

**A STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF BELIEF FACTORS AND DEMOGRAPHIC
CHARACTERISTICS ON THE ATTITUDES TOWARD WEB
ADVERTISING AMONG USM STAFF IN PENANG**

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By

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This research is specially dedicated with love
to my mother, Puan Hajar Abd Rani
for her encouragement and
never-ending support

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ABSTRAK

Majoriti kajian mengenai iklan laman Web telah dijalankan di negara barat. Tetapi, hanya sedikit diketahui mengenai sikap para pengguna laman Web terhadap iklan laman Web di Malaysia. Kajian ini dijalankan di Pulau Pinang, Malaysia untuk mengkaji sikap pengguna laman Web terhadap iklan laman Web dengan menggunakan model tujuh-faktor kepercayaan yang diperkenalkan oleh Pollay dan Mittal (1993). Dengan mengadaptasikan model tersebut, kajian ini telah mengkaji kepercayaan, sikap dan juga ciri-ciri demografik kakitangan Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang. Umur, tahap pendidikan dan pendapatan dikaji sebagai ciri-ciri demografik untuk mengenalpasti hubungan di antara ciri-ciri demografik dan sikap kakitangan tersebut terhadap iklan laman Web. Hasil kajian daripada 148 kakitangan USM menunjukkan terdapatnya perbezaan yang signifikan di antara faktor-faktor kepercayaan. Informasi produk, kesukaan/kenikmatan, peranan sosial/imej dan boleh dipercayai adalah berhubungkait secara positif dengan sikap kakitangan terhadap iklan laman Web. Manakala, faktor kebendaan dan merosakkan nilai-nilai hidup berhubungkait secara negatif dengan sikap tersebut. Ciri-ciri demografik juga dilaporkan mempunyai kesan terhadap sikap tersebut. Kajian ini juga telah mengenalpasti perbezaan signifikan di antara sesetengah ciri demografik dan faktor kepercayaan. Hasil kajian dan implikasi juga dibincangkan. Selain itu, terdapat juga hubungan di antara sesetengah kumpulan ciri-ciri demografik dan faktor-faktor kepercayaan dan juga semakin tinggi pendapatan dan juga berpendidikan kakitangan, semakin mempunyai sikap yang kurang gemar terhadap iklan laman Web.

ABSTRACT

The majority of research about Web advertising has been conducted in Western countries. However, little is known about Web users' attitudes toward Web advertising in Malaysian context. This study, conducted in Penang, Malaysia to examine Web users' attitudes toward Web advertising is tested by using Pollay and Mittal's (1993) seven-factor belief model. Applying Pollay and Mittal's seven-factor advertising beliefs model, this study explore the staff of Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang beliefs and attitudes as well as the demographic characteristics. Age, education and income level were studied as demographic characteristics to examine the relationship between the demographic characteristics and the staffs' attitudes toward Web advertising. Results from a survey of 148 USM staff indicated there is a significant difference between the belief factors. Product information, hedonic/pleasure, social role/image and trustworthy are related positively to the staffs' attitudes toward Web advertising. While, materialism and value corruption are negatively related to their attitudes toward Web advertising. The demographic characteristics were also impacted on reported attitudes toward Web advertising. This study also found out that there were significant difference between certain demographic characteristics and the belief factors. The study results and implications of Web advertisers are discussed. In addition, there is a relationship between certain groups of demographic characteristics and belief factors and the higher the staffs' income and education, the more unfavourable their reported attitudes toward Web advertising.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Advertising is one of the most important tools in marketing to promote and communicate advertisers' products to their target audience and to increase sales and profit. Kotler (2003) defined advertising is a paid non-personal communication by the advertisers to present and promote goods or services. Advertisers spent million of dollars to ensure that their message could reach the target audience. As advertising is one of the communication platforms, advertisers may choose to communicate their messages to the consumers through various advertising mediums. The advertisers seems to realize that the advertising industry is flourishing tremendously and also the importance of perception to consumer behavior, attitudes, expectations, and needs that may influence their purchasing decisions (Horowitz & Kaye, 1975).

