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Young Adults' Attitude towards Advertising: A Multi-Group Analysis by Ethnicity

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ABSTRACT

Objective – This study aims to investigate the attitude of Malaysian young adults towards advertising. How this segment responds to advertising, and how ethnic/cultural differences moderate are assessed.

Design/methodology/approach – A quantitative questionnaire is used to collect data at two universities. Purposive sampling technique is adopted to ensure the sample represents the actual population. Structural equation modelling (SEM) and multi-group analysis (MGA) are utilized in analysis.

Findings – The findings show that product information, hedonism, and good for economy are significant predictors of attitude towards advertising among young adults. Additionally, falsity is found to be significant among the Chinese, while social role and materialism among the Dayaks. No difference is observed in the effect of attitude on intention towards advertising by ethnicity. While homogeneity in advertising beliefs is assumed across ethnic groups, the Chinese and Dayak young adults are different in some of their advertising beliefs.

Practical implications – Despite cultural effect being well-documented, young adults today seem to have similar beliefs and attitude towards advertising. Knowing what is shared and what is not for this segment is essential. Hence, it is imperative to keep track of their values in diversified communities to ensure effective communication process in advertising.

Keywords – Advertising, attitude, belief, culture, SEM

1 INTRODUCTION

Advertising by nature is a socio-cultural phenomenon (Wang & Sun, 2010). While it is commonly known to play a key role in economic development, it also helps generate societal activities, and affects the way people live and act (Pollay & Mittal, 1993; Wang, Sun, Lei & Toncar, 2009). Given the burgeoning use of Internet and digital technologies, younger generations are becoming more accustomed to advertising and exposed to more advertisements than those of the same age a decade ago (Purosothuman, 2008; Tai, 2007). As a result, the way they receive and convey messages, and develop communicational relationships have changed drastically over the years (Syrett & Lammiman, 2004). This makes the understanding of young consumers' view about advertising more intricate. However, at the same time, it becomes more essential than ever.

Cultural impact on views on advertising has been well documented in marketing literature (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2001; La Ferle, Edwards & Lee, 2008). Culture and advertising are asserted to be profoundly connected with each other (Wang & Sun, 2010). Because culture more than often creates differences (Raval & Subramanian, 2004), views and responses of people from different cultural groups towards advertising are expected to be different. However, little is known about advertising views by young consumers in emerging and multi-cultural markets. Considering this, the present study adopts a quantitative approach to investigate the current attitude of Malaysian young adults towards advertising. As culture is embedded in ethnicity, this study compares and analyzes how young adults from Malay, Chinese and Dayak communities perceive

advertising. Instead of using multiple regression and analysis of variance (ANOVA), variance-based structural equation modeling (SEM) and multi-group analysis (MGA) are used to assess relations between constructs and the difference of their effects. It is believed that the elucidation of the attitude towards advertising among young adults and the effect of ethnicity and cultural differences on the topic will extend the knowledge on young consumers and advertising effectiveness.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical consideration

Despite having various attitudinal theories, the theory of reasoned action (TRA) developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), as shown in Figure 1, is used as a support basis to investigate young adults' attitude towards advertising. TRA is extensively used due to its applicability and validity (Choo, Chung & Pysarchik, 2004; Netemeyer & Bearden, 1992). Moreover, as the focal point of this study is the attitude towards advertising, TRA is deemed appropriate to elucidate its relation with antecedent and consequent constructs. TRA demonstrates that an individual's behavior is determined by its intention to perform it. Intention, in turn, is determined by attitudes and subjective norms. Finally, attitude and subjective norms are predicted by attitudinal and normative beliefs (Korgaonkar, Silverblatt & O'Leary, 2001). Most researchers agree that the influence of attitudes on intention is stronger than that of subjective norms (Farley, Lehmann & Ryan, 1981; Oliver & Bearden, 1985). Considering this, this study will focus on causal relations between beliefs, attitude and intention.

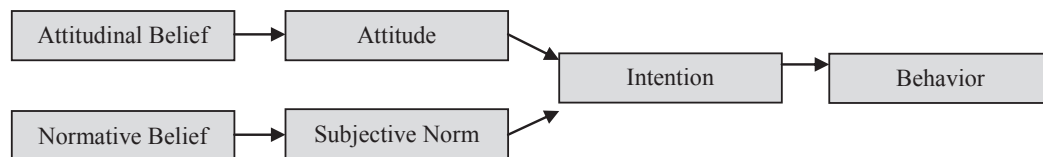


FIGURE 1 – Theory of Reasoned Action.

Source: Ajzen, I. & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior*. London: Prentice-Hall.

