An Exploration of Advertising Avoidance by Audiences across Media

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ABSTRACT

This paper compares the difference in the degree of advertising avoidance between traditional media and the Internet. The study also examines customers' beliefs, attitudes, and behavior toward advertising to build a theoretical model that explains advertising avoidance. A survey was conducted to identify the influential factors. Findings indicate that on comparison, YouTube advertisements on the Internet were more problematic than TV commercial breaks, leading to high advertising avoidance on the part of consumers. Finally, using path analysis, a general advertising avoidance model based on the belief-attitude-behavior hierarchy is tested. The model shows that certain beliefs about advertising have direct effects on advertising avoidance behavior as well as on the attitude toward advertising.

Key words: *Advertising Avoidance, Traditional Media, Internet, YouTube, Path Analysis.*

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the negative responses that can emerge toward advertising is manifested through advertising avoidance. Speck and Elliott [1] studied ad avoidance in conventional media, defining it as "all actions by media users that differentially reduce their exposure to ad content." They showed that individuals may avoid exposure to ads in three ways: *cognition*, *affect* and *behavior* (through mechanical devices).

Advertisers have always had a problem dealing with consumers who try to avoid ads. Now, new technologies have empowered consumers with tools to easily avoid ads even in the broadcast media. For example, zipping and zapping have been in vogue for many years and are probably highest during the interval between programs. Recently, Tivo and Reply TV allow consumers to see programs ate the time of their choosing without the commercials. Satellite and cable TV provide consumers with a rich set of alternatives stations from which to choose to minimize their exposure to ads.

In exploring the concept of advertising avoidance in the general online environment, Cho and Cheon [2] identified three antecedents of advertising avoidance: interruption of task, perceived clutter on Internet sites and negative past experiences with Internet advertising.

Jin and Villegas [3] also researched online advertising avoidance and considered the role of consumer ambivalence and consumer interactivity. Their study found that when consumers had low levels of interactivity and high levels of ambivalence toward the advertising, they were more likely to avoid or ignore the ads that they saw online. Hadija, Barnes and Hair [4] proposed that SNS(Social Networking Service) users simply do not notice the advertising on their SNS.

Analysis suggests that basic strategies of advertising avoidance may occur across all media, whether traditional media or new media. This study focuses on the advertising avoidance of audiences across media, including the Internet.

The present study's objectives are twofold: (1) to examine customers' ad avoidance across media, and then compare customers' ad avoidance responses to ad types in traditional and new media: TV commercial break vs. YouTube ad (2) to develop a theoretical causal model of ad avoidance in general based on the standard learning hierarchy model. In addition, the study offers suggestions about execution strategies and industry policies that might reduce the overall incidence of advertising avoidance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of ADAvoidance

Understanding how and why people avoid advertising can help improve the design and efficiency of advertising. Consumers may avoid an ad for several reasons. First, it may

be for low-priced, frequently purchased products about which they want no more information. Second, they may be so engrossed in the program in which the ad appears that they find the ad a distraction. Third, they may be so loyal to a rival brand that they do not want opposing information. Fourth, they may find the ad boring, stale, or offensive [1].

In this study, ad avoidance is defined as all actions by media users that differentially reduce their exposure to all kinds of ad contents [1]. People avoid ads by cognitive, affective, and behavioral means. They constantly evaluate their alternatives. Content preferences and processing habits are formed, including general attitudes toward advertising and patterns of ad avoidance. Ad avoidance is part of one's overall media style.

Research on traditional media has shown that when consumers are given a means to avoid ads, many do. They leave the room, change the channel [5], participate in another activity or ignore the ads altogether and focus on something else [6]. Zapping television ads correlates with zapping radio ads [7], and flipping through television channels correlates with flipping through magazine and newspaper pages [8].

2.2 Ad Avoidance across Media

Ad avoidance is well documented for television [9], [10]. Adults switch stations during commercials 12 to 50 of the time and leave the room 20 to 36 percent of the time [5], [11]. Similar behaviors occur with radio [5]. There is little research on ad avoidance in print media, but consumer can certainly flip past, tear out, or discard print ads and inserts. Since people process media differently, they may avoid different types of ads in different ways.

2.2.1 Television: Television offers advertisers the most extensive coverage and highest reach of any of the media. Millions of viewers can be reached simultaneously with one advertisement. People remove a television commercial from their attention by ignoring it, leaving the room, or switching channels. People ignore, leave, and switch even during a program. Customers' avoidance of television commercials has been described as zipping, zapping, flipping, flicking, and gazing [11].