O'Donohoe (1994) believed that advertising as a source of information, especially on the product availability and price. Consumers want to get the best choice of products offered in the market, hence they need to get the information about the brand, price as well as the product's advantages because they want something that is value for money. Marketers can increase their market share if they really know and are concern about the consumers' needs, wants and behavior. This is because; they can increase their sales when their brand gets a good response.

In Malaysia, the perception of the people might be different about advertising and also the message that the marketers or advertisers want to communicate to the target audience. This is due to the culture and also the environment that influence the perception. This is supported by the literature on the study done by Waller and Kim that a marketer has the power to control the various aspects of the company's marketing mix activities, however, they also need to be aware of the uncontrollable factors in the marketing environment.

1.2 Background of the Study.

Various medias can be used to communicate a company's promotional message, such as television, radio, newspapers, and magazines. It is very important to choose the right advertising medium (Waller & Kim). In this new era, the Internet has become a new communication medium and the Web is part of the Internet. Advertisers are now considering promoting their brands through the Web and the best way is via Web advertising. Most advertisers have built the Internet into their media mix. In 1997, advertising expenditures on the Internet amounted to \$900 million being spent by the advertisers (Leong, Huang & Stanners, 1998).

Korgaonkar, Silverblatt and O'Leary (2001) said that when Web advertising first appeared in 1993 with the innovative advertising banners by HotWired, Inc., the growth of the industry had been extraordinary. This means, advertisers were ready to take the challenge and the necessary steps to promote their product and services.

In the world of business, the World Wide Web, or the multimedia interactive component of the Internet, is fast becoming as common as the telephone. Green, Himelstein and

Judge (1998) stated that there is an estimated 55 million people who surf the Web to search for information as they could find any required information. Businesses use the Web for several purposes, such as a source to get information, as a sales tool, as a channel of distribution, and as a medium of customer support (Peterson, Balasubramanian & Bronnenberg, 1997). Since marketers are interested in consumers' acceptance and attitudes toward Web advertising, it becomes important to examine the factors influencing it. The World Wide Web gives opportunities and challenges to the advertisers, including the need to understand Web users' beliefs about and attitudes toward this new medium of advertising. This study will provide an insight about another population's attitudes toward Web advertising.

Due to the distinctive criteria, many companies advertise their products or services because the Web is an advertising medium with characteristics such as constant message delivery, audience selectivity, multimedia capacity, measurable effects, global reach, audience-controlled advertising exposure, and interactivity (Wolin, Korgaonkar & Lund, 2002). It is also a forum for customer to communicate and a channel to distribute. This is also agreed by Berthon, Pitt and Watson (1996) as they found that reporting on the Web is currently fascinating to general readers, and listings URLs is helpful to consumers and serious advertising and marketing practitioners, and academics. This is true particularly from the perspective of the Web as a marketing communication tool and the advertising medium.

Despite some statements and reasons for Web advertisements seem so positive, generally, there are also negative perception and attitude towards it compared to other media. In

Western countries, researchers have conducted studies on offensive Web advertisements. However little is known about consumers' perception of offensive advertising in Asian context, especially offensive advertising on the Web. According to Prendergast and Huang (2003), offensive advertising consists of offensive products or services, which represents the matter of advertising and offensive appeals, which represents the manner of advertising. Prendergast and Huang (2003) added the offensive products or services are the unmentionable products those that are considered by some significant segment of the population to be offensive, embarrassing, controversial and socially unacceptable. While, offensive appeals are related to the manner of presentation. One would say that the web is another medium to disseminate information and as the advertising communication tool. But the Web enables the user to respond and creates a totally new environment that changes the traditional medium of mass communication (Huang & Prendergast, 2003).

Web users sometimes perceived Web advertisements as offensive and non-informative. If it is found to be offensive, it does not just depend on the product and the service itself, but also on the manner of presentation, include sex appeal, fear and silliness (Greyser, 1972). Web users will not be interested to click on the Web advertisements when they believed that they would not get any valuable information about the brand being advertised. This is also agreed by Hoffman and Novak (2000) that the results found that banner advertisements are ineffective due to the fact that web usage rates are declining. This means when the web users does not like web advertisements, they will not surf the web.

