SYRIAN CONSUMERS: BELIEFS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES TO INTERNET ADVERTISING

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Abstract. The goal of this research is to determine the dimensions of beliefs about internet advertising affecting Syrian consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards internet advertising. The results indicate that Attitudes are influenced positively by information, and entertainment; and negatively by irritation and values' corruption. Irritation positively influences consumers' behaviors of leaving websites showing the ads. Entertainment positively influences consumers' behaviors of clicking on internet ads for further information concerning advertised products. Attitude is found to fully mediate the relationships between beliefs of information, irritation, and values' corruption and the behaviors clicking on internet ads, and partially mediate the relationship between entertainment and the behaviors of clicking on internet ads. Attitudes fully mediate the relationships between beliefs of information, entertainment, and values' corruption and the behaviors of leaving websites showing the ads, and partially mediate the relationship between irritation and the behaviors of leaving websites showing the ads. This research comes to be one of the first studies to investigate Syrian consumers' beliefs about, attitudes, and behavioral responses towards internet advertising. As well as, this study provides evidence of the direct relationship between some of the beliefs about internet advertising (i.e. entertainment and irritation) and the behavioral responses towards it.

Keywords: beliefs about internet advertising, attitudes towards internet advertising, behaviors towards internet advertising, consumer behavior, Syria.

JEL Classification: M31, M37.

Introduction

Advertising is a standard promotional tactic that is designed to reach a target audience and to either affect behavior or to introduce, persuade, and/or remind consumers of an offer (Nihel 2013). Advertising messages could be delivered through various mediums (e.g. TV, radio, and magazines). Some scholars characterize advertising as ubiquitous and an important part of the fabric of modern life (Shavitt *et al.* 1998). Advertising has advanced with technological innovation, now common throughout the world. Several new advertising mediums are emerging and these have paved the way for advertisers to increase their interactivity with target consumers. Berthon *et al.* (1996)

were the first researchers to investigate how advertising might operate on the internet and they characterized it as a new medium in the marketing communication mix. Other researchers differentiated between offline and online advertising, suggesting that traditional media (print, TV, and radio) is based on messages that are connected to entertainment, whereas the internet is better viewed as an information-based medium Lei (2000). Further debate over how to characterize the internet followed. Wolin *et al.* (2002: 88) reason that the internet also possesses an entertaining component. They see internet advertising as a broad format that consists of "commercial content paid for by sponsors, designed for audiences, delivered by video, print, audio, graphics or animation". Recently, the internet

has been regarded as the most powerful advertising media (Radbâţă, Kubenka 2012).

With an estimated amount of $2,660,000 as an expenditure on internet advertising in the Middle East by the year 2013 (Dubai Press Club 2010), Advertisers targeting Syrian consumers are well aware of the promise of the internet as an advertising. The escalation of internet advertising has grown rapidly in Syria, and is exhibited in a wide variety of forms (e.g. websites, banner ads, rich media ads, web logs, electronic mail ads, and online social network advertising). While some researchers have addressed the internet as a very effective advertising medium Pabedinskaite, Rojutė-Gaukštienė (2004), Wolin *et al.* (2002) refered to the internet as a source of challenges and opportunities for advertisers, and that includes the need for investigating internet users' beliefs, attitudes, and even their behavioral responses towards this type of advertising espcially when it comes to the results of previous research which considered consumer attitudes towards advertising as an indication of advertising effectiveness (e.g. Russell *et al.* 1994; Ducoffe 1996; Mehta 2000; Wolin *et al.* 2002; Wolin, Korgaonkar 2005; Karson *et al.* 2006; Wang, Sun 2010a, 2010b; Sun, Wang 2010; Mahmoud 2012a, 2012b). Effective internet advertising could promote for purchase intentions towards advertised products (Sathish *et al.* 2011). Therefore, modelling the relationships among beliefs about, attitudes and behaviors towards internet advertising, through the results of the current study, could help advertisers produce conveniently advertising messages that reach audience more effectively in the Syrian context. Yet while research and practice have identified the promise of internet advertising, little is known about the impact of internet advertising in the Syrian context as the literature has largely focused on developed nations (Sun, Wang 2010; Wang, Sun 2010a, 2010b; Kamal, Chu 2012). See Mahmoud (2012a, 2012b) for preliminary research into research focusing on developing countries such as Syria. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to validate scales measuring beliefs and attitudes towards internet advertising with respect to the Syrian cultural context and test a model (see Fig. 1) linking beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors related to internet advertising. This model is proposed on the basis of previous research and will utilize structural equation modeling.

