

# Consumers Attitude towards Mobile Advertising: An Empirical Study in Indian Context

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**Abstract**—With the advent of technology driven era, firms are introducing with innovative channels for transmitting advertising messages directly to consumers who are becoming busier and are more difficult to reach. Mobile advertising supported by mobile devices is gaining popularity which enables firms to communicate with consumers without time or location barriers. As the paradigm is shifting from mass marketing to one-to-one marketing, the ultimate channel that evolves is mobile advertising. In recent years, marketing activities through personal mobile devices has been widely carried out in India making it to change consumer's attitude toward mobile advertising. The present research investigates the consumer's attitude toward mobile advertising. The study conceptualizes and tests a theoretical framework that investigates the factors that induce customer's attitude towards mobile advertising. The study is based on 244 respondents and analysis confirms the conceptual model that consumers attitude were positively influenced by informativeness, credibility, utility and permission based issues. Further, irritation and privacy aspects are negatively related with attitude regarding mobile advertising. Present research tries to add to the growing body of knowledge that help marketers in developing appropriate strategies. This research offers practical implications for marketing managers interested in targeting mobile advertising campaigns. Granting consumer's permission is an important factor and is proved in our study. Marketers should take care of number and frequency of messages being sent or prior take approval from consumers in order to avoid consumers being irritated by their advertising campaigns.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Across the globe, the way people communicate with each other has dramatically changed with the introduction of mobile phones [11]. The penetration and adoption of mobile phones is far beyond anyone imagination, reaching a record adoption rate of 100% in many western and Asian countries [21]. Mobile phone is one of a handful device that has gained consumers acceptance in a very short period of time [3]. The users of mobile devices have been rapidly increasing. In India, there are 953.34 million mobile phone users by the end of January 2015 (TRAI), which signifies a huge market for personal advertising campaigns. In addition, the internet users have reached around 300 million (December, 2014) and will expect to reach 500 million by the end of 2016 (IAMAI). The high penetration and consumer adoption of mobile phones

represents a huge marketing opportunity to reach and serve consumers anytime, anywhere. One of the major applications of mobile phones is that they are heavily used for marketing purposes [25]. With the introduction of smartphones marketers can develop a wider range of pull based services and employ a larger set of marketing techniques [24].

Mobile phones have become an important part of daily lives, rarely used by any other person than its owner making a personal relationship almost as an intimate accessory [5]. Now-a-days it's regarded as a status symbol and consumers carry their mobile phones within reach making it an ideal medium for direct and personalized customer communication. Transmitting SMS based advertising messages to consumers through their handheld devices in particular has been very successful [33]. Global brands such as McDonalds, Coca-Cola, Volvo, Nike, and Disney have already begun to exploit mobile marketing concepts [29].

However, although mobile marketing has matured in most of European and western countries, it's still underdeveloped in many Asian and Middle Eastern countries [1]. In India, mobile marketing is still in its early stages of development and represents a huge opportunity in front of marketers, but big challenge is to exploit this opportunity. Many enterprises have already paid attention to the application of mobile devices in the commercial field. One really big advantage of mobile advertising is that it is highly interactive, enable marketers and advertisers to interact directly and engage consumers in two way communication [5]. The mobile phone exhibits all necessary characteristics that are required to establish a direct dialogue between the advertiser and potential customers [5].

Being able to receive advertising messages at the right moment and place can enhance perceived usefulness, increased consumers receptivity to promotions that arrive on their mobile phones [22]. Liu et al. found significant increase in mobile advertising budgets as marketers realize this as a big opportunity [19]. Shifting from mass marketing to one-to-one marketing further accelerates the need of mobile advertising [23], leads to the phenomena that marketing activities should be tailored according to consumers' needs and tastes [4].