It is widely accepted that the viewer's decision to stop watching a commercial is a behavioral measure of a consumer's situational motivation to pay attention to and to process a commercial – the lower the motivation to pay attention and to process an ad, the greater the likelihood to stop watching it [12]-[14].

Regardless of the different names used to describe the reactions of consumers to irritating ads, each of the many studies has examined the impact of viewer control over ad exposure when watching television and concluded that, when consumers are given a means to avoid ads, many do just that. All forms of avoidance increase substantially during television commercials, largely because people use that time to do other things. During commercial breaks, inattention, switching, and avoidance increase sharply [9]. Those behaviors reflect a shift in the viewer's attention away from the TV toward other activities. Zapping, which involves the use of technology to switch quickly from a commercial, is most likely to occur between programs [10],[11], [15].

2.2.2 Radio: Radio offers intimacy. Radio is mobile. People carry radios to the beach, to the ballpark, to work, and to picnics. They listen at home, at work, and on the road in between.People remove a radio commercial from their attention by ignoring it or by switching stations. People do many things while a radio is on; they might read, talk, drive, shower, or work. Attention can shift back and forth between the radio and other activities. When radio serves as background, ads may be easier to ignore. Although little research has documented competing activities or patterns of ignoring related to radio, two studies have examined switching behavior related to radio. Heeter and Greenberg [7] found that switching of radio stations occurs more during commercials than during news or music (22% more at home, 55% more in cars) and that radio commercials are zapped more often in a car than at home. Radio commercials in both venues are zapped less than television commercials. Abernethy's [5] study of ad exposure for car radios showed that station switching correlates negatively with commercial exposure and positively with reported ad avoidance, and generally occurs early in a commercial string.

2.2.3 Newspaper: Newspapers offer geographic selectivity as well as access to local markets in many communities. Also, newspapers have high level of credibility. Many local consumers rely heavily on newspaper advertising for information about grocery specials and other similar price discounts.People remove a newspaper ad from their attention by ignoring it, turning the page, or setting aside an advertising section. Readers tend to turn to their favorite sections. Only about 50% of adult readers report looking at every page of a newspaper [16].

2.2.4 Magazines: The primary advantage of magazine advertising is the ability to target various market segments. Magazines are often oriented to fairly specific topic areas. Specialized magazines with highly targeted audiences are more common than general magazines. Additionally, magazines are often read and reread by subscribers, which means advertisements will often be seen more than once. People remove a magazine ad from their attention by ignoring it, turning the page, or discarding a promotional insert. Little research has been done on reading patterns and ad avoidance for magazines. An industry surveyshows that more people pay more attention to ads in magazines (55%) than to ads on television (46%) [17]. Speck and Elliott's [1] research found that magazine ads were the second most avoided form of promotional message (television commercials were the first), more so than newspaper advertisements or radio commercials.

2.2.5 Direct Mail: Direct-mail advertising is a medium used by direct marketers and is the most personal and selective of all media [18]. Direct-mail, or as we call it junk-mail, somehow finds its way to our homes and businesses. Reaching the prospective consumer does not ensure that the message will be received, because after all, direct mail is pure advertising [19]. Therefore, a direct-mail ad must attract its own readers. This is critical when you consider that the "average American home receives more than 10 direct-mail pieces a week" [20: p.12] and that "the recipient of such ads decides in an average of four

seconds whether to discard or open it" [18: p.5].

2.2.6 Internet: Internet advertising can be delivered via any channel (e.g., video clip, print or audio), in any form (e.g., an e-mail message or an interactive game), and provide information at any degree of depth (e.g., a corporate logo or an official Web site) [21]. Therefore, it is believed that the Internet is a convergent medium for all other media Currently, several advertising forms exist on the Internet, such as banner ads, pop-up ads, interstitials, sponsorships, target sites, superstitials, e-mail ads, and so forth [22], and methods of taking advantage of those different advertising techniques have been investigated. Some studies have reported that consumers despise these intrusive and annoying advertisements and even feel violated and molested by their presence. Other studies have documented consumers' similar experiences with various Internet advertising techniques.

Internet ad avoidance might encompass intentional refraining from any further action. For example, People can ignore ads by intentionally not clicking any hyperlink or by intentionally clicking away ads on the Internet. Cho and Cheon [2] found people avoid advertising messages on the Internet because of perceived ad clutter and prior negative experience. Their study also showed people avoid Internet ads because they perceive that Internet ads impede their goals.