Literature review and research hypotheses

Beliefs

Beliefs have been conceptualized as predictions held by people in regard to the possibilities that their knowledge about a referent is true (Wyer, Albarracin 2005) or, alternatively, that an event or state of affairs has or will occur (Fishbein, Ajzen 1975; Eagly, Chaiken 1998). Mahmoud

(2012a: 92) defined beliefs about internet advertising as all knowledge that one could perceive as correct for internet advertising. So consumers could perceive internet advertising as good source of product information (Ju-Pak 1999). Likewise, consumers may be entertained by internet advertising as it may involve tactics such as interactivity and multimedia (Watson *et al.* 1998). Conversely, internet offers may be a source of irritation as advertising may cause feelings of confusion if information is perceived as intense (Ducoffe 1996). Some users of the internet may install ad blockers, which are software that prevent internet ads from downloading on the browsed website (McCormally 2000). As well as, internet advertising could be perceived as promoting lifestyles embodied by types of products and brands advertised online (Pollay, Mittal 1993; Mahmoud 2012b). Internet advertising could be a symbol of materialism as it encourages people to achieve satisfaction through consumption (Pollay, Mittal 1993). Falsity refers to the belief about advertising as a source of false information and deceptive claims (Nadilo 1998). Wolin *et al.* (2002) argue that internet advertising has the ability to shape internet users' values; therefore, it could be a cause of values corruption.

Attitudes

In general, attitudes refer to the positive or the negative cognitive dispositions that one person holds towards a referent. In this regard, some attitude theorists (e.g. Fazio 1989) propose that attitudes be thought of as object-evaluation associations. That is, an attitude can be viewed as a simple two-node semantic network, with one node representing the object, the second node the global evaluation of the object, and the link between the two nodes the strength of the association (Fabrigar *et al.* 2005: 80). Lutz (1985: 53) defines attitudes towards advertising, in general, as a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner to advertising. In the context of the internet, Mahmoud (2012a: 92) refers to attitudes towards internet advertising as a general predisposition to like or dislike advertising messages delivered online.

Behavioral responses

Overall, behavioral responses towards advertising are prompted actions that consumers take after exposure to an ad. Such behaviors could be actioned through seeking of further information after watching the ad (Nedungadi *et al.* 1993). In the case of internet advertising, behavioral responses are mostly defined as "clicking on ad" and "leaving the website showing the ad" (e.g. Wolin *et al.* 2002; Wang, Sun 2010a, 2010b).

Beliefs about and attitudes towards internet advertising

The investigation of the relationship between beliefs about and attitudes towards advertising goes back to the early 1990s when Alwitt, Prabhaker (1992) found that negative affection towards advertising was related to the perception of advertising as a source of irritation. Later studies have confirmed the significant role that beliefs about advertising could play in predicting consumers' attitudes towards advertising (Wolin *et al.* 2002; Yang 2003; Wang, Sun 2010a, 2010b; Kamal, Chu 2012b; Li-Ming *et al.* 2013). Some dimensions of beliefs about internet advertising like information (Shavitt *et al.* 1998; Zhou, Bao 2002; Usman *et al.* 2010; Eze, Lee 2012; Zabadi *et al.* 2012; Mahmoud 2012b; Mir 2012; Saxena, Khanna 2013), entertainment (Shavitt *et al.* 1998; Zhou, Bao 2002; Eze, Lee 2012; Mahmoud 2012b; Saxena, Khanna 2013), and irritation (Zabadi *et al.* 2012; Mahmoud 2012b; Saxena, Khanna 2013) are found to be more predictive for attitudes towards internet advertising than other dimensions of beliefs.

Based on the above review we can state hypothesis one (H1) as follows:

(H1): Beliefs about internet advertising will significantly influence attitudes towards it.

