

THE ATTITUDES OF GAUTENG USERS TOWARDS SMS ADVERTISING

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ABSTRACT

Short message services (SMS) remain the most frequently used mobile phone service, after normal phone calls, and thus has become a key tool for marketing activities. The increase in attention being accorded to mobile marketing activities in recent management literature prompted this study. The aim of the study is to validate the findings of a previous local study that reported three significant factors that predict consumers' attitudes towards SMS advertising. The study intends to confirm new constructs, validate the three predictors and to investigate whether the three predicting factors reported in the previous study would increase the predictability of consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising compared to the previous study using a regression model. A non-probability quota sampling technique was employed to collect data from the sample using a self-administered questionnaire. Findings from 300 consumers confirmed the new construct and validated the three significant predictors. Ultimately, the regression model increased in predictability compared to the previous framework. The results indicate that SMS advertisements that are attractive, personalised and contain relevant message content are crucial in implementing successful mobile advertising campaigns.

INTRODUCTION

Technology has a significant impact on the marketing strategies of companies, especially on the choice of medium to deliver the marketing message (Van der Valdt, Rebello and Brown, 2009:444). The continuous advancement in technology has led to the increased possibilities of cost effective avenues to sell products and services (Zernigah and Sohail, 2012:645). There is a general agreement among scholars that smartphones are fast becoming an important advertising tool for most marketers (Yang, Kim and Yoo, 2013:1345). Reports indicate that, of the 51 million people in South Africa, 34% own smartphones (PewResearch Center, 2015). The increase in mobile phone ownership has created many advertising opportunities for companies, not only in South Africa, but across the globe.

The rapid mobile penetration rates have opened up more avenues of mobile marketing such as short message service (SMS) advertisements. It has been reported that spending on mobile advertising in South Africa had grown to R189 million in 2012, and it is expected to increase even more to R938 million by 2017 (Wilson, 2013). The exponential growth in mobile advertising has attracted the attention of researchers eager to fully understand factors that influence the adoption of mobile marketing communication technologies. Companies are constantly seeking to utilise mobile technologies to communicate, buy, sell and promote marketing activities in order to reach their marketing specific goals (Yousif, 2012:147). Despite the increased number of mobile enabled services, SMS advertising has remained the dominant source of mobile marketing in South Africa (Effective Measure, 2014:10). In fact, reports indicate that SMS continues to dominate all other phone services, after normal phone calls, and thus has become commonplace in many industries (Hsiao and Chang, 2014:731). In this regard, Zhou (2011:241) indicated that there is a growing market for businesses utilising SMSs to add value to their valued customers.

A substantial amount of research has been conducted to determine factors that influence the adoption of SMS advertising by consumers. Although most of these studies are international (Yang *et al.*, 2013; Yousif, 2010; Gao, Rohm, Sultan and Huang, 2012), local research is gaining momentum. Beneke, Cumming, Stevens and Versfeld (2010) conducted a study to determine influences on attitudes toward mobile text message advertisements among youth in Cape Town. Van der Waldt *et al.* (2009), conducted a study to determine attitudes of young consumers towards SMS advertising in the Gauteng province. As mentioned, most of the local studies focused on the youth. To fully capture the effect of SMS advertising, it is imperative to consider diverse demographics, since consumer perceptions tend to differ across age. Humbani, Kotze and Jordaan (2015) conducted a study aimed at determining consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising among adult consumers. Interestingly the study found different views as compared to the other South African related studies. This study was based on Humbani *et al.*'s (2015) framework with the main aim of validating the findings of Humbani *et al.*'s (2015) study employing a more diverse age sample than the previous related local studies. For this purpose, several research objectives were set. First, this study aims to confirm the 'new' construct (namely perceived infotainment) reported in the Humbani *et al.* (2015) study. Second, this study attempts to validate the three significant predictors reported in Humbani *et al.* (2015). Finally, to investigate whether the three predicting factors increased the predictability of consumers' attitudes towards SMS advertising compared to Humbani *et al.*'s (2015) regression model of eight predictors. An understanding of consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising can provide insights into effective mobile marketing and help to improve the development and execution of future advertising strategies (Hsiao and Chang, 2014:730).

