ANTECEDENTS OF CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS ONLINE ADVERTISING IN MALAYSIA: THE STRUCTURE EQUATION MODELING APPROACH

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to determine the antecedents of consumers' perception towards online advertising in Malaysia. This research has been developed a framework by reviewing the existing literatures available in the same field. Altogether 526 respondents have been selected as a final sample size. This research uses survey method in this study because my purpose of the study is to generalize the findings from the sample to population. The current study used Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and AMOS Software Package to analyse the data. The results of this study provide evidence that increased consumer perception is associated with increased online advertising. There is a direct positive, significant relationship between consumer perception and online advertising of the respondents in the online advertising in Malaysia. It was also found that all sub dimensions of consumer perception positively and significantly affect to online advertising and its dimensions. Besides, the results indicated the significant positive relationships between consumer perception and consumer acceptance. On the other hand, a significant weak relationship was found between consumer acceptance and online advertising. However, the consumer satisfaction has not correlated significantly with online advertising of the respondents

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in the online advertising in Malaysia. Future studies can be extended to check the applicability and relevance of consumer perception within Malaysia using different samples from different sectors, occupations and so on.

Keywords: antecedents, consumer perception, online advertising, consumer acceptance, consumer satisfaction, Malaysia

1. Introduction

Malaysian consumers are heading towards technology era. More and more people in Malaysia are using Internet as the centre of information. Advertisers utilize advertising appeals as a means for buying and selling their products (Khare, 2015; Fung, 2017). Advertising appeals are designed in a way to present a positive image of the product or service to the customer using that product or service. The message transferred through advertising appeals has an influence on purchasing decisions. People purchase a product when they feel comfortable and confident with their shopping and rationalize their purchasing decisions based on facts while making decisions based on feelings.

Integration between online advertising and traditional advertising will be an important medium in this new era. In fact, before the electronic media, the core advertisement tool was human advertising and personal selling. Meanwhile, technology keeps on going. It is already gives us the personal computer, the cellular phone, the Internet and the modern electronic communication system where these facilities are simple enough for virtually anybody to use (Fernando et al., 2016). In marketing perspective, consumers are always exposed by thousands of commercial messages every day.

As part of this changing form of business, evidence is emerging about the way individual now use media and are exposed to commercial messages, especially for consumer goods (Belch and Belch, 2013; Ekta et al., 2017). Traditional approaches have led marketers to use click-stream interactions as a measure of the online media effectiveness, which links the advertising to immediate consumer action. However, click-through rates do not capture the impact the exposure of the advertisement has on the consumer's disposition towards the brand and subsequent purchase decision at the offline point of sale (Fernando et al., 2016). Besides, previous literature (Khare, 2015; Newton, 2015; Fung, 2017) had proven that online advertisement and e-marketing have become more significant as compared to the conventional or traditional marketing. The high utilization of internet has given a great opportunity for companies to market their products through e-marketing. As the property market now is being dominated by the

modern consumers and they are more receptive to internet, it is vital to study if e-marketing is more significant and highly acceptable in property products as compared to the traditional marketing. Therefore, it is vital for this study to explore the antecedents of consumers' perception towards online advertising in Malaysia.

2. Literature Review

As the consumers perceived that the information system provided by the marketers or advertisers is informative, helpful and effective in searching for the required information by the consumers, they will perceive the information system provided by the marketers as a useful tool. Bedsides, convenience factor refers to the level of easiness for the consumers to use the e-marketing tools in order to browse or search the information online. This factor is seen as attractive for the online shoppers as this approach will ease the consumers and will avoid the traditional retail shopping. Traditional retail shopping is perceived as wasting time, difficult, less economical, low bargaining power and a hassle. Convenience has always been the prime factor for the consumers to shop online. Online shoppers carry multiple benefits in terms of convenience, such as being less time consuming, flexibility, very less physical effort etc. (Fuller et al., 2015). Robinson, Amireault (2014) had highlighted that the major motivation for online purchasing is convince in terms of shopping at any time and having bundles of items delivered at their door step. Fuller et al. (2015) study had shown that the convenience factor is one of the biggest advantages of online shopping. Through an online purchase, consumers can easily compare the price compared to the traditional purchase method. So price comparison is also another convenience factor of online shopping. Arcand and Nantel (2012) had claimed convenience as one of the most important advantage for online shopping. Ekta et al. (2017) found that convenience and variety seeking are the major motivating factors of online shopping.

The time saving factor is one of the most influencing factors on why consumers utilize e-marketing tools for online shopping. Browsing or searching online catalogues is perceived to save time and to expedite the purchase decision made by the consumers. Online shopping is also perceived to reduce the shopping's physical efforts. According to Fung (2017), one possible explanation is that online shopping saves time during the purchasing of goods and it can eliminate the travelling time required to go to the traditional store. Johnson (2015) concluded that the time saving factor was reported to be primary reason among those consumers who have already experienced the online grocery buying. So the importance of the time saving factor cannot be neglected as motivation behind the online purchasing.

