

Understanding Local Cable Advertisements for Small Businesses

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Abstract

Consumers' attitude holds central focus in mainstream research in marketing, with abundant research on consumers' attitude towards digital and online advertisements. Yet, there is scarce research on local area cable advertisements of small businesses. This paper aims to examine the determinants of consumers' attitude towards advertisements of local area cable networks. Primary quantitative data from 300 viewers of local area cable channels located in Lahore, Pakistan was collected to examine the hypotheses. Our findings suggest that entertainment and credibility are positively associated with the consumers' attitude towards local cable advertisements. However, ad perception does not show any significant relation with consumers' attitude towards local cable advertisements. These results have significant implications for small businesses in crafting effective promotional policies and strategies for approaching their target consumers. By focusing on the entertainment and credibility factor, small businesses can also position their brands in limited budget.

Keywords: advertisement perception, consumers' attitude, credibility, entertainment, local cable advertising, marketing

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1. Introduction

Marketing continues to play a progressively pertinent role in the effectiveness of business entities (Chonko & Hunt, 2018). International and indigenous businesses promote their products/services through a medley of strategies; of which advertising is claimed to be an elite practice to reach the customers (Dawson & Lamb, 2016). Owing to increasing competition and economic-political transformation (Benería, Berik, & Floro, 2015), a wider range of products and services are now offered to the customers. This further intensifies the need to focus on advertising campaigns for communicating with customers. Indeed, the budgets of advertising department are also swelling in response to the call for creativity and optimal medium for reaching largest audience (Hof, 2011; Maniu & Zaharie, 2014). While customized marketing is arguably a contemporary tool (Sahni, Wheeler, & Chintagunta, 2018), advertising on television is embedded in recent historical era, of which local area cable advertising (LACA) remains relatively under-researched.

Public attitudes towards advertising have long been the recipients of attention by researchers and practitioners (Crawford, Brennan, & Parker, 2017; Kumar & Sharma, 2017). Digital and outdoor advertising are now known to be effective for customers' engagement (Anam & Faiz, 2016; Bhatti & Fiaz, 2016). Advertising causes major changes in the attitude and pattern of purchasing which can affect the life of consumers (Kalro, Sivakumaran, & Marathe, 2017; Pollay & Mittal, 1993). Research provides evidence that maintaining a positive attitude towards advertisements can improve recall of the specific brand (Cartwright, McCormick, & Warnaby, 2016; Mehta, 2000). Since negative attitude can demolish the efficiency and effectiveness of the advertisement, advertisers' concerns with the consumers' attitude towards advertising are accelerating.

There is ample research on consumers' attitude towards advertisements. For example, the consumers' attitude towards traditional as well as internet advertising (Wang, Zhang, Choi, & D'Eredita, 2002) and mobile advertising in Japan and Austria (Sinkovics, Pezderka, & Haghirian, 2012) as well as Taiwan (Yang, 2000); factors of classical conditioning related to advertisements

(Stuart, Shimp, & Engle, 1987); and the determinants of consumers' attitude towards advertisements of digital social media networks (Hassan, Fatima, Akram, Abbas, & Hasnain, 2013). Nevertheless, research on consumers' attitude towards local area cable advertisements is almost non-existent.

The role of local area cable advertisements (LACA) for promoting the products or services of small businesses is worthy of attention. What is of particular importance is an identification of the determinants of consumers' attitude towards LACA. Small and medium businesses are important pillars of economic growth (Gveroski, Risteska, & Dimeski, 2011). Realizing the significance of small and medium businesses, the government of Pakistan has established an institution, namely Small and Medium Development Authority (SMEDA) to support the small businesses. SMEDA has been playing a noteworthy role in provision of credit finance and counseling to young entrepreneurs (SMEDA, 2016). The recently established business incubation centers, such as the tech incubation center Plan 9, also facilitate small businesses in terms of capital and mentorship (Plan9, 2016).