2.2 Attitude towards advertising

For many years, the topic of attitude towards advertising has received substantial attention in marketing literature (Mittal, 1994; O'Donohoe, 1995; Pollay & Mittal, 1993). It is largely known as “a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner to advertising in general” (Lutz, 1985, p. 16). Interest in such attitude is generated and intensified by continual empirical evidence, which underlines the effect of advertising attitude on advertising effectiveness (Kotler, 1988; Mehta, 2000; Mehta & Purvis, 1995), and also attitude towards a specific brand and advertisement (Lutz, 1985). Moreover, it is also found to have a direct and positive effect on exposure and attention to advertisements (Shavitt, Lowrey & Haefner, 1998), and ultimately purchase intention and behavior (Bush, Smith & Martin, 1999; Ha, John, Janda, & Muthaly, 2011). Hence, it plays an important role in consumer behavior (Wilkie, 1994). Furthermore the understanding of advertising attitudes can result in better social policy initiatives (Calfee & Ringold, 1994; Pollay & Mittal, 1993), thus benefitting the society in general (Pollay & Mittal, 1993; Rotzoll, Haefner & Sandage, 1986).

In order to articulate the formation of attitude towards advertising, past studies have also delved into its antecedents in order to determine its predictors and its causal relations. One of the most recognized variables found in earlier studies is the belief in advertising. It is described as a specific statement about the attributes of objects

(Brackett & Carr, 2001; Ducoffe, 1996; Pollay & Mittal, 1993; Wang *et al.*, 2009). As such, it serves as a precursor to an attitude towards advertising (Korgaonkar *et al.*, 2001). Since belief in advertising influences the attitude towards advertising, knowing advertising beliefs and their level of effect on attitude would produce more insights into effective advertisements in order to result in favorable responses by the consumers (Korgaonkar *et al.*, 2001).

Notwithstanding multiple sources of belief components of advertisements in earlier studies, the seven-factor belief model by Pollay and Mittal (1993) is considered as one of the most comprehensive models for explaining attitude towards advertising (Korgaonkar *et al.*, 2001; Munusamy & Wong, 2007; Ramaprasad & Thurwanger, 1998). It is also one of the most used models up to now because of its validated measures (Korgaonkar, Karson, & Lund 2000; Korgaonkar *et al.*, 2001). Two dimensions are proposed in this model: personal utility, which has four factors, and socioeconomics, which has three factors. Among the seven factors, product information describes advertising as a provider of important information, which contributes to marketplace efficiencies. Social role and image reflects the belief that advertising affects people's lifestyle and development of social status. Hedonism or pleasure indicates that advertising can be amusing and entertaining. Good for the economy denotes the view that advertising facilitates consumers' adoption of new products, creates employment opportunities, reduces the cost of production, promotes healthy

competitions among companies, and raises the standard of living (Belch & Belch, 2009). In spite of its positive aspects, advertising is also criticized for promoting materialism, falsity and corrupting values, especially among young people. Therefore, attitudes toward advertising are determined by both positive or negative beliefs in advertising (Singh & Vij, 2007).

2.3 Ethnicity and culture

Culture has group-wide patterns of human thoughts and relations (Drake, 1994; Lau, Chiu & Lee, 2001; Legohérel, Daucé, Hsu & Ranchhold, 2009). Goodenough (1971) described culture as a set of beliefs or standards, shared by a group of individuals, that have an impact on the behavior of an individual. Similarly, Hall (1976) defined it as “the way of life of people, for the sum of their learned behavioral patterns, attitudes, and material things” (p. 20). Ethnicity, in turn, involves a common cultural heritage, a sense of belonging that is transmitted from one generation to another (Renzetti & Curran, 1998). As ethnicity is a dominant embodiment of culture (Usunier, 2000), it is apparent that the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are very much dependent upon ethnic groups to which they belong (Legohérel *et al.*, 2009). Due to its prevailing influence, cultural-value priorities can be seen in the manner of living in each ethnic group (Schwartz, 1999), and they become norms to advocate what is appropriate and what is not in various situations.

Interest in the influence of culture on consumers' view and behavior has been growing greatly due to the diversification of consumer profiles and changing of technological environment (Douglas & Craig, 1997). Even though management implications of this have been recognized for quite some time, the understanding of its effect on the young and internet-savvy consumers, who begin to enter society as active adults, requires continual assessment (Syrett & Lammiman, 2004). As cultural values are known to have a commanding role in bringing changes in

beliefs, attitudes and behaviors (Hofstede, 2001; Raval & Subramanian, 2004; Rice, 1993; Terpstra & David, 1985), young consumers' attitudes toward advertising are naturally influenced by their innate cultural predispositions. This may become a main area of concern for managers or people in marketing entering multi-ethnic and cultural markets such as Malaysia (Shao & Waller, 1993). However, as a medium that channels socio-cultural values itself, advertising can portray or contradict the values that an ethnic group hold important (Wang & Sun, 2010). Therefore, it is important to assess the view on advertising in a cross-cultural context through the lens of ethnicity to broaden intrinsically the understanding of attitudes towards advertising.