The significance factor is expected to be one of the factors that influenced the acceptance of e-marketing. The globalisation of the market and the modernization of information and communication technology through the internet have influenced the consumers' behaviour. The high utilization of internet in daily activities by the consumers has become a new trend nowadays.

Fung (2017) had stated that there is an abundance of advantages of online marketing such as its low-cost investment, direct customer communication, brand communication and also where it acts like a verbal evidence theory that people tend to believe when compared to commercial advertising. The difference between traditional media and social media is traditional media will keep the consumers informed but social media will keep the consumers involved and stimulated (Khare, 2015). As the company gets their consumers involved and engaged in its production and marketing processes, it spurs the long-lasting relationship between the company and the consumers. Therefore, this research has come up with a model, which is research model. The dependent variable is of chief importance in this research. The aspirations of this research are to understand the critical factors influencing consumers' perception towards online advertising of Malaysian perspective. Based on established relationship found by previous scholars, research framework is developed for these variables involved in this study, which is exhibited in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Research Framework

In this research model, altogether five hypotheses are developed to test the relationships among the various variables. The following section presents an exhibition on the five hypotheses developed for this study.

H_1: Consumer Perception is positively and significantly correlated with Online Advertising.

H_2: Consumer Perception is positively and significantly correlated with Consumer Acceptance.

H_3: Consumer Acceptance is positively and significantly correlated with Online Advertising.

H_4: Consumer Perception is positively and significantly related with Consumer Satisfaction.

H_5: Consumer Satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on Online Advertising.

3. Research Methodology

According to the Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the research framework describes the causal relationship among variables rather than describing variables as either cause or effect in which the cause is the independent variable and the direction of the effect, such as dependent variable may either be positive or negative in nature. Thus, present study has been developed the research model by reviewing the existing literatures in the area. The data are subsequently analyzed to explain the relationships among the variables by employing statistical analysis namely descriptive and inferential statistics. Besides, the sample size is influenced by the number of factors such as the purpose of the study, size of the population, non-responsive error, and accuracy of the study (Kothari, 2004; Sekaran & Bougie, 2014). The simplest and appropriate method for deciding a sample size for given population was described by Sekaran and Bougie, (2016), whose book elaborated the scientific guidelines with a table which facilitate to decide the sample size. In this research, altogether 526 respondents have been selected as a final sample size. In addition, this research uses survey method because my purpose of the study is to generalize the findings from the sample to population. The rationale for using the deductive approach and survey method is generalizing the findings on total population. In addition, when considering the limited time period of data collecting and the cost it is reasonable to apply the survey method for this study (Sekaran, 2000; Malhotra, 2007; Sekaran & Bougie, 2014). Therefore, survey method is appropriate for this study.

In the present study, questionnaire was mainly used as an instrument that mainly consists of closed questions, in which respondents are asked to select only one most suitable answer for each question where numbers assign for each question (Malhotra, 2000) ranging from 1 for strongly disagreed and 5 for strongly agreed.

However, the first part in the questionnaire, comprised with questions regarding demographic data of the respondents.

This study will employ the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), in which the first step is to specify the measurement model in three stages. Firstly, specify the number of factors or latent variables which is represented by ovals to be hypothesized by the scale's items constituted by rectangles. Next is to specify the items linked to each factor whereby each item linked to only one latent variable. Thirdly, if the hypothesized model includes multiple factors, then the associations between factors specify are to be represented. In this measurement model specification stage, three types of parameters are desired that are the hypothesized factor loadings, correlation between factors or the loading of a lower order factor in a higher order factor and error variance for each item (Malhotra, 2000; Furr, 2011).

Upon completion of specification phase, analysis begins whereby actual variances and actual covariances are computed using the collected data. This is done to estimate the model's veracity by creating the implied item variances and covariances and if it emulates the actual variances and covariances, hence, the research model is good. Therefore, indices of model fit are computed for the purpose of achieving the research objectives.

4. Data Analysis

The sample of this research was 526 consumers from the online advertising within Malaysia. The consumers are described in terms of gender, age, marital status, highest education qualification etc. In this sturdy, the gender split in the sample was almost equal; 48.1% and 51.9% are male and female consumers respectively, where many of the consumers (53.4%) were married consumers, whilst 46.6% of consumers were not married. Besides, the majority (63.7%) consumers are in the 22-30 years' age group and 23.2% consumers belong to the 31-40 years age group. The other three age categories only represent 13.1% of the sample, as well as the majority of consumers (53.4%) claimed that they have obtained SPM qualification, whilst only 2.1% claimed they have studied up to ordinary level. The survey found that 15.4% respondents have obtained diplomas. However, 27.4% and 1.7% of the consumers possessed degrees and postgraduate qualifications respectively. On the other hand, the univariate normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis values. If the skewness and kurtosis values do not exceed three and ten respectively, then univariate normality can be assumed. In this study, since all the skewness values and kurtosis values of the variables are below one, the univariate distributions are normal.