This study will look at the perception and the attitudes toward Web advertising in the Malaysian context. Even though, in countries like Malaysia, the consumers' acceptance of certain aspects is believed to be different from countries in the West, but marketers have to really put an effort to understand the consumers' characteristics, beliefs and attitudes. It is clear that any form of Internet based marketing will be critical to the success of many companies in the 21st century as they search for ways to gain, and sustain competitive advantage (McGaughey & Mason, 1998).

1.3 Problem Statement.

Although the studies on advertising attitudes vary in the types of samples used and data collection methods, a research on the attitudes toward advertising medium is needed. For example, a study on the attitudes toward Web advertising is needed because we have to know the web users' reactions and response. Web users might or might not accept them because Web advertisements are still new and the way of presentation is different and the attitudes may vary among different communities and there is a need for researchers from different environment because it affects a person's life and way of thinking (Schlosser, Shavitt & Kanfer, 1999). Schlosser et. al., (1999) added, more surveys are needed to assess the attitudes toward Internet advertising and the factors influencing it in different population of other countries. While, Korgaonkar and Wolin (2002) suggested that future research is needed to extend the results of their study on Web advertising on different nation populations including the demographic significance. Is attitude different based on the belief factors and demographic characteristics across the region? The answer to this question will help contribute to the knowledge about Web advertising. Based on the

review of the literature and studies done by previous researchers in Western countries, it was noticed that there has been studies on the attitudes toward Web advertising. For example, the studies done by Wolin et. al., (2002), Korgaonkar et. al., (2001), Korgaonkar and Wolin (2002) and Brackett and Carr, Jr. (2001). However, their studies focused more on the beliefs, demographic and Web usage as the predictors of the Web users' attitudes toward Web advertising. There were studies that have not been focused on the relationship between the demographic characteristics and the Web users' beliefs about Web advertising.

This study will be carried out to examine the relationship between the two predictors of the attitudes toward Web advertising as well as to close the gap by looking at the Malaysian perspectives. Malaysians too have their own perception or beliefs about certain aspects. Web advertising is not exceptional. This study will explore the factors that may have an impact on the attitudes among the staff of Universiti Sains Malaysia Penang, as they too, have Internet access and also been exposed to web advertisements and therefore they are also web users and consumers.

The staff of USM Penang come from various categories which are needed in order to do the sampling. Their age, education level, monthly income, and beliefs about web advertising are required for this research project. This is done by looking at the relationship of their demographic factors, beliefs and their attitudes toward web advertisements. This will contribute towards the findings on their attitudes by looking at the reliability of the relationship.

1.4 Research Objectives

This research is conducted to explore the attitudes toward Web advertising among the staff of USM Penang and will investigate the demographic and belief factors that influence the attitudes. The objectives of this research are:

- (i) To examine the relationship between beliefs about Web advertising and the attitudes toward Web advertising.
- (ii) To investigate the relationship between demographic characteristics and the attitudes toward Web advertising among USM staff in Penang.
- (iii) To determine the difference between demographic characteristics and the staffs' beliefs about Web advertising.

1.5 Research Questions

To achieve the above-mentioned research objectives, answers are required for the following questions:

- (i) Do demographic factors influence the attitudes toward Web advertising?
- (ii) Is there any relationship between belief factors and attitudes toward Web advertising?
- (iii) Is there any significant difference between the demographic characteristics and the staffs' beliefs about Web advertising?

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

This section will look into the definition and meaning of the key terms of this study.

1.6.1 USM Staff

The staff of USM comprise those from academic level (e.g. lecturers and teachers), high administrative level (e.g. registrar, head of departments, senior assistant registrars, etc.), medium administrative level (e.g. assistant registrars and senior technical assistants), support administrative level (clerks, typists and stenos) and also others (e.g. lab assistants, medical staff, security guards and laborers).