Attitudes and behavioral responses towards internet advertising

Previous research results exhibit a robust relationship between attitudes and behavioral responses towards internet advertising (Mehta 2000; Wolin *et al.* 2002; Sohail, Saeed 2004; Wang, Sun 2010a; Mir 2012; Kamal, Chu 2012b). In other words, positive attitudes towards internet advertising will probably be accompanied with favorable behavioral responses towards internet advertising (e.g. clicking on banners for more details about products advertised). Likewise, negative attitudes will lead to unfavorable responses towards internet advertising (e.g. leaving websites showing ads). For an instant, Mehta (2000) found that consumers with favorable affection towards advertising are more likely to recall brand advertised. Wolin *et al.* (2002) concluded that the more positive attitudes towards advertising were, the greater the likelihood would be to produce favorable behavioral responses to internet ads. Wang, Sun (2010a; 2010b) proved, through a cross-cultural investigation, that positive behaviors regarding clicking on internet ads are significantly associated with favorable attitudes towards advertising. Inspecting people attitudes and behaviors towards social media advertising in a Middle Eastern country, Kamal, Chu (2012b) found that behaviors towards social media advertising are significantly predicted by attitudes.
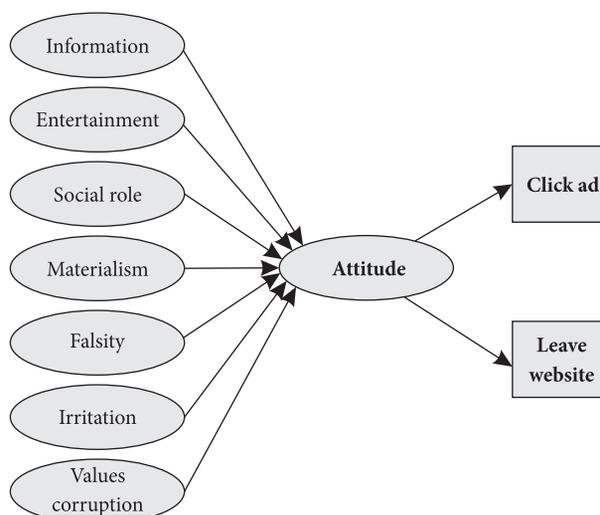

Fig. 1. The Proposed Model

With regard to the previous review, consideration to (H1), and Baron, Kenny (1986) approach to hypothesizing mediations, we propose the following hypothesis (H2):

(H2): Attitudes will fully mediate the relationship between beliefs and behavioral responses towards internet advertising.

Methods

We adopt a quantitative procedure in analyzing the data for the present study. We collect our data through a cross-sectional correlational field study design (Tharenou *et al.* 2007).

Sample

We select randomly 384 electronic mail addresses of active internet users from one internet service provider operating in Syria. An online survey was sent in an e-mail to the randomly selected users and this yielded 288 valid responses for our statistical analyses.

Measures

Measures of the present study are validated concerning the Syrian Arab culture (see Table 1).

First, scale items to measure variables are translated from English to Arabic and then back-translated from Arabic to English in purpose of eliminating items that give different meanings upon this procedure. Aiming to improve the translation accuracy, bilingual third parties are asked to conduct the back-translation (Sun, Wang 2010a). Then we ask academicians from the department of Marketing & International Trade in the Higher Institute of Business Administration (HIBA), and the department of Business Administration in Damascus University in Damascus

to evaluate the Arabic wording for our scales' items to guarantee that our measures are face-validated. As recommended by many researchers (e.g. Tharenou *et al.* 2007), our questionnaire is piloted before distributed. The pilot study involves 57 internet users. The purpose of this procedure is to guarantee a good understanding and acceptance by respondents, so some questions may need deleting or modifying. Second, measures are factor-analyzed using the approach of Principal Component Analysis and Varimax rotation (see Table 2) to check for the dimensionality of the scales measuring beliefs and attitudes. Third, measures are assessed for reliability using Cronbach alpha to check for their internal consistency (see Table 3).