Prior studies [33, 25] emphasise that attitude towards mobile advertising is an important construct for mobile marketing research because of its significant impact on consumer intention to accept mobile advertising. Rabiei et al. explained that sending messages via email leads to delete it promptly without browsing [25]. Also when television commercial start, many would change the channel while nearly all users read the mobile advertising messages at least once. Which implies that attitude toward using mobile advertising is higher than other media. So, factors leading to mobile advertising acceptance can be considered important in respect of mobile advertising success. In order to get success, a better understanding of these issues is critical to the effective use of mobile marketing.

Communication through this medium is relatively cheap and easy in delivering messages but it should not be intrusive which often results in consumers' ignorance and irritation [20]. It's the choice of customers whether to read, eliminate or save mobile advertising messages. Therefore a thorough understanding of factors that influence consumers' attitude could help marketers in developing mobile marketing strategies. Mobile advertising seems a bright future, but the extent of acceptance of mobile advertising as a marketing tool remain unclear due to various hurdles, including feeling of privacy and irritation [30]. Granting consumer's permission is one way to solve the problem as it is closely linked with the concept of mobile marketing and it's assumed that permission is pivotal for the success of advertising campaigns [3]. Designing an effective advertising campaign requires a thorough understanding of this concept. If marketers want to use mobile advertising as an efficient communication channel, it's imperative to know how consumers perceive mobile advertising messages and factors that affect their attitude toward mobile advertising.

Attitude toward mobile advertising has been discussed from a long time. Several researchers tried to find a link between consumer's attitude and advertising. Zano finds that consumers generally have negative attitudes toward advertising [35]. However, there are some other researchers who conclude that consumers have positive attitudes [28]. As a result, before choosing to employ advertising, it's vital to identify variables which affect the acceptance of mobile advertising. Based on that, the primary purpose of this paper is to investigate consumers' attitude in respect to mobile advertising and how to reap benefits of internet technology and mobile communication in mobile advertising. Several researchers conduct the study in western countries [33, 34, 24, 19], while this study is conducted in context of Indian consumers.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. In the next section we present a brief review of literature, followed by a discussion of our conceptual framework and hypothesis. We then describe the research method. Finally, we round off by discussing results the implications for research and practice.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies highlighted a vast number of advantages of mobile advertising and consider this as a medium that allows real time communication with consumers anytime and anywhere [33]. Leppaniemi et al. found that academicians use different terms such as mobile advertising, wireless marketing, wireless advertising and mobile marketing which all refers to the mobile marketing and found 21 different definitions of mobile marketing [18]. In this paper we used term "Mobile advertising" for our research purpose. Many scholars have already contributed for the research on consumers' attitude toward mobile advertising [33, 13, 5, 34]. Personalization, uniqueness, interactivity, high penetration rate, high response and low cost were the main factors of mobile advertising [5]. Consumer trust and privacy are also significant factors that affect mobile advertising [1]. Carroll et al. finds that permission, delivery, content and control were the main reasons that encourage consumers' acceptance of mobile advertising [7]. Similarly, Haghirian and Madkberger found advertising value and content are the main factors that consumers pay more attention an influence their acceptance [13]. On the point of permission, Godin pointed out that messages that were permitted by them gather more attention, rather than messages they receive from companies which they are not subscribed with [12].

### 2.1 Attitude toward Mobile Advertising

Attitude is an important concept in research on marketing and information system [33]. Kotler stated that "an attitude is a person enduring favourable and unfavourable evaluations emotional feelings, and action tendencies toward some object or idea" [17]. Attitude toward using mobile advertising is the user attitude toward observing advertisements that are received via mobile phones [25]. In general, consumers' attitude toward advertising is highly familiar, as they are exposed to it on everyday basis and holds a stable and consistent attitude toward advertising [5]. On the other hand, mobile advertising is something new, to which only few consumers have been yet been exposed. From the above literature it is assumed that attitude toward mobile advertising is less stable and easily changeable. The study focuses on identifying consumer attitudes towards mobile advertising. Attitude toward mobile advertising will affect both the success of mobile advertising campaigns and the purchase intention of consumers [34]. Similarly, Bauer et al. finds that consumers' attitude is influenced by information, entertainment and social utility [5]. According to Du Plessis and Rousseau consumers' attitudes consist of three components that is cognition, affect and domain [10]. For the purpose of this study the first component is applicable.