This study contributes to the growth of literature on mobile marketing, with specific reference to SMS advertising by validating previous local studies. Researchers in South Africa seem to concur that little is known about the influence of the market-related mobile activities on consumers' intention to buy products promoted by mobile marketing (Chinomona and Sandada, 2013:1). Mobile technology is changing rapidly in tandem with increasing demographic shifts in societies. It is prudent, therefore, to continuously validate results of different scholars through research so that marketing practitioners can recommend and implement responsible and tangible marketing solutions. The same sentiments were echoed by Persaud and Azhar (2012:420) who emphasised the importance of fine-tuning research based on SMS advertising due to increasing mobile innovations that could significantly change marketing practices. A study of this nature may help understand the different mechanisms that would be more effective in SMS advertising.

LITERATURE REVIEW

SMS advertising in perspective

Several conceptualisations of SMS advertising have been advanced by researchers in recent years. According to Unal, Ercis and Keser (2011:77), SMS advertising refers to a promotional message being transmitted via mobile devices where the message is related to the product and services of a company. Hsiao and Chang (2014:731) define SMS advertising as 'any paid message sent to mobile devices with the intent of influencing consumer attitudes and behavioural intentions'. Other scholars such as Akpojivi and Bevan-Dye (2015:2) describe SMS advertising as 'the communication of advertising messages through mobile devices using SMS'. From these definitions, it is clear that advertising is important as it creates a platform which enables the exchange of goods and services to take place between companies and their valued consumers (Akpojivi and Bevan-Dye, 2015:2). Furthermore, one common attribute of SMS advertising featured in most definitions is the use of a mobile phone which emerged as a medium of interactive marketing and advertising (Wei, Xiaoming and Pan, 2010:32).

In this study, SMS advertising is defined as 'using short message services, sent to consumers' mobile phones, to provide consumers with time and location sensitive information that promotes goods, services and ideas, thereby generating revenue for companies' (Van der Waldt *et al.*, 2009:445). This definition is suitable for this study because companies now use SMS advertising as a substantial source of revenue. Due to an increase in the introduction of many mobile phone functionalities, reports indicate optimism about the potential of SMSs with respect to revenue that will be generated on a global scale

(Zabadi, Shura and Elsayed, 2012:77). To achieve significant revenue streams, marketers need to understand the factors that affect user response. Consumers live in a media saturated environment occupying more than 70% of their day (Beneke *et al.*, 2010:78). The continuous bombardment of advertising messages to consumers may cause consumers to become indifferent to advertising (Zabadi *et al.*, 2012:78), such that marketers are encouraged to use more creative and interactive means of communicating with consumers to encourage product trial.

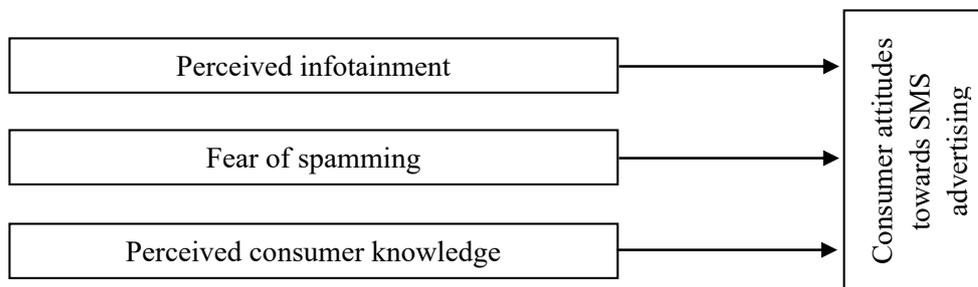
In general, the push and pull models have been used widely to categorise mobile advertising (Bamba and Barnes, 2007:817). The push method entails forcing company prepared advertising messages to a target group of consumers using an SMS, usually done without consumers consent (Chea, Bui and Luo, 2012:3209). The pull model solicits approval for receiving of messages from the consumers before they are sent out. This study draws on the push model, meaning that advertising messages are sent to consumers with or without their consent. Although criticism has been levelled against the push strategy, the model was ideal for this study as marketers must take the initiative to send messages directly to consumers. In support of the push model, Okazaki and Taylor (2008:5) reported that push strategies can be effective in promoting sales of a particular product or service as they focus on initiating action from the target consumer. Through a push model, the consumer has less control and the marketer has more control over the flow of advertising (Humbani *et al.*, 2015:3). There is evidence that companies that employ push strategies can effectively draw the attention of consumers which may result in much needed responses to a greater extent than through other marketing channels because push strategies are generally interactive in nature (Okazaki and Taylor, 2008:5).

Consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising

Attitudes play an important role in how consumers behave towards SMS advertisements because attitudes motivate people to behave in a certain way (Babin and Harris, 2014). Thus, consumers may act in a favourable or unfavourable manner towards SMS advertisements, depending on the attitudes they have about advertising in general, advertising via mobile phones and even SMS as a means of communication. Short message advertising is a part of mobile marketing that utilises SMS technology in the form of one-to-one marketing to direct messages to consumers. In this regard, several factors have been found to influence consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising. This study was built onto the attitude framework developed by Humbani *et al.* (2015) in which perceived infotainment, fear of spamming and perceived consumer knowledge were reported as significant predictors of consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework of the predictors of consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising.

FIGURE 1

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PREDICTORS OF CONSUMER ATTITUDES TOWARDS SMS ADVERTISING



Source: Humbani *et al.* (2015)

Perceived infotainment

In Humbani *et al.*'s (2015) study, perceived infotainment emerged as the most significant predictor of SMS advertising. Perceived infotainment can be described as the extent to which SMS advertising

messages are informative, personalised and based on the geographical location of the consumer (Humbani *et al.*, 2015:9). Consequently, SMS advertising messages that are effective must not only inform consumers of product options for their satisfaction (Zabadi *et al.*, 2012:81), but must also speak to consumers' needs and wants, and must be time and location sensitive. According to Okazaki and Taylor (2008:7), consumers are more receptive to location-based advertising because such advertising messages enable consumers to make timely decisions. Van der Waldt *et al.* (2009:447) reported that there is a positive relationship between the extent to which consumers perceive the messages to be informative and their overall attitudes towards SMS advertising. Beneke *et al.* (2010:80) also reported that SMS advertising can be more effective than traditional mass media because markets can be targeted more precisely at the individual level. In a study by Hsiao and Chang (2014:320), they reported that messages that are entertaining are significant predictors of consumer attitudes towards SMS advertisements. Entertainment of SMS messages is a result of content and personalised messages based on the context in which consumers are (Beneke *et al.*, 2010:81).

Based on the above, it can be hypothesised that:

H¹: There is positive relationship between consumers' perceived infotainment of SMS advertising and a favourable attitude towards SMS advertising.

Fear of spamming

Fear of spamming has been described in different ways in literature. Scholars such as Unal *et al.* (2011) and Parreno, Sanz-Blas, Ruiz-Mafe and Aldas-Manzano (2013) describe fear of spamming from an irritation point of view, while Beneke *et al.* (2010) describe fear of spamming from a privacy concern perspective. Despite these different viewpoints, there tend to be an agreement among scholars that fear of spamming can be described as unsolicited, mass marketing advertisements that are viewed as interrupt marketing (Beneke *et al.*, 2010:86). Most SMS advertisements are based on the push strategy, in which messages are sent through to consumers with or without their consent. Such messages increase the time and cost to the consumer and negatively impacts on a company's brand image as it is seen as a violation of privacy (Bamba and Barnes, 2007). Although costs are considered minimal in the South African cellular industry, service providers charge a notification fee for receiving an SMS (WASPA, 2016). These costs have the propensity to influence consumer attitudes towards unsolicited SMSs. In a study by Parreno *et al.* (2013:736) among Spanish consumers, 22% of the respondents were concerned about receiving unsolicited advertising through their mobile phones. This is consistent with the literature on spamming citing that fear of spamming can be evoked by an SMS advertisement when there is a perceived intrusion by the advertisement (Parreno *et al.*, 2013:736). Thus, when consumers feel that SMS advertisements are irritating, disturbing and interruptive, their attitudes toward the product advertised change in a negative way (Unal *et al.*, 2011:365). Based on the above, it can be hypothesised that:

H²: There is a negative relationship between fear of spamming and consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising.

