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## **I AM AVOIDING IT! A SENIORS' PERSPECTIVES ABOUT ADVERTISING**

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### **Abstract**

The aims are to analyze (i) the relationship between drivers to ad avoidance among senior viewers and (ii) compare the perceptions about those drivers between TV advertising and YouTube advertising. Findings reveal that irritation seems to be the crucial factor that lead consumers to avoid whacking advertisings. A negative attitude toward advertising and skepticism do not mediate the effect between advertising irritation and avoidance.

***Keywords: seniors consumers, ad avoidance, ad irritation, ad skepticism, attitude toward ad, YouTube, TV advertising***

### **Theoretical Background**

Advertising (ad) avoidance includes all actions by media users that differentially reduce their exposure to ad content. The strategies for avoidance developed by consumer may be classified as cognitive (ignoring), behavioral (leaving the room), or mechanical (changing channels), but

cognitive (ignoring) avoidance has been considered as the most-often used by customers for TV ads (e.g., Moriarty and Everett, 1994).

Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) define skepticism toward advertising as the tendency to disbelieve advertising claims. Attitude is regarded as an individual's internal evaluation of an object. Hoyer and MacInnis (2001) allude that attitude is a relatively global and enduring evaluation of an object, issue, person or action.

Finally, Advertising irritation is defined as the consumers' perception of displeasure and momentary impatience caused by an ad (Aaker and Bruzzone, 1985). Previous research on the subject focused on irritability as a response to disliked commercials (Aaker *et al.*, 1988; Barling and Fullagar, 1983), including the impact it has on the effectiveness of ads aired later on the same program (Gardner, 1985). Thus, five hypotheses are proposed: **H1** (Ad irritation positively influences ad skepticism); **H2** (Ad irritation positively influences ad avoidance); **H3** (Ad irritation negatively influences attitude toward ad); **H4** (Unfavorable attitude toward ad leads to ad avoidance); and **H5** (Ad skepticism positively influences ad avoidance).

## **Method**

A total of 214 fully completed and usable questionnaires (after excluding those with missing values, inconsistent responses or extreme multivariate outliers) were collected from the 300 distributed. The outliers were deleted using the graphic method, with a residual scatter plot in the range of  $\pm 3$  standard deviation. The average age of the sample is 73 years and 64.5% were female. The constructs were measured with multi-item scales (see table 1). All items were measured using a 5-Point Likert-type scale and the questionnaire was composed of 19 items representing the constructs and socio-demographic variables.

## **Conclusions**

The results show that ad irritation has a positive and significant relationship on ad skepticism and especially on ad avoidance. The strength of the relationship between ad irritation and ad avoidance is higher in the case of TV ads. As expected ad irritation leads to a negative attitude toward advertising and this negative attitude is higher in the case of TV ads. Nevertheless, the strength of the relationships between ad attitude and ad avoidance or ad skepticism and ad avoidance are not significant for both TV ad and YouTube ad. Therefore, ad attitude and ad skepticism do not act as mediators between ad irritation and ad avoidance because do not significantly reinforce the effect of ad irritation on ad avoidance.

Those who deal with marketing communication should be aware that senior consumers are using online systems and that they avoid messages that irritate them and are not focused on their issues. However, they are a growing group of consumers that should be taken more in attention. Connected consumers of media on a computer often leave digital fingerprints of their online activities, allowing the opportunity for marketing managers and content providers to better customize an online ad experience that is unique to each individual. Some consumers may see this as intrusive, while others might embrace this targeted approach to their own consumer preferences. As these marketing techniques improve, levels of ad skepticism for those who welcome these algorithmic strategies might decrease overall. In this vein, as more senior consumers become accustomed to this approach and even enjoying it, the advertising effects on the connected viewer could have an overall positive outcome on attitudes toward advertising.

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