## 3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the existing literature regarding attitude toward mobile advertising, a research framework is constructed to

illustrate the factors that affect consumers' attitude toward mobile advertising. Review of existing literature helps us in identifying theoretical models used in other studies and significant factors that influence attitude toward mobile advertising. In this section we develop our hypothesis and conceptual model based on previous discussion. Rather than testing all the variables, we identify those variables which are very important and have significant effect on consumers' attitude. For our research purpose we find informativeness, utility, permission, irritation, credibility and privacy as value creation factors in mobile advertising, leading to the attitude toward mobile advertising acceptance. (Fig. 1)

### 3.1 Informativeness

In context of this study, informativeness can be defined as the extent to which the advertisement medium provides relevant and helpful information to users [9]. One of the main reasons of consumer acceptance of mobile advertising is informativeness. Chawdhury et al. find that consumers do not feel annoyed if mobile advertisers present advertisement with appropriate information [8]. Purchasing intentions by consumers significantly increases when advertisers provide funny and entertaining messages which are informative and are relevant to the target group [27]. Based upon the relationship between informativeness and consumers attitude toward mobile advertising, the following hypothesis can be stated for this study:

H1: Informativeness of mobile advertising is positively related to consumers' attitude toward mobile advertising

### 3.2 Utility

Consumers carry their mobile phones almost everywhere, which creates opportunities for both marketers and consumers. Consumers get relevant information anytime, anywhere and marketers directly advertise their products to the consumers. Utility can be defined as perceived benefits from mobile advertising messages. Kavassalis et al. claims that mobile advertising will be accepted only when consumers perceive benefit in receiving advertising messages on their mobile phone [16]. Bauer et al. found that perceived utility was the main motive behind consumers' acceptance of mobile advertising [5]. On the above discussion, it's concluded that consumer attitude toward mobile advertising will be more positive if they perceive the utility of marketing service.

H2: the more utility consumers perceive the more positive their attitude toward mobile advertising

### 3.2 Permission

In many countries mobile advertising is permission based by law in order to keep mobile phones clear of spam, but in India there is a lack of such kind of laws. Permitted messages include messages that have been requested by the consumer as a part of an opt-in-system [15]. For instance, consumers fill their mobile phone number on a website and agree to receive

information of interest. Sultan and Rohm found that granting permission from the recipients before sending messages has resulted in higher acceptance and effectiveness of mobile advertising [30]. A similar study on e-mail users found out that half of respondents (58%) opened only those e-mail messages whom they had granted permission [31]. Based on the literature it can be stated that permission will have an impact on consumers' attitude toward mobile advertising.

H3: Granting Permission is positively associated with consumers' attitude toward mobile advertising.

### 3.3 Irritation

Frequently harassing consumers without prior permission leads to irritation. Ducoffe considers irritations as a result of techniques that annoy, offend, insult or are overly manipulative [9]. Tsang et al. found that consumer perceptions are negatively correlated with their attitudes toward mobile advertising [33]. Waldt et al. studied irritation as an emotional outcome and conclude that it is a negative factor that influence attitude toward mobile advertising [34]. Therefore, we conclude that irritation caused by mobile advertising negatively affect consumers' attitudes.