Perceived consumer knowledge

Beneke *et al.* (2010:83) describe perceived knowledge as consumers' ability to learn and use new technologies, more so, the features of these technologies. Consumers' previous knowledge as well as their previous use of mobile devices can directly affect their attitudes towards SMS advertisements (Humbani *et al.*, 2015:9). A consumer perceives an innovation as less complex if they possess a certain amount of knowledge about that technology; a mobile phone in this study (Bauer, Barnes and Reichardt, 2005:185). In support of this assertion, Radder, Pietersen and Wang (2010:30) reported that consumers' existing knowledge determines their ability to understand the features of an innovation and to realise its value. Prior studies have reported that perceived knowledge contributes to a positive attitude towards SMS advertising (Beneke *et al.*, 2010; Bauer *et al.*, 2005; Radder *et al.*, 2010), if consumers know how to use their mobile phones to retrieve and act upon SMS advertisements that they receive. Xie, Zhao

and Xie (2013:50) conducted a study to determine the effect of interface design of hand-held devices on mobile advertising effectiveness. They reported that for consumers with low literacy levels regarding mobile phones, usability was the main hurdle. In their study, they recommend that consumers need interfaces that are simple and easy to navigate. Their claims were echoed in a study by Yang *et al.* (2013:1347) who reported that consumers who do not have good experience in using their mobile phones, lack the knowledge and ability to evaluate content generated through the mobile phones. As such, research on SMS advertising has shown that user experience is positively associated with users' ease of use of the technology. This study assumes that consumers who have more experience in using mobile technology are likely to process the SMS advertisements than inexperienced users (Yang *et al.*, 2013:1347). Based on the above, it can be hypothesised that:

H³: There is a positive relationship between perceived knowledge and consumer attitude towards SMS advertising.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

The target population for this study was consumers in shopping malls around Gauteng province, namely Centurion Mall and Randpark Ridge shopping malls. The sample of 300 consisted of consumers aged 18 years and older, who receive SMS advertising messages on their phones. A non-probability quota sampling technique was employed to collect data from the sample, with respect to gender, age and ethnicity. Where possible, the quota tried to mirror the sample characteristics of the South African population distribution (Statistics SA, 2014). With regard to gender, the aim was to obtain an equal spread across the gender groups and a spread across the age groups. In terms of ethnicity, the quota was set to ensure that the majority of respondents represented the African group to be in line with the population distribution. Gauteng was chosen as an ideal province for the study for several reasons. First, on average, people spend 3% of their incomes on cell phones, while Gauteng province has the highest penetration of mobile phones, at 51% of the adults (SAARF, 2016). Second, Gauteng province comprises the largest share of the South African population with approximately 23.9% living in the province (Statistics SA, 2014). Third, Gauteng is the economic hub of South Africa, contributing the highest percentage share of the Gross Domestic Product with 34.5% in almost all sectors of the economy (Gauteng Department of Economic Development, 2015).

Measurement instrument

A 27-item questionnaire was developed for data collection. The first part of the questionnaire contained screening questions to ensure that respondents received SMS advertisements on their mobile phones. The second part of the questionnaire contained 22 statements to measure consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising. The predictors measured in the study are perceived infotainment, fear of spamming and perceived knowledge. A 7-point Likert-type response format was used to capture all responses with scale points ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Scale items to measure perceived infotainment and fear of spamming were adapted from Humbani *et al.* (2015), while scales to measure perceived knowledge were adapted from Radder *et al.* (2012:35). The scale items to measure the dependent variable, namely consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising, were adapted from Riquelme, Rios and Enezi (2011:12).

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents for this study.

**TABLE 1
 DEMOGRAPHICS**

Gender	N	%
Male	144	48%
Female	156	52%
Age		
18-24	102	34%
24-40	113	37.7%
41-65	85	28.3%
Ethnicity		
African	163	54.3%
Asian	3	1%
Coloured	17	5.7%
Indian	15	5%
White	102	34%

The results from Table 1 indicate that the distribution in terms of gender is representative of the South African population, with 52% female and 48% male. The majority of respondents (71.7%) were 40 years or younger. In terms of ethnicity, the majority of the respondents were African, representing 54% of the total respondents for the study, followed by 34% White respondents.