3 HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Notwithstanding the prevailing role that ethnicity plays, the meteoric development and use of technological devices and its impact on consumers, especially young adults, cannot be overlooked (Eze & Lee, 2012; Waller & Fam, 2000). This phenomenon is believed to have increasingly caused worldwide exchanges of national and cultural resources (Al-Rodhan, 2006), thus intensifying human interaction and conformity. Nevertheless, studies on attitude towards advertising of Malaysian young adults are still limited if compared to that of the western world (Munusamy & Wong, 2007; Ramaprasad, 1994). Moreover, even though there are marketing-related studies that acknowledge ethnic groups in Malaysia as understudied samples (De Run, 2007; Rashid & Sidin, 1987; Ting & De Run, 2012; Ting, De Run & Fam, 2012), little is known on the influence of culture on the attitude of young adults towards advertising. Furthermore, there is still a gap in literature in assessing relations between belief-attitude-intention constructs moderated by ethnic groups in a holistic and structural model (Kwek, Tan & Lau, 2010; Munusamy & Wong, 2007; Ramaprasad & Thurwanger, 1998). As a result,

the way by which Malaysian young adults from different ethnic groups perceive advertising in their surroundings, and the implication of culture on their attitude towards advertising remain largely indefinite. The lack of understanding of younger consumers today will greatly affect marketing strategy and advertising effectiveness.

Hence, it is mandatory to keep up with an updated view on this specific segment of population to understand how it responds to

advertising at the outset. Using TRA as a support theory, the attitude towards advertising is modeled as the focal point of this study. Accordingly, the seven belief factors are constructed as antecedents, and intention towards advertising as its outcome (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Finally, ethnicity is constructed as the model's moderator to test the difference of strengths between attitudinal constructs. The research model of this study is shown in Figure 2.

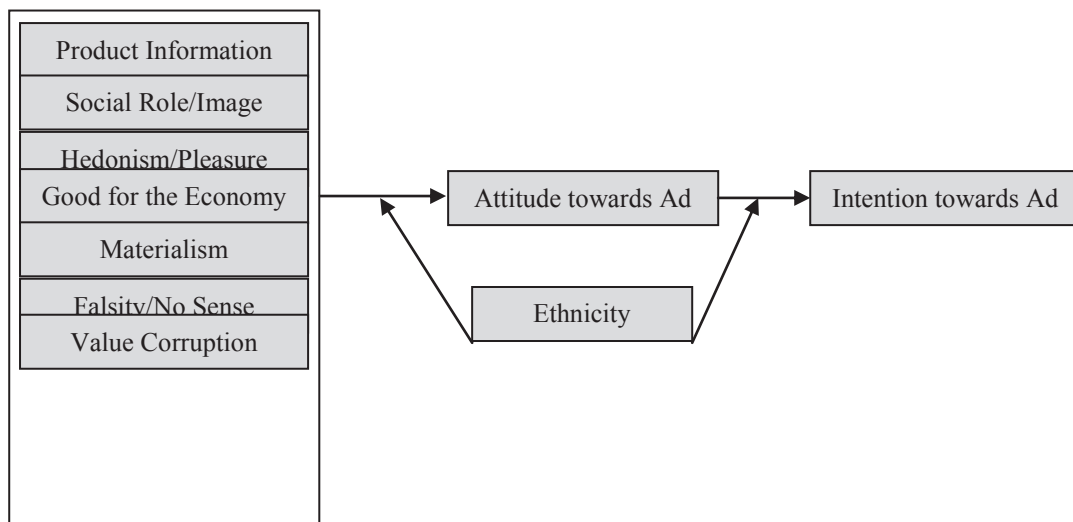


Figure 2 – Research model.

Source: Self-developed with reference to Pollay, R. W. & Mittal, B. (1993). Here's the beef: factors, determinants, and segments in consumer criticism of advertising. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(3), 99-114.

Given the need to understand the contemporary view on advertising among young adults, hypotheses are developed to first test the effect of beliefs about advertising on attitudes towards advertising, and secondly the effect of attitude towards advertising on intention towards advertising. As past studies have shown a positive relation among these three constructs (Korgaonkar *et al.*, 2001; Pollay & Mittal, 1993), the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1: Beliefs of young adults in advertising will positively affect their attitude towards advertising

H2: Attitude of young adults towards advertising will positively affect their intention towards advertising

Due to the differences of culture embedded in ethnic groups, it is postulated that the beliefs of the Malay, Chinese and Dayak young adults in advertising will be different. Consequently, their attitude and intention towards advertising will also be different. Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H3: Effects of beliefs in advertising on attitude towards advertising will be

significantly different among young adults according to ethnicity.