1.6.2 Attitude

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995), attitude is a way of thinking about something or behaving towards something. While, Zikmund (2003) defines attitude as a consistency in responding to various aspects of the world which comprised affective, cognitive and behavioral components. Attitude also means the way one may react towards something.

1.6.3 Web Advertising

Web advertising has several definitions offered by previous researchers and also the authors. Belch and Belch (2001) define Web advertising as banner advertisements and also pop-up advertisements, which the web users may found while surfing the Web. Consumers perceived that Internet Advertising comprised many kinds of commercials, from the electronic advertisements that are similar to traditional advertisements to formats that are different from traditional advertisements, such as corporate Websites (Ducoffe, 1996). Rodgers and Thorson (2000) said that web advertising consists of commercial content paid by the advertisers, designed for the audience and delivered in

many ways. Web advertisements are those that appear or pop up while surfing the web and we can choose either to click on the ads or ignore them.

1.6.4 Belief

Belief means the association of an object with certain attributes (Azjen & Fishbein, 1980). Belief also means the perception that a person has about other people, objects and issues. The results of separate belief dimensions will be attributed to the characteristics of the particular sample groups in a population (Andrews, 1989).

1.7 Significance of the Study

Advertisers spent a lot on web advertising as it is considered one of the effective mediums to attract web users' attention, with the hope that sales, profit and market share will increase. Numerous studies were carried out in the west about the attitudes toward web advertising and not in Malaysia and it was due to the perception that Malaysian are still not aware of it. The advertisers need to know about the web users perception and attitudes toward web advertising and the factors influencing it, especially among Asian countries. For example, Malaysia because it is very important to know the attitudes of the community. Despite the development of globalised markets and marketing activities, advertisers and marketers must be aware of various environmental differences (Waller & Kim). This research will provide a better understanding on how Malaysian web users perceive and feel about web advertising and what kind of attitudes that the staff of USM Penang has, as they are part of the web users and consumers as well. This study will also provide the information about their beliefs and demographic characteristics that influence

their attitudes. From the information and data of this study, advertisers will understand the reasons that the web users hold such attitudes. Advertisers may also have a better planning about their marketing and advertising strategies to reach the target audience and apply new strategies in developing their marketing activities based on the information of this study and hopefully it can help advertisers or marketers understand their target audience better.

1.6 Organization of Remaining Chapters

This chapter discussed about the background of advertising industry and the new medium of advertising that advertisers may consider which is Web advertising and to understand how to attract their target consumers. The following chapters will discuss more about this study. In chapter two we will look into the review of the previous studies done by researchers about the variables for this study, as well as the theoretical framework and hypotheses. While chapter three will discuss about the methodology for this study like the research design, variables, population, sample, procedure, measures and data analysis. The results for this research project is in chapter four and discussion and conclusion will be discussed in chapter five.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Review of Literature on Attitudes Toward Web Advertising

Before going into details about the attitudes toward Web advertising, it is essential to understand the consumers' attitudes toward advertising in general (Korgaonkar et al., 2001). Getting to know the consumers attitudes toward advertising, marketers and advertisers would be able to emphasize more on their advertising plan. A better understanding of interactivity can also help to improve the effectiveness of interactive media such as the Internet. Wang, Zhang, Choi, and D'Eredita (2002) agreed with the statement they believed that without proper communication about the products or brand, advertisers are in difficult situation to reach their target audience. Consumers have their own evaluation on advertising in general. The evaluation is influenced by their attitudes and beliefs in advertising (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1992).

People differ in their attitudes toward advertising based on their own perception and also influenced by their background and the attitudes may change and differ from time to time. The change in perceptions and attitudes may lead to certain behavior and marketers and advertisers must be aware of that. Advertisers also have to know the reason why the consumers change. This is agreed by Heishchmidt and Elfrink (1991), when they stated that when the consumers change their attitudes, it is important to know the reasons because it may indicate a change in consumer behaviour. For example, whether they like certain things and issues or not.