First research objective

Component analysis

The first objective of this study was to confirm the ‘new’ construct (namely perceived infotainment) reported in the Humbani *et al.* (2015) study. For this purpose, a principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted to determine construct validity for the three predictors, which included the perceived infotainment construct. The 17 items measuring consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising were subjected to a component analysis followed by Varimax rotation using SPSS version 21 for Windows. Prior to performing the PCA, the determination of whether the data was suitable for performing the component analysis was assessed using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value (0.88) indicated statistical significance to confirm the factorability of the component matrix. The analysis produced three components with *Eigenvalues* exceeding one, representing 60% of the total percentage of variance. The rotated component matrix is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
SUMMARY OF ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX VALUES

ITEM	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
Perceived infotainment 1	0.782		
Perceived infotainment 2	0.795		
Perceived infotainment 3	0.813		
Perceived infotainment 4	0.784		
Perceived infotainment 5	0.792		
Perceived infotainment 6	0.673		
Perceived infotainment 7	0.709		
Perceived infotainment 8	0.714		
Perceived infotainment 9	0.682		
Perceived infotainment 10	0.783		
Fear of spam 1		0.675	
Fear of spam 2		0.712	
Fear of spam 3		0.770	
Fear of spam 4		0.654	
Perceived knowledge 1			0.863
Perceived knowledge 2			0.757
Perceived knowledge 3			0.778
Eigenvalue	6.328	2.163	1.632
Percentage of variance explained	37.22	12.73	9.6
Cronbach alpha	0.92	0.69	0.74

Reliability and validity assessment

Cronbach-alpha values were used to assess the internal consistency reliability of each of the components shown in Table 2. It is suggested that, when using Likert-type scales, a Cronbach-alpha value of 0.7 and above is acceptable (Kelleher, Cardozo, Khullar and Salvator, 1997:1375). In this study, all the components had Cronbach-alpha values above 0.7, except the ‘fear of spamming’ component that showed a reliability of 0.69. According to Pallant (2011:97), Cronbach’s alpha values below 0.7 can occur regularly with short scales consisting of 10 items or less – in our case ‘fear of spamming’ contained 4 items. According to Beneke *et al.* (2010: 89), researchers accept values that range between 0.6 and 0.7. Therefore, the Cronbach-alpha coefficient of 0.69 was accepted for having internal consistency reliability and was included in further analysis. The Cronbach-alpha value for ‘attitude towards SMS advertising’ was also assessed and showed an internal consistency of 0.93.

The results of the PCA show discriminant and convergent validity. Discriminant validity was assessed by inspecting the cross-loadings in the component analysis (Cole, Cho and Martin, 2001:94). For the PCA depicted in Table 2, no item was allowed to cross-load, providing evidence of discriminant validity. All items loaded higher than 0.50 on their respective components, as indicated in Table 2, verifying convergent validity.

The first research objective was satisfied in that all three constructs showed validity and reliability, but more specifically that the perceived infotainment construct held under the conditions of a more diverse sample.

Second research objective

Correlation and multiple regression analysis

The second objective of this study was to validate the three significant predictors reported in Humbani *et al.*'s (2015) study. For the current study, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were used to determine the predictive ability of the three independent variables towards SMS advertising. The dependent variable was consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising, and the independent variables were: perceived infotainment, fear of spamming and perceived knowledge. Preliminary analyses were conducted and the data showed that there were no violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity, outliers and homoscedasticity.

The correlation analysis shows that all three hypotheses were supported. Firstly, Hypothesis 1 (H1) showed a strong, positive correlation between personalised infotainment and attitudes towards SMS advertising ($r = 0.842$; $p < 0.00$). Therefore, it is concluded that perceived infotainment of SMS advertisements positively influences consumers' attitudes towards SMS advertisements.

The second hypothesis (H2) was also supported. In this case, the correlation coefficient (medium strength) for fear of spamming was negative ($r = -0.389$; $p < 0.00$), validating that consumers' fear of spamming negatively affects their attitudes toward SMS advertisement.