Table 1. Measures used in the present study

Dimension	Item	Recoded	Source	Scale
Information	is a good source of product information	N/A	Ducoffe 1996	Likert
	provides timely information	N/A		Likert
	provides meaningful information about the product use of other consumers	N/A		Likert
	provides useful information about new products	N/A		Likert
Entertainment	is entertaining	N/A	Wolin *et al.* 2002; Ducoffe 1996; Wang, Sun 2010a, 2010b	Likert
	is pleasing	N/A		Likert
	is fun to use	N/A		Likert
	is exciting	N/A		Likert
Social Role	It lets me know what is in fashion and what I should buy for keeping a good social image	N/A	Pollay, Mittal 1993; Wolin *et al.* 2002	Likert
	tells me what people like myself are buying and using	N/A		Likert
	helps me know which products will or will not reflect the sort of person I am	N/A		Likert
Materialism	make you buy things you don't really need	N/A	Wolin *et al.* 2002	Likert
	Increases dissatisfaction among consumers by showing products which some consumers can't afford	N/A		Likert
	Is making us a materialistic society – interested in buying and owning things	N/A		Likert
	Makes people buy unaffordable products just to show off	N/A		Likert
Falsity	Helps the consumer buy the best brand for the price	R	Wang, Sun 2010a, b; Wolin *et al.* 2002; Burnett 2000)	Likert
	I don't believe online ads	N/A		Likert
	Is not objective	N/A		Likert
Irritation	Is irritating	N/A	Ducoffe 1996	Likert
	Is confusing	N/A		Likert
	Is annoying	N/A		Likert
	insults people's intelligence	N/A		Likert
Values Corruption	Makes people live in a world of fantasy	N/A	Wang, Sun 2010a, b; Wolin *et al.* 2002)	Likert
	takes undue advantage of children	N/A		Likert
	Leads children to make unreasonable purchase demands on their parents	N/A		Likert
Attitude	Overall, I consider online advertising as a good thing	N/A	Wolin *et al.* 2002; Wang, Sun 2010a, b	Likert
	Overall, I like online advertising	N/A		Likert
	Overall, I regard online advertising as an essential thing	N/A		Likert
	Overall, watching online advertising is important to me	N/A		Likert
	Overall, online advertising is not interesting to me	R		Likert
Behavioral Response	When I see online advertisement, I click on it for further information	N/A	Wolin *et al.* 2002	Likert
	When I see online advertisement, I leave the website	N/A		Likert

Table 2. Factor analysis

Item	Infor-mation	Entertainment	Social Role	Materia-lism	Falsity	Irritation	Values Corruption	Attitude
inf01	0.777							
inf02	0.887							
inf03	0.44							
inf04	0.589							
ent01		0.577						
ent02		0.878						
ent03		0.85						
ent04		0.446						
soc01			0.691					
soc02			0.728					
soc03			0.608					
mater01				0.763				
mater02				0.527				
mater03				0.74				
mater04				0.76				
fals01					0.434			
fals02					0.83			
fals03					0.779			
irr01						0.816		
irr02						0.631		
irr03						0.795		
irr04						0.66		
vc01							0.788	
vc02							0.86	
vc03							0.511	
att01								0.355
att02								0.756
att03								0.762
att04								0.808
att05								0.786
Eigenvalue	2.582	2.519	1.845	2.421	2.051	2.892	2.287	2.55
%Variance	10.326	10.074	7.379	9.685	8.206	11.567	9.148	50.996

Results

Demographic data description

As table 4 exhibits, our respondents consist of (56.94%) men and (43.06%) women. The majority of the respondents hold a bachelors degree (43.06%), with age ranging between 20 to less than 30 years (65.97%), and a monthly income of less than 10,000 SYP or unemployed.

Hypotheses testing

The model testing hypotheses of the present study (Fig. 1) is evaluated through the statistical method of structural equation modeling (SEM) using SPSS-AMOS (v. 18) software.

Table 3. Reliability test

Factor	Items #	Alpha
Information	4	0.712
Entertainment	4	0.757
Social Role	3	0.639
Materialism	4	0.750
Falsity	3	0.681
Irritation	4	0.807
Values Corruption	3	0.727
Attitude	5	0.743

Table 4. Demographic description

Variable	Values	Frequency	% Frequency	Minimum	Maximum
Gender	Males	164	56.94		
	Females	124	43.06		
	Total	**288**	**100**		
Education	High School or less	26	9.03	Minimum	Maximum
	Intermediate Diploma or Some years of College	88	30.56		
	Bachelor	124	43.06		
	Postgrads	50	17.36		
	Total	**288**	**100**		
Age	Less than 20 years	64	22.22		
	From 20 to less than 30 years	190	65.97	18 Years	50 Years
	30 years and above	34	11.81		
	Total	**288**	**100**		
Income	Unemployed or of less than 10,000 SYP	155	53.82		
	10,000 to less than 20,000 SYP	58	20.14		
	20,000 to less than 30,000 SYP	37	12.85	0 (Unemployed)	350,000 SYP
	30,000 SYP and above	38	13.19		
	Total	**288**	**100**		