H4: Effects of attitude towards advertising on intention towards advertising will be significantly different among young adults according to ethnicity.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Scope of the study

Studies on young-adult consumers have been important in consumer research for many years (Grant & Waite, 2003). Firstly, because they have outgrown adolescence and begun their adulthood, young adults seek to identify and establish their own personalities and behavior (Holbrook & Schindler, 1989). Many of their acts are consolidated to become something permanent throughout their lifetimes (Rogler, 2002). Secondly, young adults can easily influence people around them with their opinions and decisions (Grant & Waite, 2003), and act as change agents in a group or society (Leslie, Sparling, & Owen, 2001). Thirdly, from the marketing point of view, young adults are a specialized market segment that forms a prospective group of people (Feldman, 1999; Moschis, 1987).

One specific group of the young-adult population in Malaysia is university students (De Run, Butt, & Nee, 2010; Mokhlis, 2009). They have always represented a meaningful and substantial segment of the general public, and, as such, it requires a continual and close attention (Beard, 2003). Social, Economic, Cohort </keyword></keywords><dates><year>2003</year></dates><urls></urls></record></Cite></EndNote>. Despite being a multi-ethnic country, Malaysia is formed predominantly by Malays (50.4%), followed by Chinese (24.6%). However, in Sarawak itself, Dayaks are the majority (Statistics Handbook Malaysia, 2010) (Department of Statistics, Malaysia, 2010). As Malay, Chinese and Dayak are three different ethnic groups, and

they have distinctive cultural identities (De Run, 2007). Hence, university students from these ethnic groups are sampled in the study to assess the influence of culture on their attitude towards advertising.

4.2 Data collection and analysis

Students from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) and Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak (SUTS) were selected as the target population in this study. The former is the most populated public university and the latter is the most populated private university with its own campus in Sarawak. Hence, students in these two universities are from all over Malaysia. Those who come from foreign countries and are young adults were not included in the studied population. Using past studies on young adults as references, ages between 18 and 25 were used as a proxy to sample young adults for this study.

Purposive and snowball sampling approaches were used to ensure that the numbers of Malay, Chinese and Dayak students sampled reflect the actual population in Malaysia. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. A seven-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates strongly disagree and 7 indicates strongly agree, was adopted for all items pertaining to beliefs, attitude and intention towards advertising. However, they were randomized to diminish issues with common method variance. After performing a pretest with 50 students, minimal changes were made accordingly. A total of 450 copies were then distributed on the two campuses, and 347 usable copies were later collected. Data were added into a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software.

Compared to customary analysis approaches, which performs only one layer of association between independent and dependent variables at the same time, structural equation modeling (SEM) allows concurrent modeling of relationships among multiple independent and dependent constructs (Gefen, Straub & Boudreau, 2000). There are two approaches to estimate

SEM parameters, namely the covariance-based approach and the variance or component-based approach (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004). Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), which uses a variance-based approach, is increasingly being adopted in various research disciplines, including Marketing, in recent years (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena, 2012). It is particularly useful when the research objective emphasizes prediction and maximizes the variance of key target constructs by different explanatory constructs instead of producing an empirical and universal covariance matrix. Therefore, PLS-SEM can work with a wider sample size and it does not require assumption of data normality (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2011; Hair *et al.*, 2012; Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009; Reinartz,

Haenlein & Henseler, 2009). Given the objectives of the present study, PLS-SEM was considered as the best approach, and the software SmartPLS 2.0 was used to run a path modeling analysis and subsequently a multi-group analysis (MGA) (Ringle, Wende & Will, 2005).

5 RESULTS

5.1 Respondent profile

Table 1 shows the demographic details of 347 young adults sampled for this study. The numbers for Malay, Chinese and Dayak are almost the same, and their age ranged from 18 to 25 years.

TABLE 1 – Respondent profile

Variable		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	145	41.8
	Female	202	58.2
Ethnicity	Malay	110	31.7
	Chinese	122	35.2
	Dayak	115	33.1
Age	18	31	8.9
	19	21	6.1
	20	64	18.4
	21	81	23.3
	22	40	11.5
	23	40	11.5
	24	32	9.2
	25	38	11.0

5.2 Measurement model

All constructs in the overall model satisfy the requirements for composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach alpha greater than 0.70 (Gefen *et al.*, 2000; Nunnally, 1978). Acceptable convergent validity and discriminant validity, whereby each loading is greater than 0.50, average

variance extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.50 and square root of AVE is greater than each correlation coefficient, are all achieved, as shown in Table 2a and Table 2b (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Chin, 1998; Hair *et al.*, 2011).