Third, the correlation coefficient and p-value for perceived consumers' knowledge ($r = 0.160$; $p < 0.003$) indicate support for Hypothesis 3, although the correlation was small. This indicates a positive relationship between perceived consumer knowledge of mobile devices and a favourable attitude toward SMS advertisements.

Furthermore, the results of the regression analysis in Table 3 indicate that all three variables are significant predictors of consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising. More specifically, perceived infotainment is the most significant predictor of consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising (0.819) followed by fear of spamming (0.120) and lastly consumer knowledge (0.62) contributing the least.

TABLE 3
FACTORS PREDICTING CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SMS
ADVERTISEMENTS

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.399	0.350		1.121	2.63
Perceived infotainment	1.011	0.041	0.819	24.487	0.000
Fear of spamming	-0.161	0.043	-0.120	-3.713	0.000
Perceived knowledge	-0.081	0.041	-0.062	-1.937	0.049

The regression results as well as the correlation values validate that all three predictors reported in Humbani *et al.*'s (2015) study are significant; thus satisfying the second research objective of this study.

Third research objective

Finally, the third research objective was to investigate whether the three predicting factors will increase the predictability of consumers' attitudes towards SMS advertising compared to Humbani *et al.*'s (2015) regression model of eight predictors.

The results of the multiple regression analysis reported in Table 3 show that the current model explains 72.7% of the variance in consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising. An ANOVA test was conducted to test the significant fit of the regression model with overall data (Pallant, 2011:250). The results

indicate a p-value (0.000) demonstrating that the regression model is statistically significant for the overall data. Humbani *et al.*'s (2015) regression model only explained 33.1% of the variance in consumer's attitudes towards SMS advertising. Therefore, this study increased the predictability of consumers' attitudes towards SMS advertising compared to Humbani *et al.*'s (2015) regression model of eight predictors.

DISCUSSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The results highlight several implications for managers and/or marketers who need to design and implement SMS advertising campaigns. First, this study confirmed the perceived infotainment construct which confirms that companies should pay attention to the elements involved in infotainment. These elements include: the SMS message being viewed as personalised, related to the consumer's location and providing relevant content. Companies should thus customise and alter messages to consumers' needs and preferences because personalised messages can serve as a major differentiator between SMS advertising and other advertising media (Chen and Hsieh, 2012:546). Information should be communicated to consumers on the basis of their geographic location to ensure relevancy of the message (Beneke *et al.*, 2010:81). Content should be useful, timely and show up-to-date features for it to be appealing to consumers (Riquelme *et al.*, 2011:9). More so, SMS advertisements that include humour, are eye-catching and entertaining are favourable and can motivate purchasing behaviour among consumers.

Second, this study validated the previous study by Humbani *et al.* (2015) in which perceived infotainment, fear of spamming and perceived knowledge were considered as significant predictors of consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising. More specifically, the regression model increased the predictability of the model with the three identified factors. Besides perceived infotainment as being the strongest predictor of attitudes towards SMS advertising, fear of spamming and perceived knowledge also acted as strong predictors. When consumers receive irrelevant and inappropriate messages they generally feel that the sender acts intrusively and obstructively (Dickiner and Kleijnen, 2008:27). Failure of marketers to recognise what consumers consider to be spam will result in an unfavourable attitude toward the advertisement received. Results show that consumers consider SMS advertisements as spam when they receive them without their consent and when no opt-out option is provided. To avoid spamming consumers, permission should be given to consumers to opt-out without any charge. The opt-in and opt-out options should be incorporated in all SMS advertisements to allow consumers to make own judgements. As recommended by Bamba and Barnes (2007:827), companies that propose SMS advertising campaigns must register with mobile service providers or specialised SMS information services for wider coverage. Mobile service providers can filter out all spammed advertisements before they are sent out to users. In South Africa, the Wireless Application Service Providers Association (WASPA) code of conduct must be observed by companies, which stipulates that SMS advertisements should not be sent without the user's permission (WASPA, 2012). Consumers accept SMS advertisements from known sources than unknown sources, which underscores the importance of getting permission before hand. Furthermore, to avoid spamming consumers, companies should provide information on products that interests consumers, including price, promotional activity and any brand-related information. In a previous related study by Chen and Hsieh (2012:555), they reported that if SMS advertisements speak to consumers' needs, they leave a good impression and increases the desire among consumers to purchase the product.