Statistics related to various types of marketing tools are important to contextualise this study. Analog cable TV networks began in Pakistan back in early 1990s, with only 20-30 channels. Now the borderless media system is well established, with almost 80 percent of urban Pakistanis having access to cable TV (IPOP, 2016). There are 2346 licensed operators, 107 channels and around 40-60 million consumers. Almost half of the households receive around 50 channels, due to technological constraints. The number of televisions in households increased with an increase in the per capita income. High income families have more than four TV sets, whereas around 81 percent of low income families are reported to have at least one TV set (Pakistan Statistics Division, 2006). Total cable penetration in Pakistani households is estimated around 11.5 million with 68 million individuals watching cable TV, 88 local channels and the genre of local entertainment taking between 45 to 61 percent of market share in 2013 across national, urban and rural regions (Gallup Pakistan, 2014). On average, a Pakistani teenager spends as many as 30 hours a week watching television; viewing time is more in the low income families. Out of the four provinces

in Pakistan, Punjab has the largest number of cable operators (Pakistan Statistics Division, 2006).

The media industry now has a turnover above 46 billion Pakistani rupees, with each connection priced at 300 rupees (Baig & Cheema, 2016). The annual expenditure on advertisements has risen from 7 billion rupees in 2002 to 35 billion in 2013 (Gallup, 2013). Overall, the media landscape in Pakistan has been identified as vibrant and largely independent that has been burgeoning in parallel with the rising competitive commercial environment (Baig & Cheema, 2016).

As new businesses are proliferating, so is the advertisement of new products and services (Khan, Asad, & Mehboob, 2017). National advertising is characterized as draining a business's budget, friendly to masses and restricted customization to the target audience. Local advertisements may also be more effective to market the launch of an outlet of an established brand in a new location, or a new local promotion campaign.

The study addresses a research lacuna in the field of advertisements by small businesses in Pakistan. The relationship of entertainment and consumers' attitude towards marketing through various mediums has been discussed extensively (Anam & Faiz, 2016; Azeem & ul Haq, 2012; Dutt, Zaheer, & Salim, 2017; Faiz, Awan, Asad, & Anam, 2017; Le & Vo, 2017; Mir, 2012). However, there is a dearth of empirical studies on the relationship of entertainment and consumers' attitude towards LACA in Pakistani context. Identifying consumers' attitude toward LACA is crucial for facilitating innovative advertisements to attract consumers. This paper addresses this link. Independent variables are (i) entertainment, (ii) credibility and (iii) ad perception. Dependent variable is consumers' attitude towards LACA of small businesses. The study addresses a research lacuna in the field of advertisements by small businesses in Pakistan.

1.1 Research Gap

Local area cable advertisements (LACA) have a significant role in advertisements of small businesses due to its affordability and niched geographical reach. Numerous blogs (e.g. ProPakistani (2009)) and SBA) and newspaper editorials have highlighted the importance of LACA but scientific research on this issue is missing.

Moreover, previous researches have focused on consumers' attitude towards advertisements through different mediums that are television, internet and mobile. However, this study addresses three determinants: entertainment, credibility and advertisement perception of LACA of small businesses. The literature review helped to ascertain that entertainment is an important determinant of consumers' attitude towards advertising but its effect on consumers' attitude towards LACA has not received due empirical attention. In addition, the significance of credibility and ad perception as determinants of consumers' attitude towards LACA remains under-investigated to date. This paper aims to redress this research gap.

1.2 Research Objective

The main aim of this paper is to investigate the determinants of consumers' attitude towards LACA. Specifically, it assesses the effects of three factors: entertainment, credibility and ad perception. The research objectives of this study are listed below:

- a. To study the relationship between entertainment and consumers' attitude towards LACA
- b. To investigate the relationship between credibility and consumers' attitude towards LACA
- c. To examine the relationship between ad perception and consumers' attitude towards LACA.

The remaining of the paper addresses these research objectives. The first section (above) has emphasized on the importance of advertising for small businesses, and identified that the factors which determine the attitude towards LACA in the local context is needed. The next section reviews the related body of literature, then the research design is explicated, followed by the results and implications. Finally, a brief conclusion is provided along with areas for future research.