Another study on Taiwanese students' beliefs about and attitudes toward advertising done by Yang (2000), indicated that the students acknowledged the positive and negative effects of advertising based on the perceptions and belief factors. The paper extends the studies by Pollay and Mittal (1993) to a different setting in Taiwan and there were differences in the belief factors of Taiwanese college students about advertising compared to the results of Pollay and Mittal (1993). It is clear that the same model can be applied to study the attitudes toward advertising on different population, but the results may differ. This is due to the personal and environmental factors. Apart from Yang (2000), there are also other researchers who did the study on the attitudes toward advertising. Study done by Shavitt, Lowry and Haefner (1998) showed that the American attitudes toward advertising in general appear somewhat favorable. Americans may differ from the people of Asia in their attitudes because there are certain factors that influence them to like or dislike advertisements.

According to Shavitt, Lowry and Haefner (1998), in this new era, consumers' attitudes and beliefs about advertising are not easy to assess because different person might have different perception about advertising, either favorable or unfavorable, marketers and advertisers need to realize the fact about the kind of attitudes that the consumers hold. Advertisers must know how to attract the consumers' attention in order to communicate their messages effectively.

Internet advertising has grown tremendously in the last few years, but it is still new in both research and practice areas (Dahlen, 2002). Even though Web advertising is still

new, the Internet as a marketing and communication medium offers many unique challenges to marketers. This is because web users are the target consumers of advertisers. Their attitudes toward web advertising have been considered important because they influence consumers' exposure, attention and how the consumers react to a particular advertisement. The company may attract the consumers' attention through the banner ads but it is up to the consumers to evaluate the commercial contents as they can ignore the ads (Schlosser, Shavitt & Kanfer, 1999). Web ads are not like the advertisements that are being shown on television, heard on radio or read in magazines because Consumers can easily click on to other websites or just ignore the Web ads as they can close the windows. This means the web users can control their advertisement exposure compared to other advertisements being advertised using other mediums.

2.1.1 The Predictors of attitudes toward Web advertising.

To evaluate why the web users tend to have favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward Web advertising is to understand the reasons for them to hold such attitudes and what they know about Web advertising, which refers to the beliefs that the Web users have toward Web advertising. Belief factors are believed to be the predictors of Web advertising attitudes. This is proven by the study done by Wolin, Korgaonkar and Lund (2002) as their hypothesis generally predicted that Web users' beliefs about Web advertising were related to their attitudes toward Web advertising and six of the seven belief factors were significant.

Demographic factors are also believed to have relationship with the attitudes toward Web advertising. Korgaonkar and Wolin (2003) indicated in the previous studies that consumers' beliefs about and attitudes toward advertising in general, as well as medium specific advertising tend to have a relationship with age, income and education. Kalidas (2000) also stated that demographic factors are typically used by advertisers to target their audience as demographic variables are easily available and easy to measure in profiling the audience.

Based on the results of the study on the attitudes of Hispanics toward Web advertising, done by Korgaonkar et al., (2001), the level of interest in Web advertisements among Hispanic web users correlates significantly with their perceptions and beliefs, along with their attitudes toward Web advertising as well as one of the demographic factors which is the education level. It is clear that beliefs and attitudes toward Web advertising play a greater role than demographics alone in determining respondents actions related to Web advertisements. Marketers need to understand that consumers perception will lead to their purchase behaviour. Biehal, Stephens and Curlo, (1992) agreed that the advertisers need to ensure that attitude towards advertising formation naturally precedes choice. Consumers purchasing behaviour and product selection might be based on their attitudes toward Web advertising. It is believed that if the consumers perceived the Web negatively, there is a possibility that they will not purchase the products that have been advertised.

Generally, it is clear that the attitudes toward advertising in general and Web advertising among the subjects from different population were derived from their own beliefs and demographic factors. Findings from previous studies indicated that Web users have different reasons to have favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward Web advertising. They have favorable attitudes because they perceived that Web advertising provide product information, make them feel good, as a social role, and good for their economy. While they dislike Web advertising because Web advertising encouraged materialism, lead to value corruption and no sense. Although the studies of overall attitudes have varied widely in the types of samples, consumers still have different judgments about the same dimensions (Schlosser et al., 1999).