Table 5. Proposed Model Results

The Proposed Model						
The Relationship			**Estimate**	**S.E.**	**C.R.**	**P-value**
Information	→	Attitude	0.185	0.058	3.211	0.001
Entertainment	→	Attitude	0.35	0.044	7.995	0.000
Social Role	→	Attitude	−0.042	0.039	−1.077	**0.281**
Materialism	→	Attitude	0.044	0.036	1.233	**0.218**
Falsity	→	Attitude	0.055	0.041	1.352	**0.176**
Irritation	→	Attitude	−0.286	0.05	−5.75	0.000
Values Corruption	→	Attitude	−0.16	0.035	−4.619	0.000
Attitude	→	Click on ad	1.011	0.075	13.533	0.000
Attitude	→	Leave website	−0.562	0.103	−5.476	0.000
Chi-square	P-value = 0.000			χ^2 / df = 3.232		
NFI	0.942					
CFI	0.958					
RMR	0.036					
RMSEA	0.880					

Bootstrapping is used as well to confirm the significance of mediations exhibited in the model regardless of normality of our data (Byrne 2010). We use the following statistics in testing the goodness of fit: Chi- square (χ^2) (Bollen 1989); normed fit index (NFI) (Bentler, Bonett 1980); comparative fit index (CFI) (Bentler 1990); root mean square residual (RMR) (Hu, Bentler 1995); and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Browne, Cudeck 1993). Those statistics will help to test for how good the model is in fitting the collected data.

Table 5 shows the results of the proposed model testing. The values of RMR (0.036 < 0.05) (Hu, Bentler 1995), CFI (0.958 > 0.9) (Bentler 1990), and NFI (0.942 > 0.9) (Bentler, Bonett 1980) indicate a good fit for the proposed model. However, RMSEA (0.88 > 0.08) demonstrates a poor fit of the proposed model for our data (Jöreskog, Sörbom 1989) – besides there are three insignificant paths: Social Role → Attitude (P-value = 0.281 > 0.05), Materialism → Attitude (P-value = 0.218 > 0.05), and Falsity → Attitude (P-value = 0.176 > 0.05). Therefore, our model needs to be revised, and then retested. AMOS suggests adding two new paths (Entertainment → Click on ad; Irritation → Leave website) as modification indices to improve the model fitting for the data. Therefore, we eliminate the insignificant paths, draw the new suggested two paths, and retest the alternative model. Table 6 shows the results of testing the alternative model. All paths are significant. The goodness of fit statistics show that the alternative model is presenting a

good fit for our data. In this regard, we notice that c² value is insignificant ($\chi^2/df = 1.076$, P-value > 5%), the normed fit index is higher than 0.9 (NFI = 0.982), the comparative fit index is higher than 90% (CFI = 0.999), the root mean square residual is less than 0.05 (RMR = 0.032), and the root mean square error of approximation is less than 0.08 (RMSEA = 0.020) (Jöreskog, Sörbom 1989; Hu, Bentler 1995; Bentler 1992; MacCallum *et al.* 1996). Consequently, we conclude that the alternative model expresses a good fitting for our data. As well as, Table 8 shows that all indirect effects are significant. That is, we come to a decision that H1 and H2 are partially supported in the light of the following results (see Fig. 2).

Beliefs as predictors of attitudes towards internet advertising

Attitudes towards internet advertising are directly influenced positively by information (Estimate = 0.155, P-value < 0.01, r = 0.382), and entertainment (Estimate = 0.35, P-value < 0.01, r = 0.382); and negatively by irritation (Estimate = –0.258, P-value < 0.01, r = –0.437) and values' corruption (Estimate = –0.141, P-value < 0.01, r = –0.375).

Beliefs as predictors of behaviors towards internet advertising

Irritation positively influences consumers' behaviors of bouncing away from websites that show the ads (Estimate = 0.368, P-value < 0.01, r = 0.282). Entertainment positively influences consumers' behaviors of clicking on internet ads for further information concerning advertised products (Estimate = 0.245, P-value < 0.01, r = 0.494).