In traditional media, intrusiveness has been recognized as a leading cause of advertising annoyance [23]. Although Rust and Varki [24] predicted that advertisements in new media would be less intrusive, Li, Edward and Lee [25] reported that online consumers are goal-oriented and perceive online advertisements to be even more intrusive than those in other media. Further, they found that online consumers develop negative attitudes towards the advertisements which then lead them to develop intentions to not return to the site.

2.3 Hierarchy Model: Beliefs – Attitude – Behavior

Consumer's predisposition to avoid ads in a medium is likely to be related to categorical beliefs and perceptions about them. If people respond to commercials categorically, the reason is probably that they have general attitude about ads in the medium. Lee and Lumpkin [26] report that zipping and zapping are related inversely to one's attitude toward television commercials,especially one's belief that advertisements contain useful information. Although perceptual differences do not always lead to attentional differences, ad avoidance should generally vary with one's perceptions about advertising in each medium.

Cognition (C), affect (A), and behavior (B) are three ways in which consumers may respond to advertising stimuli [27]. The classical attitudes model structure was compounded by beliefs or cognitions, affect and behavior, usually seen as components of attitude which act as determinants of its formation [28].

The hierarchy of effects modeldeclares that beliefs are a precursor to attitude, and attitude is an antecedent to behavior [29]. Predictably, several past studies have attempted to investigate the relationship between attitude and behavior in the context of advertising [30], [31]. These and other studies in marketing, as well as the social science literature, suggest a positive relationship between attitudes towards advertising and predisposition for advertising. Thus, in order to examine the relationship between consumers' beliefs on advertising and advertising avoidance behavior, their attitudes toward advertising have been measured.

Taking into account the three main types of existing hierarchies or sequences for attitude formation – i.e. the standard learning hierarchy (CAB), the low-involvement hierarchy (CBA) and, finally, the experiential hierarchy (ABC) [32] – this study follows the standard learning hierarchy also called the CAB – i.e. beliefs→affect→behavior – paradigm [33]. The basis of this paradigm is that the consumer initially forms beliefs about certain objects by accumulating knowledge with regard to several attributes which define said object. Then, once these beliefs are developed, feelings – i.e. affective responses – are formed. Finally, the consumer's behavior-related responses are based on those affective responses [34].

3. RESEARCH QEUSTIONS AND HYPOHESES

3.1 Comparing ADAvoidance

RQ1: How do consumers avoid advertising across media? Do they respond differently to Internet from other media?

RQ2-1: Do consumers avoid TV commercial breaks differently from YouTube ads(video ads that must be watched before video can be viewed)?

RQ2-2: What advertising beliefs are related to ad avoidance of TV commercial breaks and YouTube ads?

3.2 Modeling ADAvoidance

Pollay and Mittal [35] suggest their seven-factor belief and attitude advertising model may be used to profile any population of interest. They theorize that people who are predisposed toward traditional advertising will have more positive beliefs and attitudes to such advertising. The same is expected to be true in this study.
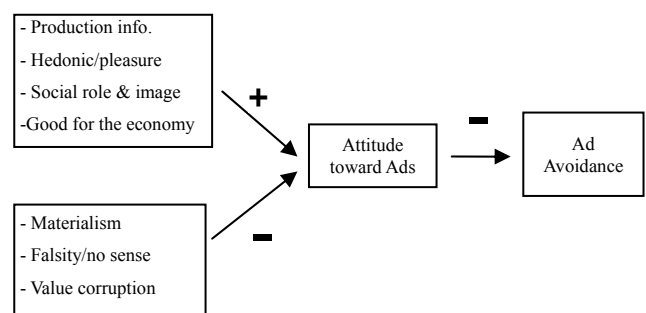

Fig. 1. Proposed Model for Ad Avoidance

Fig. 1 represents the proposed path model underlying the study. The model posits attitude toward advertising as being influenced by the seven belief factors: product information, social role and image, hedonic/pleasure, good for the economy, materialism, value corruption, and falsity/no sense. In turn, the model also posits a direct relationship between attitude (attitude toward advertising) and behavior (advertising avoidance). In

the study model, all paths reflect causal relationships among the variables.

The proposed conceptual model was tested through path analysis using the LISREL 8.5 student version program and based on the principle of full information maximum likelihood. This method controls for measurement errors and jointly estimates the relationships embodied in the conceptual model [36]. Before starting the modeling, it was established that the following necessary conditions were met: (1) no perfect multicollinearity, (2) homoscedasticity and (3) independent errors. In addition, no substantial outliers were observed.

