigation also attempts to fill this gap and to help marketers better understand the impact of WAVD on online shoppers across genders.

This study contributes to the advertising literature in two ways. First, the study advances our understanding of the role of WAVD in online purchase intention formation by integrating the direct and indirect effects of WAVD on online purchase intention into a single model. Second, unlike previous research that proposes that gender only moderates the effect of site stimuli on attitudes (Goodrich, 2014; Richard et al., 2010; Tsichla, Hatzithomas, & Boutsouki, 2014), our study discovers that gender plays a significant moderating role with behavioral intentions as well. This study therefore is the first of its kind to provide such empirical evidence in a web advertising context.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. First, we provide a theoretical background of the variables in our model. Next, we develop the hypotheses proposed in our model. After that, we discuss the method used for data collection and analysis. Then, we conclude the paper with a discussion and some directions for future research.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Web advertising visual design (WAVD)

Visual design is considered as one of the essential elements of web advertising success (Cho, 1999). Recognizing its importance in the field of the internet, Singh and Dalal (1999, p.92) profess that “designing effective messages (ads or web sites) is a key ingredient in creating an ideal customer”. Moreover, Duffett (2015, p.520) declares that “advertisements should be carefully created to be interactive and stimulating”. In an internet context, visual appeal has been shown to influence the quality of interaction between online stimuli and the internet users (Chou, Chen, & Lin, 2015; Lee, Ahn, & Park, 2015). The importance of WAVD may derive from the fact that websites become more competitive with hundreds, if not thousands, of advertisements competing for consumers' visual attention (Pieters et al., 2010). Therefore, employing a variety of attention-grabbing tools in web advertisements, such as large size, vivid colors, and animation, may play a vital role in making a strong first impression on visitors. Dreze and Zufryden (1997) argue that visual design in web advertising deals with elements that include color, shapes, images, font type, font size, and dynamic techniques, etc. As long as these factors are congruent with customers' attitudes, beliefs and values, the effectiveness of advertising will be enhanced (Braun-Latour & Zaltman, 2006).

Among many theories that aim to explain the effect of visual

design factors, the theory of Visual Rhetoric (Scott, 1994) is a widely accepted one. According to this theory, visual elements, such as images and color, can easily convey commercial meaning in marketing messages, reduce the role of cognitive efforts, and in turn influence a target audience. Since its appearance 21 years ago (Scott, 1994), the theory of Visual Rhetoric has become one of the most frequently referenced and powerful theories for the prediction of online consumer behavior (Cyr et al., 2009; Flores et al., 2014). In this light, we attempt to explore whether visual cues in web advertising (e.g., background color, images, and flash design) influence advertising outcomes as measured by advertising attitude, brand attitude, and online purchase intention. In an internet context, much research has shown that attractive and pleasurable site stimuli can enhance positive consumer responses (Chen, Hsu, & Lin, 2010; Ching et al., 2013; Cho & Kim, 2012; Day, Shyi, & Wang, 2006; Flores et al., 2014; Kim, Kim, & Park, 2010; Liu, Chou, & Liao, 2015; Moore, Stammerjohan, & Coulter, 2005; Richard, 2005; Sokolik et al., 2014). Hence, the responses of online consumers may be influenced by visual attractiveness in web advertising as well.

2.2. Attitudinal responses: attitudes toward advertising (ATA) and attitudes toward brand (ATB)

Attitude is considered to be one of the key determinants of advertising efficiency. It is viewed as an overall feeling or evaluation about an individual, idea or object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). This definition suggests that attitudes change over time as individuals gain new knowledge about the idea or object from different sources. In this study, we consider attitude toward advertising (ATA) as an overall feeling toward advertising on the internet in general, whereas attitude toward brand (ATB) is described as the overall feeling about a particular brand. In this regard, Cho (1999, p.40) suggested that “People who have a more favorable attitude toward web advertising overall have a more favorable attitude toward a banner ad.” A person's attitudes play a vital role in determining his/her behavioral intentions, as suggested by the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In addition, previous research has shown that the impacts of advertising messages on purchase intention are theoretically mediated by advertising attitudes and brand attitude (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Shimp, 1981). In an online setting, various studies have established the mediating role of attitude in the relationship between site stimuli and online purchase intention (e.g. Korgaonkar & Wolin, 2002; Rasty, Chou, & Feiz, 2013; Stevenson, Bruner, & Kumar, 2000; Wu, Wei, & Chen, 2008).

2.3. Online purchase intention (OPI)

Online purchase intention has been defined as a consumer's desire to buy a product or service from a web site (Cyr, 2008). In this context, online purchase intention is considered as “the final consequence of a number of cues for the e-commerce customer” (Ganguly, Dash, & Cyr, 2009, p. 27). Research in which online purchase intention has been examined shows a significant relationship between purchase intention and actual purchasing (Morwitz, Steckel, & Gupta, 2007; Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006). In other words, online purchase rates of a product or service will be higher among consumers who state positive intentions to buy the product than among those with weaker intentions. This view is consistent with many theoretical models of consumer behavior. For instance, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, p. 368) state, “if one wants to know whether or not an individual will perform a given behavior, the simplest and probably most efficient thing one can do is to ask the individual whether he intends to perform that behavior”. As a

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6837356>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6837356>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)