TABLE 2A – Overall convergent validity

Construct	Items	Loadings	AVE ^a	CR ^b	Alpha
Product Information (INF)	INF1	0.818	0.725	0.888	0.809
	INF2	0.851			
	INF3	0.885			
Social Role/Image (SOL)	SOL1	0.837	0.699	0.874	0.786
	SOL2	0.823			
	SOL3	0.848			
Hedonism/Pleasure (HED)	HED1	0.740	0.665	0.856	0.750
	HED2	0.846			
	HED3	0.856			
Good for Economy (ECO)	ECO1	0.882	0.716	0.883	0.802
	ECO2	0.788			
	ECO3	0.866			
Materialism (MAT) ^R	MAT1	0.692	0.677	0.893	0.848
	MAT2	0.846			
	MAT3	0.868			
	MAT4	0.872			
Falsity/No Sense (FAL) ^R	FAL1	0.895	0.751	0.900	0.834
	FAL2	0.888			
	FAL3	0.814			
Value Corruption (COR) ^R	COR1	0.935	0.841	0.914	0.808
	COR2	0.899			
Attitude (ATT)	ATT1	0.829	0.644	0.843	0.728
	ATT2	0.708			
	ATT3	0.861			
Intention (INT)	INT1	0.868	0.825	0.934	0.894
	INT2	0.933			
	INT3	0.922			

Notes. ^a Average variance extracted (AVE) = (sum of the square of factor loadings)/{(sum of the square of factor loadings) + (sum of the error variances)}

^b Composite reliability (CR) = (square of the sum of factor loadings)/{(square of the sum of factor loadings) + (square of the sum of error variances)}

^R indicates a reverse-coding used; therefore, Materialism should read as Not Materialistic, Falsity as Truthfulness and Value Corruption as Not Corrupting to Values

TABLE 2B – Overall discriminant validity

	ATT	COL	ECO	FAL	HED	INT	MAT	INF	SOC
ATT	0.803								
COR	0.110	0.917							
ECO	0.537	0.086	0.846						
FAL	0.224	0.546	0.131	0.867					
HED	0.473	-0.023	0.447	0.019	0.812				
INT	0.423	-0.087	0.261	0.067	0.366	0.908			
MAT	0.082	0.607	-0.030	0.563	-0.086	-0.071	0.823		
INF	0.529	-0.021	0.519	0.021	0.508	0.259	-0.104	0.852	
SOL	0.381	-0.089	0.371	-0.009	0.527	0.397	-0.128	0.506	0.836

Note. Diagonals represent the square root of the AVE while off-diagonals represent correlations.

In order to perform MGA according to ethnicity in a later stage, convergent validity and discriminant validity for each ethnic group were also tested to ensure the consistency and rigor of the measuring instrument. Table 3a and 3b

show that the criteria pertaining to AVE and CR are met. Although the Cronbach alpha value for attitude of the Dayak group is below 0.70, the construct is retained due to acceptable AVE and CR values.

TABLE 3A – Convergent validity by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Construct	Items	AVE ^a	CR ^b	Alpha
Malay	Product Information (INF)	3	0.739	0.894	0.823
	Social Role/Image (SOL)	3	0.673	0.860	0.767
	Hedonism/Pleasure (HED)	3	0.672	0.860	0.756
	Good for Economy (ECO)	3	0.687	0.868	0.772
	Materialism (MAT) ^R	4	0.514	0.737	0.817
	Falsity/No Sense (FAL) ^R	3	0.706	0.877	0.816
	Value Corruption (COR) ^R	2	0.762	0.862	0.792
	Attitude (ATT)	3	0.637	0.838	0.718
	Intention (INT)	3	0.834	0.938	0.900
	Chinese	Product Information (INF)	3	0.776	0.912
Social Role/Image (SOL)		3	0.666	0.857	0.759
Hedonism/Pleasure (HED)		3	0.702	0.875	0.792
Good for Economy (ECO)		3	0.747	0.899	0.832
Materialism (MAT) ^R		4	0.517	0.794	0.816
Falsity/No Sense (FAL)^R		3	0.745	0.897	0.831
Value Corruption (COR) ^R		2	0.873	0.932	0.856
Attitude (ATT)		3	0.721	0.886	0.809
Intention (INT)		3	0.817	0.930	0.890
Product Information (INF)		3	0.664	0.855	0.754
Dayak	Social Role/Image (SOL)	3	0.724	0.887	0.812
	Hedonism/Pleasure (HED)	3	0.627	0.832	0.706
	Good for Economy (ECO)	3	0.713	0.881	0.800
	Materialism (MAT) ^R	4	0.732	0.916	0.880
	Falsity/No Sense (FAL)^R	3	0.764	0.907	0.855
	Value Corruption (COR) ^R	2	0.807	0.893	0.776
	Attitude (ATT)	3	0.599	0.816	0.671
	Intention (INT)	3	0.823	0.933	0.892

Notes.^a Average variance extracted (AVE) = (sum of the square of factor loadings)/{(sum of the square of factor loadings) + (sum of error variances)}

^b Composite reliability (CR) = (square of the sum of factor loadings)/{(square of the sum of factor loadings) + (square of the sum of error variances)}

^R indicates a reverse-coding used; therefore, Materialism should read as Not Materialistic, Falsity as Truthfulness and Value Corruption as Not Corrupting to Values