Based on this model, hypothesis 1 investigates the links between seven ad beliefs and attitude toward advertising. Next, hypothesis 2 tests the relationship between attitude toward advertising and ad avoidance of general.

H1: Consumers' beliefs on advertising are related to their attitudes towards advertising.
H1a: Product information is positively related.
H1b: Hedonic/pleasure is positively related.
H1c: Social role and image is positively related.
H1d: Good for the economy is positively related.
H1e: Materialism is negatively related.
H1f: Falsity is negatively related.
H1g: Value corruption is negatively related.
H2: Consumers' positive attitude toward advertising is related negatively to their reported ad avoidance.

4. METHOD

4.1 Sample

The present study employed a survey to collect the data. Data for this survey were collected in April 2015. A sample of 253 undergraduate students enrolled in a large university of Chungcheong province in South Korea was surveyed.

All participants acknowledged that they: (1) were at least 18 years of age; (2) regularly received advertising messages. Participation was voluntary and extra course credit was offered for participating in the self-administered survey. Participants completed the questionnaire in a classroom setting. A six-page survey was given to the participants to obtain some demographic information and to understand their commercial avoidance behavior.

4.2 Measurements

The survey instrument included several statements designed to measure the participants' beliefs about and attitudes toward advertising. In addition, avoidance of advertising both in general and of different media was measured.

4.2.1 Advertising Beliefs: Advertising beliefs were measured by 21 items modified from Pollay and Mittal's [35] measure: five-point Likert-type scales anchored by 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Overall global attitudes toward advertising are depicted as a function of a series of beliefs reflecting either personal use or societal effects. Personal use factors include product information, social role and image, and hedonic/pleasure. Societal effects include the following four

factors: good for the economy, materialism, value corruption, and falsity/no sense.

4.2.2 Attitude toward Advertising: Three five-point Likert scale statements were used to measure the respondents' attitudes towards advertising in general [35], [37]. These scales included 'Overall, I consider advertising a good thing;' 'Overall, I like advertising;' and 'my general opinion of advertising is unfavorable.'

4.2.3 Advertising Avoidance: This study used all three components of consumer advertising responses in measuring ad avoidance in general and in each medium [1]. Lavidge and Steiner [29] provided three behavioral dimensions: cognitive, affective, and conative. The cognitive domain encompasses all the thought processes that a consumer has about a certain product or brand; the affective domain addresses the emotion and attitude which a consumer possesses or displays towards a product or brand, while the conative dimension denotes the motives that a consumer has and the behavioral action he or she performs with respect to a product or brand.

Specifically, the cognitive component of ad avoidance consists of a consumer's belief about an object, which is evaluative in nature. A consumer's feeling or emotional reaction to an object represents the affective component of ad avoidance. The behavioral component of ad avoidance is considered as consumer avoidance action other than lack of attendance.

The cognitive ad avoidance was accessed by indicating "I intentionally ignore (*specific medium*) ads," the affective ad avoidance by "I hate (*specific medium*) ads," the behavioral ad avoidance by "I do any action to avoid ads on the (*specific medium*)." All ad avoidance items were measured with a Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always).

5. RESULTS

Descriptive statistics for the scaled variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

	N of scales	Mean	Range*	Cronbach's *alpha*
Advertising beliefs				
Product Info.	3	3.79	1-5	.92
Hedonic/pleasure	3	3.45	1-5	.83
Social role & image	3	3.26	1-5	.90
Good for the economy	3	3.50	1-5	.68
Materialism	3	3.43	1-5	.89
Falsity	3	3.16	1-5	.90
Value corruption	3	3.63	1-5	.81
Advertising avoidance				
Cognitive	3	3.58	1-5	.90
Affective	3	2.57	1-5	.75
Behavioral	3	2.55	1-5	.60
Attitude toward advertising	3	3.21	1-5	.88

*Strongly disagree (1) – Strongly agree (5)

Among mean values of ad avoidance, the highest was cognitive ad avoidance (M=3.58), followed by affective ad avoidance (M=2.57). Behavioral ad avoidance was found the lowest (M=2.55).

Cronbach's alpha reliability tests were conducted to determine how well the individual items grouped together. The generally accepted lower limit for Cronbach's alpha is 0.70. Except for good for the economy (α=.68) and behavioral ad avoidance (α=.60), acceptable reliability levels were achieved for the measurements.