Attitude as a mediator between internet advertising beliefs and behaviors

Attitudes fully mediate the relationships between beliefs of information (P-value < 0.01), irritation (P value < 0.01), and values' corruption (P-value < 0.01) and the behaviors clicking on online ads, and partially mediate the relationship between entertainment (P-value < 0.01) and the behaviors of clicking on internet ads.

    Attitudes fully mediate the relationships between beliefs of information (P-value < 0.05), entertainment (P-value < 0.05), and values' corruption (P-value < 0.05) and the behaviors of leaving websites showing the ads, and partially mediate the relationship between irritation (P-value < 0.05) and the behaviors of leaving websites showing the ads.

Discussion

The present study finds that Syrian consumers perceive beliefs about internet advertising as a multi-dimensional

Table 6. Alternative Model Results

| The Relationship			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
Information	→	Attitude	0.155	0.056	2.79	0.005
Entertainment	→	Attitude	0.35	0.039	9.072	0.000
Irritation	→	Attitude	–0.258	0.047	–5.493	0.000
Values Corruption	→	Attitude	–0.141	0.033	–4.263	0.000
Attitude	→	Click on ad	0.866	0.084	10.252	0.000
Attitude	→	Leave website	–0.243	0.119	–2.034	0.042
Irritation	→	Leave website	0.368	0.109	3.373	0.000
Entertainment	→	Click on ad	0.245	0.072	3.423	0.000
Click on ad	P-value = 0.375 $\quad$ $\chi^2/df = 1.076$					
NFI	0.982					
CFI	0.999					
RMR	0.032					
RMSEA	0.020					
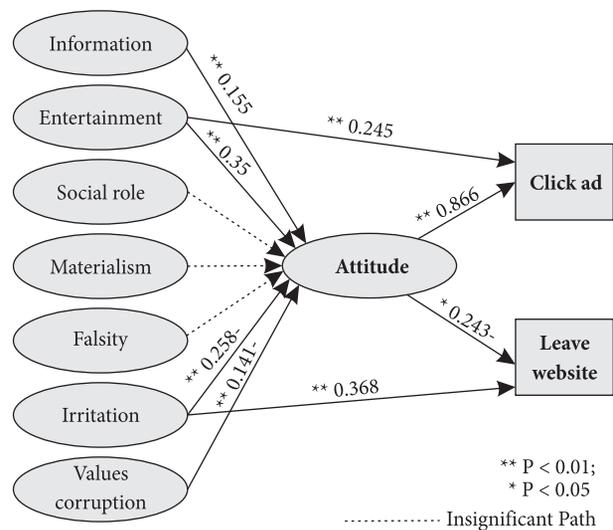
Fig. 2. The Alternative Path Model

construct (i.e. information, entertainment, the social role, materialism, falsity, values corruption, and irritation), and attitude as a uni-dimensional construct. This result concurs with previous findings of the literature (e.g. Alwitt, Prabhaker 1992; Wolin *et al.* 2002; Wang, Sun 2010b; Mahmoud 2012a, 2012b).

Irritation is found to exert a direct effect on Syrian consumer's behavioral responses of leaving the website that presents the ads. For example, if consumers get encountered with a website bearing many ads, those consumers will probably feel confused and consequently leave the ads-bearing site. That is, consumers who perceive of internet ads as being irritating or confusing will probably drive Syrian consumers to leave the website showing the ads, regardless of whether he or she holds favorable or unfavorable affects towards internet advertising in general. This result is considered a significant contribution to the current literature as beliefs could directly influence consumer behavioral responses towards internet advertising.

Our results also show that entertainment directly influences Syrian consumers' responses towards clicking on internet ads to get additional information related to the advertised product. So, perceiving internet advertising as a source of entertainment (e.g. containing flash games) may predict consumers to click on internet ads, even if Syrian consumers hold negative attitudes to internet advertising in general. Proving a direct relationship between entertainment and clicking on internet ads, a contribution has been made to current literature demonstrating that beliefs could be directly linked to behavior.