2. Literature Review

Attitude typically symbolizes a psychological technique that is used by a consumer to make sense of and respond to one's surroundings (Aaker, Stayman, & Hagerty, 1986). In business studies, awareness and attitude towards a specific brand are now legitimately represented through the consumers' attitude towards its advertisements (Sadeghi, Fakharyan, Dadkhah, Khodadadian,

Vosta, & Jafari, 2015). Consumers' attitude and consumers' behavior are interconnected. Existing literature has established that consumers' attitude towards advertising was highly negative. Many researchers have provided evidence in support of positive relation between consumers' attitude and advertisement (Calfee & Ringold, 1994; Pollay & Mittal, 1993; Wills & Ryans, 1982). In 2004, Gallup survey on consumers' attitude towards advertisements revealed that the public favor advertisements due to information regarding a product or service. Some researchers have focused on attitude structure in which six distinct media (including broadcast, television, newspapers, yellow pages, direct mail and magazines) for advertisements are examined (Mir, 2011; Usman, Ilyas, Hussain, & Qureshi, 2010). Yet, what remains under-examined is the medium of local area cable networks, which is the focus of our paper.

The institution and an instrument for advertising are two distinct concepts (Lutz, 1985). An advertising institution refers to consequences and purpose (Sandage & Leckenby, 1980); linked with economic and societal effects (Usman et al., 2010). Conversely, advertising instrument is practice and process for general attitude (Sandage & Leckenby, 1980) and related to executional aspect of advertising, including its effectiveness and consumers' attitude (Usman et al., 2010). Moreover, consumers' attitude towards advertisement affects their attitude towards brand and purchase intention (Durvasula, Mehta, Andrews, & Lysonski, 1997), as well as perception of the brand as a whole (Bauer & Greyser, 1968).

Existing research about consumers' belief about advertising and consumers' attitude towards advertisements has some contradictions (Mir, 2012). One view is that consumers' belief and consumer attitude are overlapping and related concepts (Mehta, 2000); while the other view holds them distinct and independent of each other (Brackett & Carr, 2001). Following the second viewpoint, this study also holds belief and attitude as distinct concepts, where the former refers to an expressive thought about something and the latter refers to one's assessment and emotions towards a particular idea, person or thing (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Consumers' rationale towards advertisements are depicted in their perception and emotions, and inform their attitude towards advertisements (Mehta, 2000). Therefore, consumers' attitude

towards advertisements is a salient determinant of efficiency of advertising; having purchases being the goal (Aaker & Stayman, 1990; Brown & Stayman, 1992). However, research on consumers' attitude towards LACA of small businesses remains scant.

Advertisements most preferred by consumers are the entertaining ones (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1992; Pollay & Mittal, 1993), and then those with credibility (Wang & Sun, 2010). If online advertisements are not seen as trustworthy or credible, consumers may develop negative attitude towards the brand (Wolin, Korgaonkar, & Lund, 2002). The immature and unregulated nature of online media can posit a serious concern of credibility for online shoppers (Shamdasani, Stanaland, & Tan, 2001). Credibility of online advertised products and services can be improved by a greater consideration of guarantees, such as money-back guarantee (Shamdasani et al., 2001) and integrating with established online businesses (Wolin et al., 2002). Nevertheless, inherent in the concept of advertisement is a time-based degree of change in ad perception.

2.1 Research Hypotheses

Based on the findings about possible relationships among the constructs, following are the hypotheses:

H1: Entertainment has a positive effect on consumers' attitude towards LACA

H2: Credibility has positive effect on consumers' attitude towards LACA

H3: Ad perception has a positive effect on consumers' attitude towards LACA

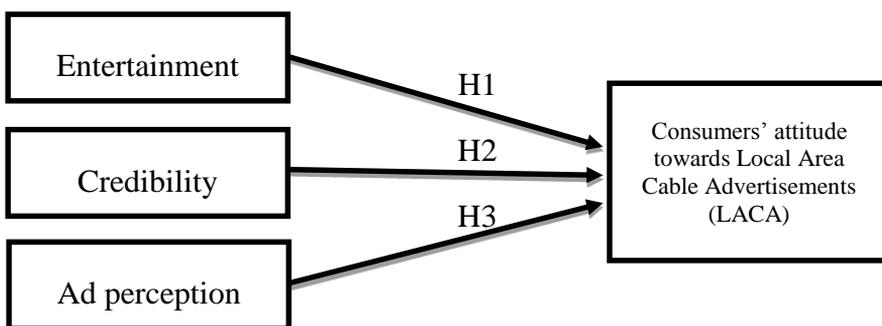


Figure 1: Schematic Diagram

3. Research Design

To test the hypotheses proposed above, primary data was collected from individuals (consumers) who watched television and had local cable network at home. Due to descriptive nature of research, a questionnaire survey was conducted (Saunders, 2011) and analyzed statistically in SPSS. A permission letter was attached to the questionnaire and respondents were personally contacted and invited to respond to the questionnaire either face-to-face or online through Google Forms. Using convenience sampling technique, a total of 320 questionnaires were personally administered, yielding a 100 % response rate. Of these, only 300 questionnaires were valid and complete; therefore, completion rate for this study is 94 %.

The questionnaire used in this study comprised of five distinct segments. Part 1 consisted of control variables, such as sex, age group, educational qualification, and the extent of watching a local cable channel. Then Part 2 had nine questions addressing consumers' attitude towards local area cable advertisements (dependent variable). Part 3, 4 and 5 had eight questions about the entertainment, five questions about credibility and four questions about ad perception, respectively. Part 2-5 used a five point Likert scale where 1 denotes *strongly disagree* and 5 denotes *strongly agree*.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Demographic Analysis

Out of the 300 valid responses of this study, 109 responses were from men and 191 from women. In terms of education, 114 respondents were undergraduates, 65 were graduates and 116 held a Master's degree. Only 5 respondents had doctorates. With respect to age, 201 respondents fell in the age bracket of 16-22 years, 94 were between 23-29 years, 4 were between 30-36 years while only one was more than 37 years old. These statistics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographics of the Respondents

Demographics	Frequency
Gender	109 Males, 191 Females
Education	114 undergraduates, 65 Graduates, 116 Masters and 5 Doctorates
Age	201 (16-22 years), 94 (23-29 years), 4 (30-36) and 1 (37-43)

4.2 Rate Frequency

Table 2 presents the rates at which respondents watch local area cable channels. It has been observed that almost half of the total respondents (49 percent) watch the cable TV on daily basis. 5.3 percent recipients watch the TV Cable network for 4-5 times per week whereas the remaining 45.7 percent watch the TV Cable network 1-3 times a week or rarely.

Table 2
Frequency of Watching Local Cable

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	147	49.0
4-5 times/week	16	5.3
1-3 times/week	48	16.0
Rarely	89	29.7
Total	300	100.0

4.3 Descriptive Statistics, Reliability and Normality of Variables

Table 3 provides descriptive statistics related to the four variables in columns 3 and 4 that constitute the proposed model tested in this study. Analysis of descriptive statistics suggests that the consumers' attitude towards LACA has a mean value of 3.14 (SD=0.661). It indicates that the majority of responses regarding consumers' attitude towards LACA fell between the measurement scale of neutral and agree. Similarly, entertainment has a mean value of 3.20 (SD=.787) showing that most of the responses fell between neutral and agree. Credibility has a mean value of 2.79 (SD=0.765) showing that the responses for credibility fell between neutral and disagree. While ad perception has a mean value of 2.94 (SD=0.594) showing that responses for ad perception fell between neutral and disagree. In column 5 of Table 3, the values for Cronbach's alpha for each

construct are given. A reliable construct of a questionnaire should have the value of Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.7 (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001). Reliability statistics are showing that the constructs of questionnaire are reliable and can be used for further analysis. The values of Cronbach's alpha for all four variables are greater than 0.7 which indicate that the four scales employed show internal consistency and can be used for further analysis. Column 6 presents the number of items used to measure the specified variables.