5.1 Comparing ADAvoidance
RQ1: How do consumers avoid advertising across media? Do they respond differently to Internet from other media?

The table 2 shows that ad avoidance was highest for Internet in all items (cognition, affect, behavior, and the mean of all). Comparing the media, while respondents showed high ad avoidance of Internet (M=4.06), direct mail (M=3.67), and radio (M=3.66), they reported relatively low ad avoidance of magazine (M=2.74), newspaper (M=3.03), and TV (M=3.22).

To examine the differences of ad avoidance between media, a series of paired t-tests were performed among the six media. Paired mean-comparisons revealed that all ad avoidances were significantly different from each other (at the $p<.05$ level), excluding the followings: TV-Newspaper, Radio-Direct Mail in cognitive ad avoidance; TV-Newspaper, Radio-Direct Mail in affective ad avoidance; TV-Direct Mail in behavioral ad avoidance; and Radio-Direct Mail in mean of 3 items of ad avoidance (See Table 3).

Among significant mean differences, the greatest mean difference was found between Internet and Magazine in cognitive ad avoidance.

Table 2.Scores for Ad Avoidance across Media*

Media	Cognitive (Rank)	Affective (Rank)	Behavioral (Rank)	Mean (Rank)
Overall	3.57	2.58	2.55	2.90
TV	3.05 (4)	2.90 (4)	3.71 (3)	3.22 (4)
Newspaper	2.98 (5)	2.77 (5)	3.33 (5)	3.03 (5)
Radio	3.58 (3)	3.52 (3)	3.88 (2)	3.66 (3)
Magazine	2.66 (6)	2.62 (6)	2.93 (6)	2.74 (6)
Direct Mail	3.65 (2)	3.69 (2)	3.68 (4)	3.67 (2)
Internet	4.08 (1)	3.97 (1)	4.14 (1)	4.06 (1)

*Higher score = more avoidance

Table 3. T-test of Mean Differences in Ad Avoidance across Media

Media (I-J)		TV	Paper	Radio	Magazine	DM	Internet
TV	Cognitive		.067 (.747)	.526 (-6.63)*	.391 (4.40)*	.597 (-6.05)*	1.03 (-12.42)*
	Affective		.13 (1.57)	.62 (-8.31)*	.29 (3.12)*	.79 (-8.30)*	1.07 (-12.62)*
	Behavioral		.38 (4.64)*	.17 (-2.19)*	.78 (7.82)*	.04 (.38)	.43 (.38)
	Summated		.19 (2.67)*	.44(-6.98)*	.48 (6.07)*	.45 (-5.23)*	.84 (-12.28)*
Paper	Cognitive			.593 (-6.89)*	.324 (4.68)*	.664 (-7.38)*	1.09 (-13.97)*
	Affective			.75 (-8.98)*	.15 (2.17)*	.92 (-9.64)*	1.19 (-14.41)*
	Behavioral			.55 (-6.19)*	.40 (4.86)*	.34 (-4.15)*	.81 (-9.72)*
	Summated			.63 (-8.45)*	.29 (4.49)*	.64 (-7.88)*	1.03 (-13.99)*
Radio	Cognitive				.917 (10.58)*	.071 (-.84)	.502 (-6.47)*
	Affective				.90 (10.64)*	.17 (-1.88)	.45 (-5.39)*
	Behavioral				.95 (9.63)*	.20 (2.38)*	.26 (-3.67)*
	Summated				.92 (11.81)*	.011 (-.15)	.40 (-5.96)*
Magazine	Cognitive					.988 (-9.92)*	1.42 (-16.43)*
	Affective					1.08 (-10.62)*	1.35 (-14.69)*
	Behavioral					.75 (-7.38)*	1.21 (-12.92)*
	Summated					.94 (-9.94)*	1.33 (-16.12)*
DM	Cognitive						.431(-4.68)*
	Affective						.28 (-2.99)*
	Behavioral						.47 (-5.23)*
	Summated						.39 (-4.51)*

Note: t-values are in parentheses, * p < .05

RQ2-1: Do consumers avoid TV commercial breaks differently from YouTube ads?

This research question seeks to explore consumers' relative ad avoidance to different forms of advertising; specifically, how consumers felt about ads on YouTube in comparison to TV commercial breaks. YouTube ad is an online video advertisement that is *"video content distributed via the Internet to be streamed or downloaded onto compatible devices such as computers and mobile phones"* [38]. Mainly, YouTube ads insertion is concentrated on the start, middle or the end of a video clip. This study assumes that YouTube ads(skippable/non-skippable video ads that must be watched before video can be viewed) are designed to interrupt, and TV commercial break also cause interruption. The interruption itself might be enough to explain their intrusiveness. In the sense of similar medium characteristic, respondents were asked to compare pop-up ad to TV commercial break in terms of ad avoidance.