Belief-based measurement has already been applied to various researches that measured the attitude of audience towards advertising. For example, the studies done by Pollay and Mittal (1993), Andrews (1989), and Korgaonkar et al., (2002). This study will measure the attitudes of USM staff in relation to their beliefs and perceptions about Web advertising and the demographic factors that may have relationship with their beliefs and attitudes.

2.2 Beliefs about Web Advertising

In general, beliefs factors or dimensions are the important measurement to examine the respondents' attitudes. Dubinsky and Hensel (1984) agreed that the relationship between beliefs about advertising in general and attitudes toward advertising is important and the relationship becomes more important in recent studies to measure the influence of beliefs

about advertising in general on attitudes toward advertising. The statement has been supported by Muehling (1987) that the distinction of certain aspects in advertising becomes more important to measure the influence of belief dimensions.

The beliefs about advertising in general may differ from a belief about a specific advertising from a specific medium because advertisements are presented differently in different media. We have to compare Internet advertising with advertising in general and the implications for traditional marketing models and practices (Schlosser et. al., 1999). To gain better understanding of Web users' advertising beliefs, the related literature is examined. There are studies that indicate several beliefs model. There are two-factor model, which comprised of personal and social effects. Three personal uses and four societal effects, which might determine people's attitudes and also reveal the differences among people in their beliefs and attitudes toward advertising (Pollay & Mittal, 1993). While Alwitt and Prabhaker (1992) found that consumers' perceptions and evaluation of television advertising comprise six dimensions and they are personal and social benefits, how TV ads are executed, deceptive, offensiveness, too often or too much and offer information. In 1993, Pollay and Mittal support a seven-factor belief model. In their study, the seven factor of belief about advertising consist of product information, hedonic/pleasure and social role/image together with four social effects of advertising: good for the economy, materialism, falsity/no sense and value corruption. Although Pollay and Mittal's (1993) study was in-depth, but they were looking at the belief factors of advertising in general, not on a specific advertising medium. This study will apply the same model but will use the model that has been modified by Korgaonkar et al., (2002) in

order to get the in-depth understanding of the staffs' beliefs about Web advertising. In order to measure the respondent's beliefs about Web advertising, the wording or phrasing of some items in the seven-factor model were modified by Korgaonkar, Lund and Wolin (2002) to study respondent's beliefs specifically for Web advertising. Another study done by Korgaonkar and other researchers like O'Leary and Silverblatt in 2001 also applied the Pollay and Mittal's (1993) seven belief factors, as they relate that to their study on "Hispanics and Web Advertising".

2.2.1 Product Information

This factor indicated that Web advertising is the information provider. Web advertising information is believed to allow for greater marketplace, where the consumers' needs and wants have to be matched with the offering made by the advertisers (Wolin, Korgaonkar and Lund 2002). In Ducoffe (1996) study, he found a significant correlation between informativeness and the value of Web advertising. Web advertising is also believed to be the information provider when Brown, Pope and Voges (2003) said, that Internet is the best place to get information. Web advertising enable consumers access a greater amount of detailed information about the products attributes, comparative pricing and availability.

The results of the study done by Wolin, Korgaonkar, and Lund (2002), indicated that product information as the most dominant role and the result considered the same as what Ducoffe (1996) found. While the result of the study done by Korgaonkar, Silverblatt and O'Leary (2001) indicated that those who are interested in Web advertising are more

likely to perceive Web advertising as providing product information. While Wolin, Korgaonkar and Lund (2002) explained the indicator of product information items are Web advertising is a very valuable source of information about sales, Web advertising tells Web users which brands have the features that they are looking for and Web advertising helps Web users keep up to date about products available in the marketplace. Based on the items, we can conclude that product information dimension will make the Web user a good decision-maker. Consumers need more information about the product, price, and promotion in order to make a wise decision before they make the right choice. Web advertising as well as the other medium are responsible to provide information that the consumers need.