The third construct that was found to be significant in predicting consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising is perceived consumer knowledge. Consumers who have less difficulty using a phone are likely to be receptive to marketing techniques such as SMS advertising (Humbani *et al.*, 2015:26). Marketers must realise that a consumer's knowledge of mobile phone usage contributes immensely on them having a favourable attitude towards SMS advertisements. From this research and in the study conducted by Humbani *et al.* (2015:25), consumers who are able to learn quickly with certain technologies and experience fewer problems in using their mobile devices, are more likely to have a favourable attitude toward the SMS advertisement received. As reported by Gao *et al.* (2012:215), the more consumers have knowledge about how to access information, share content and communicate on

their mobile devices, the easier consumers perceive mobile marketing to be receptive and are therefore more likely to perceive the benefits in SMS advertisements.

Other scholars describe perceived knowledge from a user's experience point of view. According to De Kerviler, Demoulin and Zidda (2016:342), companies should find innovative ways to encourage trials of mobile services, including using SMSs. The authors recommend targeting infrequent users of SMSs rather than current users, with persuasive incentives to encourage favourable response to SMS advertising. SMS advertising campaigns must be developed in such a way that users become driven by the consequences of their actions rather than the stimuli (Mpinganjira, Dos Santos, Botha, Du Toit, Erasmus, Maree and Mugobo, 2013:57). For instance, if a response to an SMS advertisement is rewarded through product satisfaction, that behaviour will be reinforced and that leads to repeat behaviour. Therefore any SMS promotional activity that are geared at encouraging product trial must yield observable benefits so as to reduce the perception of risk associated with responding to SMS advertising. Although many consumers are becoming more techno savvy and engage in multi-channel marketing, the challenge is for companies to identify and target consumers who have a neck for mobile technologies. This is important because consumers are divided amongst those who prefer to buy online, offline and via mobile phones. Practitioners, therefore, need to fully understand their target audience so that messages can be tailored in accordance with the profile of the target audience. On the other hand, mobile device manufacturers need to pay attention to reducing the complexity of the interface and make it easy for consumers to navigate through their mobile devices. By so doing, consumers may find it easy to use their mobile phones, which will influence their willingness to receive interactive SMS advertisements. This is important because willingness to receive SMS advertisements has been closely correlated with actual store visits.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was aimed at replicating and validating a previous study conducted by Humbani *et al.* (2015:1-19), which focused on adult South African consumers and their attitudes towards SMS advertisements. Although a much broader sample was targeted in the current study, sampling units were collected from Gauteng province only, which limits the generalisability of results. Similar studies need to be extended to other provinces in the country.

This study conducted quantitative research and it is suggested that a qualitative approach or mixed method approach be used in future studies to provide a broader understanding of consumers' attitudes towards SMS advertisements (Humbani *et al.*, 2015:14).

Humbani *et al.* (2015:1-19) tested ten predictors that had a relationship with consumer attitudes towards SMS advertisements and three of the ten predictors were accepted. In this study the three predictors were retested and the results corroborated those reported by Humbani *et al.* (2015). The limitation is that the study retested the same three predictors and did not include other possible predictors that could be clear candidates for future investigation, such as usefulness, frequency and advertising value.

Due to the advances in technology and introduction to new smart phone applications, future research could examine the attitudes towards advertisements on various social media platforms that use instant social media applications (apps) such as Facebook messenger, Whatsapp and WeChat.

CONCLUSION

It is evident in the study that the use of mobile devices has increased among adult South African consumers. Even though this is seen as an effective tool for marketers, it is not largely being exploited. In this study, all predictors were accepted and proved to be significant predictors of consumer attitudes towards SMS advertisements. Marketers must identify and understand each predictor to gain knowledge about the causes of either a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the SMS advertisement. In this study and the study conducted by Humbani *et al.* (2015) it is evident that for successful, valuable SMS campaigns, it is necessary for marketers to ensure that the SMS advertisement is personalised to the consumers' needs, providing relevant, trustworthy content while ensuring the absence of spam.

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