The model given in Figure 1 is estimated using multiple regression analysis. To ensure that the inference drawn/hypothesis testing is reliable, it is important to ensure that the variables to be analyzed must have normal distribution (Hair, Black Jr, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Columns 7 and 8 show the z-statistics for skewness and kurtosis. The formula used to calculate the values of z-kurtosis and z-skewness is:

$$Z = \frac{\text{skewness or kurtosis}}{\text{standard error}}$$

When the research sample is of 300 participants, the value of z (kurtosis/skewness) should lie within the range of +/- 3.29 if the distribution is normal (Field, 2009). The value of z-skewness for consumers' attitude towards LACA is -3.68. This indicates that data is slightly negatively skewed. This slight skewness can be left untreated since it makes no significant difference on the analysis. The Z-skewness for entertainment is -2.78. The calculated value confirms that the values of entertainment are normally distributed. The Z-skewness for credibility is -0.36, which means that the values of credibility are also normally distributed. The z-skewness for ad perception is 1.36, which also implies that the data is symmetrical and not skewed.

The calculated values of Z-kurtosis for each of the four variables of interest are given in column 8. The values of Z-skewness range between -2.63 and -1.75, which mean that the distribution of each of the four variables is normal.

4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

To estimate the model given in Figure 1, multiple regression analysis was performed using SPSS v-22. The consumers' attitude towards LACA was regressed on entertainment, credibility and ad perception (AP). The estimation results are given in Table 4.

The model is significant with F-value $(3, 296) = 79.882$ ($p < 0.001$) and R-squared = 0.447. It means that 44.7 percent variation in consumers' attitude is due to the three variables mentioned above. The coefficient of entertainment is 0.291 ($p < 0.01$), which means that if the entertainment element increases by one unit, the attitude towards cable TV network improves by 0.291 units. This shows that H1 gets accepted. The coefficient of credibility shows the presence of a positive and significant (at 1 percent) relationship between credibility and attitude towards cable TV network. The estimated value supports H2. The coefficient of advertisement perception is 0.053, which indicates presence of a positive relationship with attitude towards cable TV network but the value is insignificant. The estimated coefficient of ad perception does not support H3.

5. Discussion

This research study investigated the relationship between entertainment, credibility and ad perception with consumers' attitude towards LACA for small businesses.

In comparison, Usman et al. (2010) investigated cultural impact of Pakistanis towards advertisements and found that product information affects consumers' general attitude towards advertisements. Another study found that the consumers' attitude towards the acceptance of mobile advertisements is determined by consumers' permission, message content and personalization (Mir, 2011).

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics, Reliability and Normality of Variables

Attributes	Description	Mean Value	St. Dev.	Cronbach's Alpha	Items	Z-skewness	Z-kurtosis
Attitude towards local area cable advert	It shows that majority of responses regarding consumers' attitude towards local area cable advertisements fell between neutral and agree	3.14	0.661	0.803	9	-3.68	-1.75
Entertainment	It shows that most of the responses fell between neutral and agree.	3.2	0.787	0.866	8	-2.78	-2.63
Credibility	It shows that responses for ad perception fell between neutral and disagree.	2.79	0.765	0.793	5	-0.36	-2.19
Ad-Perception	It shows that responses for ad perception fell between neutral and disagree.	2.94	0.594	0.851	4	1.36	-2.11

Table 4
Regression Analysis

	Attitude_mean
Constant	1.060*** 0.175
Entertainment_mean	0.291*** 0.042
Credibility_mean	0.356*** 0.043
AP_mean	0.053 0.050
F (3, 296)	79.882 (p<0.001)
R-sq.	0.447
N	300

***Significance at 0.01 level

The results support a positive effect of entertainment factor on consumers' attitude towards LACA ($\beta=0.291$; $p < 0.01$) (hypothesis 1 supported). These findings are in accordance with other studies which also suggested that entertainment affects consumers' attitude towards mobile advertisements (Usman et al. 2010; Tsang, Ho, and Liang 2004) or advertising in general (Eze and Lee 2012; Ling, Piew, and Chai, 2010).