H4: Irritation is negatively associated with consumers' attitudes towards mobile advertising

### 3.4 Credibility

Credibility refers to the truthfulness and believability of advertising in general. Advertising credibility is critical for consumers as consumers acquire time critical information and tied to a remote event or transaction [2]. Credibility of advertisements is further critical because consumers make decisions on the basis of uncertain information. Researchers found positive correlation between credibility of an advertisement and consumers' attitude toward the advertisement [6, 33]. On the basis of above arguments we propose that credibility positively affects consumers' attitude toward mobile advertising. H5: credibility is positively associated with consumers' attitude toward mobile advertising

### 3.5 Privacy

Finally, discussing the privacy issue, which is most significant and influential issue in internet based environment. Consumers trust in the use of personal data might affect their acceptance of mobile advertising. Rust et al. identify privacy as a critical issue in marketing that has assumed greater significance in recent years [26]. The risk associated with mobile advertising is mainly perceived as one of data security [5]. Generally new media services users tend to have concerns about manipulation, unauthorized data access, and unwanted tracking of usage patterns. On the basis of above discussion we conclude that relationship between privacy and attitude toward mobile advertising can be assumed as being negative.

H6: there is a negative relation between Privacy being compromised and consumers' attitude towards mobile advertising.

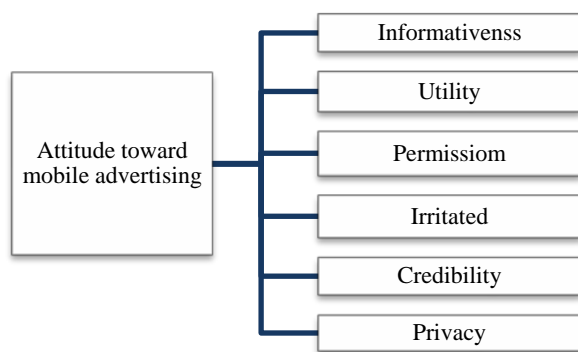


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

##### 4.1 Sampling method and respondents' demographic information

The study targeted 260 respondents based on convenience sampling technique. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. Male respondents formed the majority of respondents, although the gender composition is almost equal. The age groups are somewhat spread, with the majority of respondents are from 21 to 30 age group. About 43.4 % respondents possess postgraduate or more. To ensure accurate findings, 16 invalid responses were eliminated and therefore 244 valid responses were analysed at the end.

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents (n=244)

| Characteristic | Descriptor                        | Distribution | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| Age            | Less than 20 years                | 42           | 17.2       |
|                | 21 to 30 years                    | 98           | 40.2       |
|                | 31 to 40 years                    | 56           | 23.0       |
|                | 41 years or older                 | 48           | 19.7       |
| Gender         | Male                              | 140          | 57.6       |
|                | Female                            | 104          | 42.6       |
| Education      | Undergraduate or lower            | 138          | 56.6       |
|                | Master's, Doctorate, Professional | 106          | 43.4       |
| Occupation     | Student                           | 74           | 30.3       |
|                | Employed                          | 124          | 50.8       |
|                | Unemployed                        | 46           | 18.9       |

##### 4.2 Survey instrument

The survey was carried out by using a self-administered questionnaire which is divided into two major parts. The first part, adapted from different studies, i.e. Informativeness and irritation [9], utility [19], Credibility [20], privacy [20], permission and overall attitude toward mobile advertising [32]. The questionnaire was based on the conceptual model discussed in previous section (see Fig. 1). Most of the

questions were on Five-point likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly agree" (5) for measuring different independent variables. The second part collected the respondent's demographic data, such as age, gender, education and occupation.

##### 4.3 Validity and reliability analysis

Prior to its dissemination, the questionnaire was pretested on a small sample (n=20) of respondents. After the pre-test, some questions were eliminated and wording of some questions was modified. In addition, the questionnaire construct validity was also measured. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was applied to assess data reliability. The results are shown in Table: 3 and the value greater than 0.7 is acceptable. Values in the table indicate that data collected from the survey are suitable and reliable for further. All hypothesis testing and reliability checks were completed using SPSS software version 17.