Attitudes towards internet advertising is found to mediate fully the relationship between some beliefs (i.e.

information, irritation, and values corruption) and the behavioral response of clicking on internet ads (Shavitt *et al.* 1998; Wolin *et al.* 2002; Zhou, Bao 2002; Yang 2003; Wang, Sun 2010a, 2010b; Usman *et al.* 2010; Eze, Lee 2012; Zabadi *et al.* 2012; Kamal, Chu 2012b). Additionally, attitudes are found to partially mediate the relationship between entertainment and clicking on internet ads. This finding implies that Syrian consumers with positive beliefs about internet advertising will probably form favorable attitudes towards it and consequently enhance the possibility of clicking on internet ads. Moreover, Syrian consumers who like internet advertising in general, will likely click on internet ads, even if they describe those ads as entertaining or not.

The present study finds that attitudes toward internet advertising in general mediates fully the relationship between some beliefs (i.e. information, entertainment, and values corruption) and the behavioral response of leaving the website showing the ads (Shavitt *et al.* 1998; Wolin *et al.* 2002; Zhou, Bao 2002; Yang 2003; Wang, Sun 2010a, 2010b; Usman *et al.* 2010; Eze, Lee 2012; Zabadi *et al.* 2012; Kamal, Chu 2012b). In addition, attitude towards advertising will mediate partially the relationship between irritation and leaving the website showing ads. That is, when Syrian consumers hold positive beliefs about internet advertising, they probably develop favorable affection and consequently are less possible to leave a website with an advertising content.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations

Variables	Mean	S.D.									
Information	4.24	0.50									
Entertainment	3.31	0.68	0.27**								
Social Role	3.37	0.79	0.25**	0.47**							
Materialism	2.91	0.85	−0.04	0.31**	0.35**						
Falsity	2.51	0.70	−0.38**	−0.09	−0.23**	0.02					
Irritation	2.03	0.59	−0.31**	−0.13*	−0.08	0.28**	0.35**				
Values Corruption	3.12	0.83	−0.27**	−0.09	−0.16**	0.29**	0.24**	0.37**			
Attitude	3.59	0.57	0.38**	0.50**	0.25**	0.02	−0.18**	−0.44**	−0.38**		
Click on ad	2.92	0.93	0.27**	0.45**	0.25**	0.03	−0.15*	−0.34**	−0.21**	0.62**	
Leave website	2.01	1.05	−0.14*	−0.33**	−0.25**	0.01	0.17**	0.28**	0.17**	−0.31**	−0.36**

** *P* < 0.01; * *P* < 0.05

Table 8. Mediation effect confirmation – Indirect effects significance

Dimension	Values Corruption	Irritation	Entertainment	Information	Attitude
Attitude	...	...	...	...	...
Click on ad	0.022*	0.031*	0.03*	0.031*	...
Leave website	0.001**	0.001**	0.001**	0.002**	...

** *P* < 0.01; * *P* < 0.05

As well as, Syrian consumer with positive attitudes towards internet advertising will probably keep navigating the website, even if they find internet ads irritating or not.

Implications

Researchers are advised to consider using the validated scales used in the present study, when they measure public beliefs about and attitudes towards advertising in the Syrian or even in the Arab country contexts.

Advertisers promoting in Syria are encouraged to influence Syrian consumers' beliefs about internet advertising to be more positive and less negative. That could be through working towards having internet advertising more informative (e.g. providing timely product-related information), more entertaining (e.g. including flash games within internet ads, or enclosing amusing pictures), less irritating and confusing (e.g. avoiding high volumes of ads within a website), and less values corruptive or pro-values through enhancing targeting tools in a way preventing kids from being exposed to inappropriate ads (e.g. Most social networks ads are accurately communicated to targeted segments of consumers). So consumers will mostly have more favorable affection and that leads to more favorable behavioral responses towards internet ads in respect to click on them or the period of time that consumers spend exposing to them.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

The results of this research in regard to the relationships between beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors towards internet advertising may need further investigation in cases of other electronic advertising media (e.g. SMS ads) or other traditional advertising media (e.g. newspapers, magazines, or radio ads) to test the validity of our results across different advertising medium types (e.g. Mittal 1994; Mahmoud 2010).

A cross-sectional method is used in the present study, That is, some researchers make criticism of using cross-sectional design in testing causal relationships (e.g. Reisel *et al.* 2010). So, it is recommended to conduct further investigations for our results using a longitudinal design, as having longitudinal data will help check consistency across waves. Besides, this research lacks the use of qualitative data, which could contribute in giving more meaningful results when used in accompany with quantitative data (Tharenou *et al.* 2007).

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