TABLE 3B – Discriminant validity by ethnicity

Ethnicity		ATT	COL	ECO	FAL	HED	INT	MAT	INF	SOC
Malay	ATT	0.798								
	COR	0.055	0.873							
	ECO	0.549	0.071	0.829						
	FAL	0.151	0.611	0.139	0.840					
	HED	0.458	-0.049	0.387	0.095	0.820				
	INT	0.570	-0.014	0.538	0.081	0.484	0.913			
	MAT	0.435	-0.169	0.291	-0.034	0.424	0.321	0.717		
	INF	-0.108	0.490	-0.077	0.494	0.000	-0.175	-0.067	0.860	
	SOL	0.411	-0.100	0.386	-0.032	0.578	0.622	0.466	-0.163	0.820
Chinese	ATT	0.849								
	COR	0.174	0.934							
	ECO	0.515	0.136	0.864						
	FAL	0.360	0.514	0.187	0.863					
	HED	0.488	0.159	0.487	0.049	0.838				
	INT	0.580	0.025	0.470	0.001	0.548	0.904			
	MAT	0.361	0.032	0.179	0.187	0.322	0.160	0.719		
	INF	0.089	0.518	-0.003	0.490	0.140	0.011	-0.064	0.881	
	SOL	0.314	0.010	0.329	0.011	0.459	0.423	0.254	-0.066	0.816
Dayak	ATT	0.774								
	COR	0.123	0.898							
	ECO	0.552	0.063	0.844						
	FAL	0.224	0.504	0.138	0.874					
	HED	0.497	-0.162	0.476	0.013	0.792				
	INT	0.457	-0.092	0.547	0.062	0.496	0.907			
	MAT	0.477	-0.150	0.320	0.077	0.362	0.293	0.856		
	INF	0.166	0.705	-0.028	0.500	-0.233	-0.191	-0.112	0.815	
	SOL	0.429	-0.187	0.411	0.045	0.555	0.497	0.442	-0.192	0.851

Note. Diagonals represent the square root of the AVE while the off-diagonals represent the correlations

5.2 Structural model

Bootstrapping was used to determine whether path relationships for overall and ethnicity-based models are significant or not.

Bootstrap sub-samples with 5,000 cases were created to allow the procedure to estimate the model for each subsample (Hair *et al.*, 2011). The t-values for each path relationship and decision to hypothetical testing are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4 – Path coefficients

Ethnicity	Path Relationship	Beta Value	Std. Error	t-value	Decision
Overall	INF >ATT	0.265	0.061	4.378***	Supported
	SOL >ATT	0.050	0.055	0.951	Not supported
	HED>ATT	0.189	0.057	3.300***	Supported
	ECO >ATT	0.285	0.066	4.222***	Supported
	MAT >ATT	0.070	0.062	1.112	Not supported
	FAL >ATT	0.154	0.056	2.752***	Supported
	COR > ATT	-0.018	0.057	0.447	Not supported
	ATT > INT	0.429	0.053	8.065***	Supported
Malay	INF >ATT	0.300	0.130	2.305**	Supported
	SOL >ATT	-0.013	0.116	0.114	Not supported
	HED>ATT	0.200	0.110	1.827**	Supported
	ECO >ATT	0.292	0.098	2.997***	Supported
	MAT >ATT	-0.099	0.124	0.796	Not supported
	FAL >ATT	0.092	0.134	0.684	Not supported
	COR > ATT	0.039	0.117	0.335	Not supported
	ATT > INT	0.435	0.114	3.814***	Supported
Chinese	INF >ATT	0.402	0.089	4.499***	Supported
	SOL >ATT	-0.011	0.088	0.126	Not supported
	HED>ATT	0.195	0.101	1.936**	Supported
	ECO >ATT	0.166	0.102	1.629*	Supported
	MAT >ATT	-0.120	0.100	1.206	Not supported
	FAL >ATT	0.394	0.081	4.866**	Supported
	COR > ATT	-0.030	0.092	0.325	Not supported
	ATT > INT	0.361	0.088	4.096**	Supported
Dayak	INF >ATT	0.146	0.105	1.401*	Supported
	SOL >ATT	0.132	0.099	1.327*	Supported
	HED>ATT	0.275	0.090	3.048***	Supported
	ECO >ATT	0.293	0.122	2.415**	Supported
	MAT >ATT	0.307	0.131	2.347**	Supported
	FAL >ATT	0.035	0.097	0.361	Not supported
	COR > ATT	-0.046	0.108	0.428	Not supported
	ATT > INT	0.477	0.077	6.196***	Supported

Note. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Given the parameters of PLS-SEM, a blindfolding procedure was performed to assess the predictive capability of the model (Chin, 1998). Cross-validated redundancy (Q^2) estimates latent construct; therefore, it is the sole interest in this study. The Q^2 result higher than 0 indicates

that there is a predictive relevance in overall and ethnicity-based models (Fornell & Cha, 1994). R squared (R^2) values for attitude and intention are found to be substantial and moderate, respectively (Cohen, 1988). Findings for the models are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5 – R² and Cross-validated Redundancy