Table 2: Reliability of data (Cronbach's alpha)

| Factor           | Alpha | Factor     | Alpha |
|------------------|-------|------------|-------|
| Overall attitude | 0.91  | Permission | 0.87  |
| Informativeness  | 0.84  | Believable | 0.79  |
| Utility          | 0.75  | Privacy    | 0.81  |
| Irritated        | 0.82  |            |       |

#### 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

##### 5.1 Factors affecting attitudes

Having assured about the validity and reliability of data we tested the proposed conceptual model (Fig. 1) using correlation and regression analysis. The analysis shows various variables that affect consumers attitude toward mobile advertising. Results of the estimated model show that all six independent variables significantly influence attitude toward mobile advertising. The result implies that privacy and irritation negatively affect the customers' attitude. The result from regression analysis showed that the model was significant at 0.001 significance level (F= 29.300, p<0.001). The value of R<sup>2</sup> is 0.426, which tells us that mobile advertising can account for 42.6% variation in consumers attitude. Our findings suggest that consumers have favourable attitudes toward advertising. This is also consistent with previous literature about consumer's attitude toward advertising [33, 5, 34]

Table 3: Regression Analysis (R and R square)

| Model | R        | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. error of estimate |
|-------|----------|----------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1     | 0.635(a) | 0.426    | 0.411             | 0.059                  |

Table 4: R regression analysis (Beta and t values)

| Model      | Standardized coefficients |       | Standardized coefficients | t     | Significance |
|------------|---------------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|--------------|
|            | β                         | SE    |                           |       |              |
| (Constant) | 1.949                     | 0.452 | B                         | 4.316 | .000         |

|                 |        |       |        |       |      |
|-----------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|------|
| Informativeness | 0.159  | 0.070 | 0.127  | 2.277 | .024 |
| Utility         | 0.228  | 0.069 | 0.184  | 3.322 | .001 |
| Permission      | 0.193  | 0.076 | 0.145  | 2.527 | .012 |
| Irritated       | -0.257 | 0.043 | -0.302 | -5.91 | .000 |
| Believable      | 0.348  | 0.065 | 0.303  | 5.333 | .000 |
| Privacy         | -0.274 | 0.068 | -0.204 | -4.03 | .000 |

Dependent Variable: Overall attitude toward mobile advertising

Table 5: Correlation analysis

| Independent variables | O A    | Info   | Utility | Permission | Irritated | Believable |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|---------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Informativeness       | .377** | 1      |         |            |           |            |
| Utility               | .239** | .178** | 1       |            |           |            |
| Permission            | .272** | .129*  | .38**   | 1          |           |            |
| Irritated             | -.39** | -.17** | .57     | .022       | 1         |            |
| Believable            | .424** | 0.38** | -0.12   | 0.28**     | .15**     | 1          |
| Privacy               | -.23** | -.14** | .011    | .189**     | .168**    | .05        |

[\*\* correlation is significant at 0.001 levels (2-tailed), \* correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2-tailed)]

Hypothesis 1 contends that there is a positive and direct relationship between informativeness and consumers attitude toward mobile advertising. The path Coefficient ( $\beta=0.159$ ) is strong with a high t value (2.277) indicating that informativeness of mobile advertising has a strong positive association with attitude. However from table 5, value (0.377\*\*) indicate that there is moderate correlation between the informativeness and overall attitude of consumers. Thus, hypothesis 1 receives significant support from the data. Providing information is one of the main functions of advertising and this competitive environment, the only mantra to conduct a successful advertising campaign is to provide attractive and useful information to customers.

Hypothesis 2 proposes that utility from mobile advertising significantly affects consumers' attitude. What we find is that the relationship is positive and significant. The path coefficient ( $\beta=0.228$ ) indicate that there is strong association between utility and attitude. However, correlation is also significant between (0.239\*\*) these variables. The results indicate that it gives utility from advertising messages, the attitude of consumers strongly depends on the message characteristics, so message should be carefully developed which gives benefits to consumers.

Hypothesis 3 argues that permission prior to mobile advertising campaigns have a positive influence on consumer's attitudes. The path is positive ( $\beta=0.193$ ,  $t=2.527$ ) supporting the hypothesis with a correlation of 0.272\*\* between these two variables. The importance of getting consumers permission has been proved in prior studies also [3]. Thus, it's perceived that permission based mobile

advertising is important to maintain good customer relationships.