A paired-samples t-test was used to test for differences between two ad types in four items: cognition, affect, behavior, and the mean score of three items (See Table 4). The results revealed that participants' responses differed significantly between their ad avoidance of TV commercial break and ad avoidance of YouTube ads.

Table 4. Comparison between Avoidance of TV Ad Breaks/YouTube Ads

Avoidance	Mean of TV ad break	Mean of YouTube ads	df	t-value (Sig.)
Cognitive	3.32	4.42	252	-14.30 (*)
Affective	3.70	4.56	252	-10.524 (*)
Behavioral	3.48	4.47	252	-11.56 (*)
Summated	3.50	4.48	252	-13.49 (*)

Note: * p < .05

The ad avoidance of YouTube ads was higher than that of ad avoidance of TV commercial breaks in all four levels: cognition, affect, behavior, and summation.

The greatest difference between the two media appeared to be for cognitive ad avoidance. Overall the YouTube ad provided higher ad avoidance than that presented in TV commercial break.

RQ2-2: What advertising beliefs are related to ad avoidance of TV commercial breaks and YouTube ads?

This research question attempts to investigate the direct relationship between beliefs (ad beliefs) and behavior (ad avoidance). Because the relation between ad beliefs and ad avoidance behavior has not been examined in the context of advertising, the relationships between ad beliefs and ad avoidances in traditional and new media were explored.

Research question 2-2 was examined by correlation analysis (See Table 5). Six pairs out of 7 possible correlation pairs between ad beliefs and avoidance of TV commercial breaks were found significant at the level of 0.05. However, only three significant correlation pairs were found between ad beliefs and avoidance of YouTube ad. The strongest

relationship was found between falsity and TV commercial break (r=.374).

Table 5. Correlation between Ad Beliefs and TV Ad Breaks/YouTube Ads

Ad beliefs	TV ad break	YouTube ads
Product Info.	-.257**	-.131*
Hedonic/pleasure	-.148*	-.148*
Social role & image	-.194**	-.180**
Good for economy	-.191**	-.022
Materialism	.085	.055
Falsity	.374**	.059
Value corruption	.262**	.084

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01

5.2 Modeling ADAvoidance
H1: Consumers' beliefs on advertising are related to their attitudes towards advertising.

To test the relationships, the hypothesized causal paths were estimated. Parameter estimates for the causal paths and path significances are presented in Table 6.

Of the seven proposed relationships in H1, three were statistically significant in the expected direction. As anticipated, significant effects of product information (H1a), materialism (H1e), and falsity (H1f) on attitude toward advertising (*p*<.05) were detected.

This study also found a significant effect of hedonic/pleasure on attitude toward advertising (*p*<.05), but the relation was not in the expected direction.

In terms of relative importance of the predictive variables on the response variable, product information exhibited the strongest predicting power of attitude toward advertising, followed by falsity and materialism.

Table 6. Path analysis Maximum Likelihood Estimates and Selected Fit Indices

Paths	Proposed model	Modified model
Product information → Attitude toward advertising	0.134*	0.134*
Hedonic/pleasure → Attitude toward advertising	-0.058*	-0.058*
Social role & image → Attitude toward advertising	0.026	0.026
Good for the economy→ Attitude toward advertising	-0.041	-0.041
Materialism → Attitude toward advertising	-0.064*	-0.064*
Falsity → Attitude toward advertising	-0.087*	-0.087*
Value corruption → Attitude toward advertising	0.004	0.004
Attitude toward advertising → Ad avoidance	-0.448*	-.0.097
Product information → Ad avoidance		-0.021
Hedonic/pleasure → Ad avoidance		-0.167*
Social role & image → Ad avoidance		-0.031
Good for the economy → Ad avoidance		-0.369*
Materialism → Ad avoidance		0.102
Falsity → Ad avoidance		0.267*
Value corruption → Ad avoidance		0.096
Goodness-of-fit indices:		
X^2	68.71	.00
df	7	0

p value	.00	1.00
GFI	.943	NA
AGFI	.633	NA
RMSEA	.190	.00

Note: * p < .05

H2: Consumers' positive attitude toward advertising is negatively related to their reported ad avoidance.