Ethnicity	Constructs	R ²	CV-Comm (H ²)	CV-Red (Q ²)
Overall	ATT	0.437	0.298	0.262
	INT	0.179	0.822	0.145
Malay	ATT	0.444	0.302	0.209
	INT	0.189	0.800	0.145
Chinese	ATT	0.536	0.422	0.351
	INT	0.130	0.784	0.095
Dayak	ATT	0.476	0.234	0.241
	INT	0.228	0.791	0.187

To rigorously compare the results across three ethnic groups, t-statistics were calculated to evaluate the differences in path coefficients across models. A procedure described by Chin, Marcolin

and Newsted (2003), as shown in Figure 3, was used to perform MGA. As there are three ethnic groups, three separate comparisons were tested in the analysis.

$$t = \frac{Path_{group_1} - Path_{group_2}}{\left[\sqrt{\frac{(m-1)^2}{(m+n-2)} * S.E.^2_{group1} + \frac{(n-1)^2}{(m+n-2)} * S.E.^2_{group2}} \right] * \left[\sqrt{\frac{1}{m} + \frac{1}{n}} \right]}$$

FIGURE 3 – Formula for Multi-group analysis

Table 6a shows the comparison between Malay and Chinese young adults and t-value results. Only the effect of falsity on attitude

towards advertising is found to be significantly different.

TABLE 6A – Multi-group Comparison between Malay and Chinese young adults

Relationship	Malay		Chinese		t-value
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta	Std. Error	
INF > ATT	0.304	0.134	0.402	0.089	0.632
SOL > ATT	-0.013	0.116	-0.011	0.088	0.014
HED > ATT	0.202	0.104	0.195	0.100	0.052
ECO > ATT	0.292	0.107	0.166	0.101	0.860
MAT > ATT	-0.099	0.124	-0.120	0.100	0.134
FAL > ATT	0.073	0.134	0.394	0.078	2.175**
COR > ATT	0.039	0.117	-0.030	0.092	0.472
ATT > INT	0.435	0.111	0.361	0.080	0.556

Note. * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Table 6b shows the comparison between Malay and Dayak young adults and t-value results.

Only the effect of materialism on attitude towards advertising is found to be significantly different.

TABLE 6B – Multi-group comparison between Malay and Dayak young adults

Relationship	Malay		Dayak		t-value
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta	Std. Error	
INF > ATT	0.304	0.134	0.146	0.105	0.946
SOL > ATT	-0.013	0.116	0.132	0.099	0.959
HED > ATT	0.202	0.104	0.275	0.093	0.524
ECO > ATT	0.292	0.107	0.293	0.121	0.006
MAT > ATT	-0.099	0.124	0.307	0.131	2.208***
FAL > ATT	0.073	0.134	0.035	0.089	0.246
COR > ATT	0.039	0.117	-0.046	0.108	0.533
ATT > INT	0.435	0.111	0.477	0.078	0.320

Note. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 6c shows the comparison between Chinese and Dayak young adults and t-value results. Contrary to the previous comparisons, the effects of product information, materialism and falsity are found to be significantly different.

TABLE 6C – Multi-group comparison between Chinese and Dayak young adults

Relationship	Chinese		Dayak		t-value
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta	Std. Error	
INF > ATT	0.402	0.089	0.146	0.105	1.860**
SOL > ATT	-0.011	0.088	0.132	0.099	1.081
HED > ATT	0.195	0.100	0.275	0.093	0.589
ECO > ATT	0.166	0.101	0.293	0.121	0.806
MAT > ATT	-0.120	0.100	0.307	0.131	2.587***
FAL > ATT	0.394	0.078	0.035	0.089	3.037***
COR > ATT	-0.030	0.092	-0.046	0.108	0.113
ATT > INT	0.361	0.080	0.477	0.078	1.043

Note. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Relations between beliefs, attitude and intention

The initial findings have shown a link between beliefs, attitude and intention towards advertising among young adults in a holistic manner. Intention towards advertising is found to be significantly predicted by attitude towards advertising, and such attitude is also significantly predicted by beliefs in advertising. However, not all beliefs in advertising are found to have a significant effect on attitude. From seven belief

factors, the overall model indicates that only product information, hedonism, good for a country's economy and falsity are found to be significant antecedents to attitude. This largely corresponds to earlier studies conducted in the Malaysian context (De Run & Ting, 2013; Munusamy & Wong, 2007; Rashid & Sidin, 1987; Tan & Chia, 2007). It is therefore supposed that Malaysian young adults, like the general public, maintain their belief that advertising mainly provides information. This relates well to their concern about the truthfulness or falsity of advertisement. Moreover, being young adults, they generally find advertising with hedonic or

amusing elements more appealing. Furthermore, they also tend to relate advertising to economic welfare. For that reason, the first and the second hypotheses of the study are supported.