2.2.2 Hedonic/Pleasure

Web advertisements containing message and copy that embedded with enjoyable, attractive colours and specific language communications effects should add value to the products and services that advertisers advertised. This is agreed by Akselsen, Pitt and Watson, (1998) as they stated that web advertising must be able to motivate and interact effectively. Wolin, Korgaonkar and Lund, (2002) found that hedonic/pleasure was significant and positively related to the respondents' attitudes toward Web advertising. Korgaonkar, Silverblatt and O'leary (2001) found that those who are interested in Web advertising are more likely to perceive Web advertising as enhancing their hedonic/pleasure in their study on "Hispanic and Web Advertising". When consumers perceived that Web advertising enhances their pleasure, they may consider the products

advertised too. Advertisers must know the right strategies to grab the web users attention.

2.2.3 Social Role/Image

As we know, Web advertising like other advertising medium, promotes the brand that brings out the image and enhance decision-making process. Web advertising promotes a good social role and lifestyle messages through associated status, and brand image (Pollay & Mittal, 1993). Hofacker and Murphy (1998) stated that use of personal references in the advertisement had an effect on brand association. Wolin, Korgaonkar and Lund (2002) agreed that the interactive messages in Web advertising enhance its ability to present these social messages in their study and they found that social role/image was positively related to the attitudes toward Web advertising. Web users may learn something new through the advertisements on the Web about the new lifestyle, image and trend.

2.2.4 Good for the Economy

Web advertising is good for the economy because it helps advertisers or marketers to improve their profits, as it is another advertising medium. Advertisers can advertise their products and services through the Web other than television, magazines, newspapers and radio. It is also believed that Web advertising provide convenience to consumers. Web advertising saves consumers time and makes it possible for them to choose from a wide variety of merchandise from their home (Wolin et al., 2002). But there was not stated as the results shown that the Coefficient alpha for good for economy is just 0.5130, also as

well as the result from the study on “Hispanic and Web advertising” by Korgaonkar, Silverblatt and O’Leary (2001). It is clear that there are different perceptions about Web advertising made by the consumers. Even though some web users or consumers believed that Web advertising is not related to the economic conditions but more or less they have to realize that advertising is one of the major income for those who are involved.

2.2.5 Materialism

As defined by Pollay and Mittal (1993), materialism refers to a set of belief structures that sees consumption of material goods, which may promote materialism. For example, when consumers see the displayed products that they can’t afford to buy and also make them feel that they want to have everything. It also stimulates the consumers to buy the things that they don’t really need because of the promising headlines. Korgaonkar, et al., (2001) found that those who are interested in Web advertising are more likely to perceive Web advertising as promoting materialism. This is due to the image of the product appearance and also the way they advertised the products. Certain advertisements that we can find while we were surfing the web will make us want more that what we can afford. That is why there is a perception that Web advertising enhances materialism, but it also depends on the background of the person that may influence their perception.

2.2.6 Trustworthy

Marketers are believed to claim that their advertised products can meet and satisfy every consumer’s needs and wants through websites, such as slimming products and beauty products. Some of the characteristics of these sites include the truth, claims and

intelligence-insulting prose and often promises consumers magical results from the product they are selling. But, we have to admit that nowadays consumers are even smarter and they don't simply trust the advertisements and they are looking for something that is value for money. Consumers may have different perception about trust in products advertised in different advertising medium and they want to make sure which medium they can trust and rely on. Korgaonkar, Lund and Wolin found that falsity/no sense is negatively related to attitudes toward Web advertising among the respondents while Hispanics who are interested in web advertising are more likely to perceive Web advertising as not being false (Korgaonkar, O'Leary & Silverblatt, 2001). While, this study will measure the extent of the USM staffs' trust about Web advertising because we need to examine the trustworthiness of Web advertising.