5.3 Model Modification

For the initial model the χ^2 statistic (See Table 8), a measure of badness of fit, is equal to 68.71, with 7 degree of freedom, and a *p* value less than .01. Because the value is statistically significant (p<.05) and is not close in value to the number of degree of freedom, this goodness-of-fit index suggests that the proposed initial model is unacceptable; GFI (Goodness-of-fit: value close to .95 reflects a good fit) = .943; AGFI (Adjusted GFI: value adjusted for *df*, with .95 a good model fit) = .633; NFI (normed fit index: value close to .95 reflects a good model fit) = .874; RMSEA (root-mean-square error of approximation: value less than .05 indicates a good model fit) = .190.

Across this particular set of model fit indices, the conclusion for the initial model is that the data-to-model fit is approaching a reasonable level, but not quite acceptable. Some model modifications might allow us to achieve a better fit between the sample variance-covariance matrix *S* and the reproduced (implied) variance-covariance matrix ∑, given the model. Model modification is considered in the following.

The modification indices and overall model were examined as a means of improving fit. The modification indices showed that the model's fit could be improved by adding a path from beliefs about advertising to ad avoidance.

Parameter estimates for the revised model are presented in Table 4. Overall the fit of the modified model was better. The respecified model fit indices now indicate an acceptable level of fit (χ^2=0.00, df=0, *p*=0, RMSEA= 0.00; the model is saturated and fit is perfect; chi-square is the only statistical test of significance for testing the theoretical model. The chi-square value ranges from zero for a saturated model with all paths included to a maximum for the independence model with no paths included; The number of distinct values in the sample variance-covariance matrix equals the number of parameters to be estimated; thus, χ^2=0 and degrees of freedom=0). Thus, we consider it to be our final model for the prediction of ad avoidance.

To compare the original model and the modified model, the chi-square difference between the two models was estimated. The resultant chi-square change indicated significant improvement of the final model in the model fit (χ^2 difference = 68.71, df=7, *p*<.05). Also, the goodness-of-fit statistics in the modified final model indicated a better fit with the data (See the initial and final model in Table 8). The proposed and modified path models with parameter estimates are presented in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3.
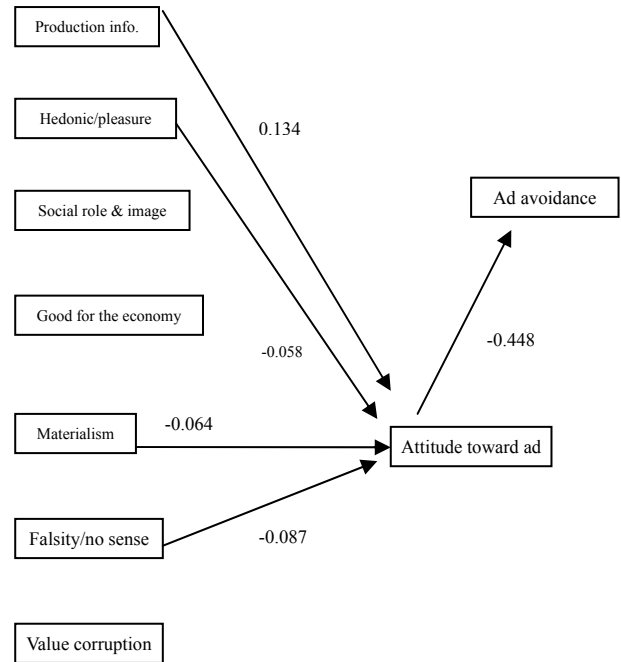

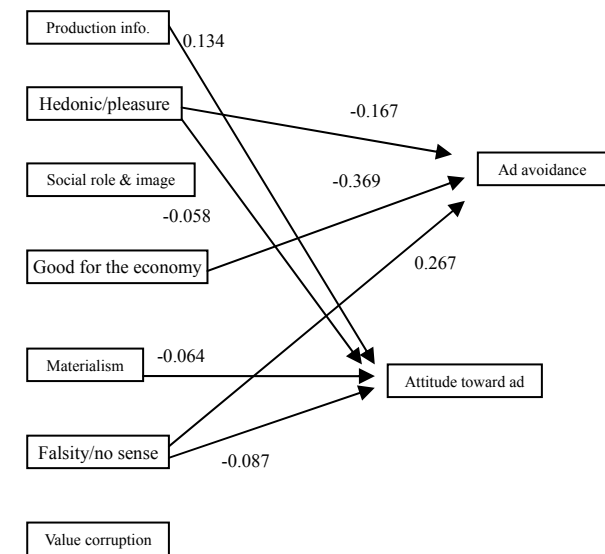Fig. 2. Path analysis based on the proposed model

Fig. 3. Path analysis based on the modified model

6. DISCUSSION

Advertisers have always had a problem dealing with consumers who try to avoid ads. Although most consumers consider advertising essential for business, they typically are not yearning for ads. A few consumers search the media for ads. Ads humor some and bore others. Many consumers dislike ads, and most try to avoid them.