When the overall model is divided into three models based on ethnicity, the findings are generally the same, but they provide more details. Product information, hedonism and good for economy are shown to be consistent predictors of attitude towards advertising across ethnic groups. Nevertheless, falsity is only appears in Chinese young adults as an added determinant of attitude towards advertising. In a similar way, the beliefs of social role and materialism are found to have a specific effect on the attitude of Dayak young adults. It is therefore evident that, despite being largely similar in their beliefs in advertising, Chinese and Dayak young adults' attitude towards advertising can be predicted by additional belief factors. Hence, it is necessary to look at the findings of the latter stage.

6.2 Multi-group comparison according to ethnicity

The findings of MGA show that Malay and Chinese young adults are largely equal in terms of beliefs in advertising. The only difference between them is seen in the Chinese's concern on the truthfulness of advertising. Similarly, the views of Malay and Dayak young adults on advertising are also mostly the same, except for materialism, which seems to have a greater impact on Dayak's young adults' attitude towards advertising. Three out of seven belief factors, namely product information, materialism and falsity, are found to be significantly different between Chinese and Dayak young adults. Moreover, there is no significant difference in the effect of attitude on intention towards advertising according to ethnicity. Considering this, it is concluded that the third and fourth hypotheses are not supported in this study.

Regardless of the profound influence of ethnicity and culture on people's belief system and pattern of living, the findings imply that

all young adults have common beliefs about advertising. As such, their attitude and intentions towards advertising are similar. This contradicts postulations made by an earlier study, which states that young adults' attitude towards advertising may be different due to socio-cultural differences in Malaysia (Rashid & Sidin, 1987). This study supports the results of a recent study, which posits that their belief factors are consistent across ethnic groups (Munusamy & Wong, 2007). Over the years, the drastic changes in demographics and technological environment have caused people to begin to share their resources and adopt different things in a gradual process (Al-Rodhan, 2006). This results in more interdependence, bringing people, cultures, beliefs and practices to a greater proximity (Sorrells, 2012). Secondly, the findings suggest that the Malays, being the most populated ethnic group in Malaysia, are most likely to be dominant in exerting their culture in a multi-ethnic and cultural country (Brumbaugh, 2002; De Run, 2007). As a result, the non-dominant groups, Chinese and Dayaks, will resort to socialize in their cultures and that of the majority. This clarifies the little difference found between the beliefs of Malay young adults and others in advertising compared to the difference between Chinese and Dayak young adults.

6.3 Managerial implication

Culture has an influential role in forming and bringing change in attitude and behavior. It provides insights into the rationale as to what drives people to behave and why. Hence, understanding ethnic identities and their respective cultural values continues to be a key to success of social marketing programs (Raval & Subramanian, 2004). However, the dynamism and complexity of the society has directed people towards more exposure and interaction. This may well harbor or expedite the process of acculturation as individuals begin to learn and adopt cultural values and practices from one another (Sam & Berry, 2010). As such, it is imperative for managers and marketing departments to monitor

and apprehend what sets ethnic groups apart and what integrates them before approaching them to ensure a favorable response.

This study highlights the importance of understanding and keeping close track of Malay, Chinese and Dayak young adults' views on advertising. This will improve communication in advertising activities by conveying the right message to the right people in a community, despite cultural diversity. Since advertising will continue to be one of the main choices of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) employed by organizations to demonstrate their superiority over their competitors, knowing more about young adults' attitudes towards advertising and the implication of ethnicity and culture will surely give them an edge over others (Munusamy & Wong, 2007). Such knowledge will also help to predict their attitude towards specific advertisement, thus reinforcing the organization's competitive advantage. Meticulously strategizing marketing activities by carefully treading between the lines of what makes ethnic groups different and what is shared and assimilated by them may prove pivotal to advertising success.

7 CONCLUSION

The study has utilized TRA to provide a theoretical explanation to attitude towards advertising. Particularly, the use of PLS-SEM has elucidated the views of young adults from three ethnic groups in Malaysia considering a structural model to understand the implication of culture on the topic. While TRA is validated in the context of young adults' attitude towards advertising, beliefs, attitude and intention towards advertising demonstrated by Malay, Chinese and Dayak young adults are found to be similar. Despite the impact of ethnicity and culture, there is generally no significant difference in the effect of beliefs in advertising on attitude towards advertising, and subsequently intention towards advertising.

This study, however, is limited in two aspects. First, it only considers attitude towards

advertising in general. As such, it may have restricted the diversity of views according to different cultural backgrounds. Secondly, the collection of data only from university students in Sarawak may have restricted the findings, not being able to be applied to all young adults in Malaysia. Therefore, a more comprehensive and nationwide study is needed to assess the views of young adults on advertising in general and also specific advertising in order to articulate the implication of cultural differences on this matter. Comparative studies among adolescents, young and full adults can also be conducted to determine the effects of generational gaps across different cohorts.

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