Our findings also suggest that consumers' attitude towards LACA is positively affected by credibility ($\beta=0.356$; $p < 0.01$) (support for hypothesis 2). These results are supported by previous studies, for example, credibility and value of advertisement was found to have a positive association in a research conducted in Japan and Austria (Sinkovics et al., 2012). Similarly, Sallam and Wahid (2012) also assert that endorser's credibility has a direct and positive link with consumers' attitude towards advertisements. In contrast, credibility is found to have no positive association with attitude towards internet-based advertising (Saeed et al., 2013).

Finally, we found that ad perception is not a determinant of consumers' attitude towards LACA of small businesses ($\beta=0.053$; $p = 0.290$) (hypothesis 3 is not supported). This is in accordance with research conducted by MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) who posited that advertisement perception is not linked with consumers' attitude

towards advertisement. Thus, our findings offer a significant contribution to the existing body of literature on determinants of consumer attitude towards advertisements of small businesses.

5.1 Implications

We offer significant implications for researchers and practitioners. The daily average time viewers spent watching cable TV in Lahore was between 100 to 112 minutes (Gallup Pakistan, 2014). By focusing on the specified determinants of consumers' attitude towards LACA, advertisers can save costs. Entertaining advertisements are likely to generate sales on LACA, while ad perception does not make a drastic difference in consumer attitude. However, credibility is important to the consumers therefore trust element needs to be given due consideration. Entertainment and credibility should be incorporated while designing the advertisements. It is recommended to use the tools of entertainment and credibility strategically to make TV advertisements more engaging and effective. Ignoring these factors could lower the effectiveness of a local ad. However, focusing on the ad perception of the target audience could have little to no effect on consumer attitude.

5.2 Limitations

Like all scientific research studies, our paper has some limitations. First, data has been collected from 300 respondents. The results need to be validated on a wider population and sample size may be increased to improve generalizability of the results. A longitudinal research design may be conducted in future to address how consumers' attitude towards LACA change over the passage of time.

5.3 Future Directions

This study has opened avenues for furthering research into consumers' attitudes and in field of consumer behavior. Future research may consider independent variables such as societal image, features of information, value and irritation. Further research is also needed to validate the relationships among constructs in other geographical areas as well. The role of celebrities or celebrity endorsement in infomercials is another aspect that requires future investigation. In the case of nutritionally labeled dairy products, for example, Khan, Faiz, Asad, and Awan (2016) suggest that celebrity

endorsement does not increase purchase intentions of dairy products. We suggest future studies to examine the effect of local celebrities in local cable advertisements.

We also call for qualitative examination of determinants of consumers' attitude towards other medium, including social media. Faiz (2015) argues that qualitative research unfortunately remains under-utilized in the business research in Pakistan. Field studies using in-depth interviews with viewers can provide additional insights into the dynamics of various features of effective advertisements. Finally, our sample included external customers of media industry. The extent to which internal customers, i.e., employees, in media industry benefit from incorporating the features of entertainment and credibility in the organizational climate is yet to be researched. As argued by Asad, Naseem, and Faiz (2017), elements of organizational climate are linked with job satisfaction of employees in services sector. Thus, we call for further examination of how entertainment and credibility within organizations can affect its employees.

5.4 Conclusion

This paper empirically examined the determinants of consumers' attitude towards advertisements of local area cable networks. Our study suggests that entertainment and credibility are determinants of consumers' attitude towards local area cable advertisements (LACA) of small businesses. However, our study did not find support for ad perception as a determinant of consumers' attitude towards LACA.

This paper examined important determinants of the consumers' attitude towards LACA of small businesses in Lahore. Our findings contribute to the expanding body of research in small businesses by suggesting that entertainment and credibility of an advertisement have a positive association, while ad perception does not have a positive association with the consumers' attitude towards LACA. Therefore, this paper extends the existing literature on consumers' attitude towards LACA of small businesses.

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