2.2.7 Value Corruption

Different culture of consumers may have different perceptions about value. In advertising industry, marketers need to learn about other culture so that they wouldn't get the negative perceptions among the consumers. In Malaysia, as a multicultural country, value is very important in every aspect in daily lives. In the perspective of Web advertising, advertisers are aware that they will reach their target audience from various parts of the world as the Internet means "International Network". Marketers are aware of various environmental differences that they may have to address such as cultural and value factors, especially for South East Asian Countries that have their own distinct business culture, values and norms, which are very different from Western countries (Kim & Waller). Korgaonkar et al., (2002) indicated that Web advertising has the power

to mould users' values; thus, Web advertising has the potential to corrupt the values of its users and can undermine the values of parents who intend to impress their children. Sometimes advertisers are not aware that they are promoting things that can influence and take advantage of children and also the appearance of sex appeal through their Web advertisements. Waller (1999) agreed that in order to draw the audience's attention to a particular product or service advertisement, there has been an increasing use of controversial advertising especially advertising on the Web. The perception that there is too much sex in Web advertising today can be true especially in an Asian context. Sometimes these could be an offensive advertising on the Web. Below is the list of potentially offensive products or services in Web advertising that may corrupt value.

Table 2.1:
Potentially Offensive Products or Services in Web Advertising in Asian perspective.

	Products/Services
1.	Chat-line services
2.	Sexual connotations products
3.	Dating services
4.	Male undergarment
5.	Alcoholic drinks
6.	Hair replacement products
7.	Feminine contraceptives
8.	Female undergarment
9.	Feminine hygiene products
10.	Condoms
11.	Gambling
12.	Weight loss products

Source: Huang, H. C. & Prendergast, G. (2003), pp. 393-411.

The table shows the types of products that have the potential to be offensive from the perspective of the Asian and may corrupt value. Web users who have perceive that these kind of advertisements can corrupt values will have unfavorable attitude towards Web advertising.

The modified Pollay and Mittal (1993) seven-belief factor model were selected for this research because the dimensions can be applied into the study about the attitudes toward Web advertising. Wolin, Korgaonkar, and Lund (2002) had modified the phrasing to suit their study on belief and attitudes toward Web advertising. The relationship does exist between beliefs about Web advertising and Web users attitudes toward Web advertising.

2.3 The influence of Demographic Factors

Advertisers must understand the Web users' beliefs about and attitudes toward this new medium's advertising potential. To understand the web users' attitudes toward Web advertising, other factors such as and demographic factors need to be reviewed. The demographic factors are easy to measure compared to other measurement. Web users or the respondents are different based on their demographic characteristics and they behave differently in their consumption pattern, decision-making process, media preferences and also perception about certain things. Advertisers normally segment their market according to the target market's demographic characteristics. In advertising, advertisers will also approach the segmentation to reach their target audience because demographic segmentation is very useful for many marketing decision.

In Web advertising, advertisers must also be aware that individual differences among the message recipients may lead to wide variations in the manner in which the Web users respond to the advertising appeals. How the Web users feel about Web advertising is based on their emotions. Chen, Harris and Moore (1995) stated that individuals' emotions are influenced by their difference. The demographic information such as gender, occupation, age, education level and monthly income are the predictors of the attitudes toward Web advertising. There is a difference within the demographic groups as their behavior and media preference varies (Kalidas, 2000). This study will examine three of the demographic characteristics because normally respondent's age, income and education level were used and the three characteristics are enough in order to measure the respondents' beliefs and attitudes.

2.3.1 Age

Age differences may influence the users' perception about Web advertising because the beliefs and attitudes among younger users might be different from those who are older. Study done by Calisir (2003) demonstrated how young consumers perceive the Web as an advertising medium despite explosive growth in the number of young consumers getting on the Web. He added that this information has increasingly become valuable for advertisers when making their media decisions and determining their marketing mix. There have been researches done to examine the relationship between demographic characteristics and advertising. Alwitt and Prabhaker (1992) suggest that older consumers show greater dislike of television advertising than the younger consumers. While, Shavitt, Lowrey and Haefner (1998) found that younger consumers report more