This study sought to explain consumers' ad avoidance reactions to advertising across media. First, ad avoidance among media was highest for the Internet. Compared with traditional media, YouTube ads via the Internet using

computers and mobile phones showed much higher ad avoidance than TV commercial break. The results agree with recent negative trends in Internet and new media advertising. Different formats of advertisement on the Internet such as pop-ups, interstitials, and junk e-mail are strongly related to the themes of intrusive and annoying. In fact, these formats usually annoy consumers because of their less controllable and intrusive characteristics. In addition, the unexpected appearance of advertising messages on the Internet disrupts user tasks or goals and causes consumers to extensively avoid the noise. Therefore, understanding how to minimize the causes of negativeness in Internet ads will enable it of more effective communication medium.

The correlation analysis showed that traditional ad formats such as TV commercial breaks were much more highly related with seven ad belief factors than Internet ad formats like YouTube ads had. Overall, seven beliefs on advertising were highly related with ad avoidance in the expected direction for traditional and new media. With respect to the negatively correlated belief factors with ad avoidance, to succeed at decreasing ad avoidance especially on the Internet, it is imperative for advertisers to design Internet advertising with underlying trust, avoiding confusing, silly, misleading, trivial and sinful implication.

Second, H1 was partially supported. Some consumers' beliefs about advertising appear to be related to their attitudes toward advertising in general. Three of the seven belief factors examined were significant, indicating customers' product information belief related positively, and materialism and falsity beliefs related negatively, to attitude toward advertising in general. The results indicate that product information held the most dominant role. This dominance is not surprising considering the significant correlation between informativeness and advertising value [37].

Third, as H2 predicted, consumers' attitude toward advertising in general influenced their reported ad avoidance toward advertising; that is, the more positive consumers' attitude is toward advertising in general, the greater the likelihood they will not avoid ads. Drawing from previous research, this study revalidates the attitude-behavior link described in the literature. These findings suggest that advertisers should invest time and money into providing consumers with the components that will likely lead to forming positive attitudes. These positive attitudes, in turn, will likely result in favorable consumer behavior.

The most important implication of this research is that the Internet is not necessarily more effective than traditional advertising media. Basically, the Internet seems to interrupt the process of persuasion. This study has provided the opportunity to reconsider the benefits of traditional channels that rapidly increasing uses of online techniques may not offer. Based on the direct comparisons of consumers' ad avoidance regarding traditional and new forms of advertising, it seems reasonable to speculate that people are more likely to value the informativeness of advertising both in traditional media and on the Internet, and to show high ad avoidance when they get advertising on the Internet.

Finally, the attitude-behavior relationship in the proposed model may not be as valid as initially thought. Direct paths

from belief structures may be at work as a consumer avoids (or says he/she avoids) various forms of advertising.

6.1 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The use of college students could be a concern because they are a unique population that does not allow for the findings to be generalized to other populations. Their uses, experiences, and comfort level of the Internet might have presented some responses that might not be true to other recipients of advertising. However, because the participants are accustomed to both traditional forms of advertising and new technologies, the results obtained from those survey respondents are valid for how advertising should move in the future, since they are the next generation of consumers.

An important trigger of advertising avoidance is privacy concerns where consumers will limit the information they share [39] and exhibit avoidance behaviors. If consumers feel that their information is being used to target them too closely they will also have a negative reaction to the message and avoid the advertising [40]. It would be interesting to investigate the effect of users' privacy concerns on their online advertisement avoidance behavior. The effect of concern for privacy could be particularly high for the users with lower level of media related skills [41].

Future research on advertising avoidance could examine the effects of different avoidance reasons, in various user situations, using varying combinations of advertising formats, products/services, and messages in traditional and new media. The results of such study would provide practitioners an opportunity to develop their advertising messages or formats more effectively in order to reach and appeal to consumers, lessening negative consequences based on advertising avoidance. Additional ways of testing models like the one tested here may also be necessary.

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