Hypothesis 4 hypothesize that irritation in consumers is negatively related to the attitude toward mobile advertising. The path coefficients for these hypothesis are quite similar ( $\beta=-0.257$ ,  $t=-5.917$ ). Generally people who get irritated tend to view mobile advertising negatively. The correlation (-0.393\*\*) also indicate that there is strong negative association between irritation and consumers attitude.

Hypothesis 5 argues that credibility on the marketer or in the messages of marketers is positively associated with consumer's attitude toward mobile advertising. The results from the study also support the hypothesis ( $\beta=0.348$ ,  $t=5.333$ ). Credibility is one of the crucial factors in establishing customer-seller relationship when consumers believe that mobile advertising is credible, they tend to have positive attitudes toward advertising. Results from table 5 also indicate strong correlation (0.42\*\*) between the variables

Hypothesis 6 asserts that the privacy issues significantly affects consumers attitude toward mobile advertising. The relationship was found to be negative ( $\beta=-0.274$ ,  $t=-4.033$ ). Consumers who consider privacy very valuable have a negative attitude towards mobile advertising. The result from correlation analysis (-0.230\*\*) also supports this as there is negative correlation between the variables. They consider that if privacy is compromised, it would lead negative effects.

## 6. RESEARCH AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

To exploit the full potential of mobile marketing, one may need to understand the consumers and the mobile marketing ecosystem. From this study several managerial implications can be drawn. As attitude is the main driver toward mobile advertising, this research makes a number of academic and managerial contributions. The results indicate that informativeness and utility are strongest positive factors regarding consumers' attitude which support previous studies [33,5]. Managers who use mobile advertising campaigns can take advantage of this direct influencer by provide more relevant and timely information including offers, promotions and discounts that are highly valued by consumers.

As far as privacy is concerned, there appears a negative relationship between consumers' attitude and mobile advertising which is in consistent with prior studies [13]. Despite increasing trust and privacy issues and protection of personal data, the study finds that if privacy is being compromised it would result in a negative attitude toward mobile advertising. Irritation emerges as an important factor which negatively affects consumer attitudes. It may be due to extensive messaging, irrelevant messages at inappropriate time. In order to increase usefulness and response rate from the consumers, prior permission should be obtained. One way to resolve this problem is to personalize the messages according to customers' needs and get prior permission to get

maximum participation from the customers. Marketers should try to find a balance between the numbers of messages sent at appropriate time. Similar to previous studies [15, 14] it has been found out that getting permission prior to advertising campaign significantly affects consumers' perception regarding mobile advertising.

Mobile operators need to organize their advertising campaigns in such a way as not to give an impression that this burden is on them. The quality of the message content should be enhanced by making it more entertaining, attractive and rich with quality information. The research has limitations because of small sample size but for practitioners the study highlights the importance of permission and informativeness that helps in conducting successful mobile advertising campaigns.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The main purpose of the article is to determine consumers' attitude towards mobile advertising in the Indian context. In order to achieve this objective, the article constructed a model which includes six independent variables (Informativeness, utility, permission, believability and privacy) and an outcome variable (Attitude toward mobile advertising). The findings of the study show that all the formulated hypotheses were in the same direction as was hypothesized in the study. The present study broadens existing literature by identifying variables that affect consumers' attitude toward mobile advertising and further highlights the need to continue research in this area. Findings in the study strictly indicate that marketers should pay attention to get permission from consumers rather than sending messages in bulk which they don't even read and delete them instantly. Informativeness, irritation and credibility toward mobile advertising are the main variables that affect consumers' attitude. Verification of most of the hypotheses confirms the importance of factors that affect consumers' attitudes. If companies successfully develop trust in consumers, the addition of new communication channels such as mobile phones becomes a promotion mix easier. In the future it is expected that we will see more developed interactive media that will give firms even more competitive edge over competitors.

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