Table 1: Skewness and Kurtosis Values for the Variables

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
Consumer Perception	-0.003	0.041
Online Advertising	0.190	-0.772
Consumer Acceptance	0.265	0.529
Consumer Satisfaction	-0.344	-0.321

Multivariate normality was tested examining Mardia's coefficient for multivariate kurtosis. The Mardia's multivariate coefficient of this study is relatively high. Thus, the data may not be normally distributed. The violation of the multivariate normality assumption is highly affected in confirmatory factor analysis. In the present study, due to the high multivariate normality value, the 1000 bootstrap resampling method was used. To check for linearity, this study used the residual scatter plot. If the scatter plots are overlaid with a trend line, it can be assumed that there are linear relationships amongst the research variables. According to the residual plots, the observed residuals are not far above or below the normal line; thus it can be assumed that the variables had linear relationships with each other.

This study examined the homoscedasticity using scatter plots of the standardized residuals. The assumption of homoscedasticity requires that the variance of the dependent variable is the same at all values of independent variable or constant variance of the error term (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The Durbin- Watson value is 1.836 which is in between 1.5 and 2.5; thus, the assumption of independence of the error terms is not violated. The simplest and most obvious way to detect multicollinearity is to check the correlation matrix for the independent variables. The correlation of 0.7 or above is the first sign of sizable multicollinearity; this study examined the correlation among the variables. The coefficient below 0.9 reveals that there is no evidence to suspect multicollinearity amongst the variables. Further to this, the tolerance value and VIF value is calculated; it is generally believed that any variance inflation factor (VIF) that exceeds 10 and a tolerance value lower than 0.10 indicates a potential problem of multicollinearity (Hair *et al.*, 2010). According to the results in Table 2, the tolerance values are higher than 0.10 and the VIF values for each relationship are in between 1.384 and 1.580. Thus, there is no evidence for suspecting multicollinearity between the variables.

Table 2: Result of the Multicollinearity Analysis

Variable	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Consumer Perception	0.722	1.384
Consumer Acceptance	0.633	1.580
Consumer Satisfaction	0.682	1.467

Dependent variable: Online Advertising

Moreover, in the questionnaire development stage, the reliability test that was performed was explained. In addition, this section focuses on assessing the reliability of each construct that were used in the study. The Cronbach' alpha is the most commonly used coefficient that measures reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, they noted that high construct reliability values indicate the existence of internal consistency. This means that all indicators consistently represent the same latent construct. Hair *et al.*, (2010) suggests that the rule of thumb for a good reliability estimate is 0.7 or higher. A reliability estimates of between 0.6 and 0.7 may be acceptable if other indicators of the model construct validity are good. Table 3 demonstrates the results of reliability analysis for each variable. According to the table, each reliability coefficient is higher than 0.7 which indicates that the existence of internal consistency is high.

Table 3: Results of Reliability Analysis

Variable and constructs		No. of items	Alpha value
	Self-Efficacy	05	0.800
Consumer Perception	Hope	06	0.800
	Optimism	05	0.732
	Resilience	05	0.757
Online Advertising	Total Performance	08	0.836
	Contextual Performance	13	0.887
Consumer Acceptance	Context	03	0.751
	Content	02	0.881
	Promotion	02	0.849
	Community	02	0.762
	Convenience	02	0.732
	Condition	02	0.705
Consumer Satisfaction		07	0.832

The structural model in Figure 2 shows the proposed relationship between the exogenous variables and the endogenous variables. Exogenous variables are synonymous with independent variables in regression analysis and cause fluctuations

in the values of other variables in the model. Changes in the values of exogenous variables are not explained by the model. In contrast, endogenous variables are similar to dependent variables and are influenced by the exogenous variables in the model, either directly or indirectly (Western and Gore, 2006). Consumer Perception (CP) is the exogenous variable in the model. Online Advertising (OA), Consumer Acceptance (CA) and Consumer Satisfaction (CS) are the endogenous variables in the model. Each of these endogenous variables is seen as an outcome for a basis on which the hypotheses can be developed within the study. In other words, the proposed relationships between research variables as shown in this path diagram can be accessed through the statistical outcome of the model. As mentioned in the proposed research model, the present study hypothesizes that Consumer Perception of the consumers (CP) has a positive effect on: Online Advertising, Consumer Acceptance and Consumer Satisfaction. In addition, the positive effects are to be expected between Consumer Acceptance and Online Advertising, Consumer Satisfaction and Online Advertising, Consumer Acceptance and Consumer Satisfaction.

The estimated structural model is depicted in Figure 2l whilst the model fit indices are summarised in Table 4. The χ^2 (653) value is 1428.79. The χ^2 / df is < 3. Absolute and incremental fit indices evidence a better fit of the model; in fact, a GFI value of 0.909 is a reasonable fit; indicating that the model has a good improvement over the based model. The absolute fit indices of RMSEA and RMR are reported with a value of 0.048 and 0.020, this indicates that they fit well with the model. In addition, the incremental index of CFI is reported with a value of 0.918; these values are above the general cutoff criteria of 0.90 and confirm that the model reasonably fit's with the data. The other two indices, IFI and TLI also record decent values (0.918 and 0.906) over 0.90 and further confirm the outcome of the other indices.
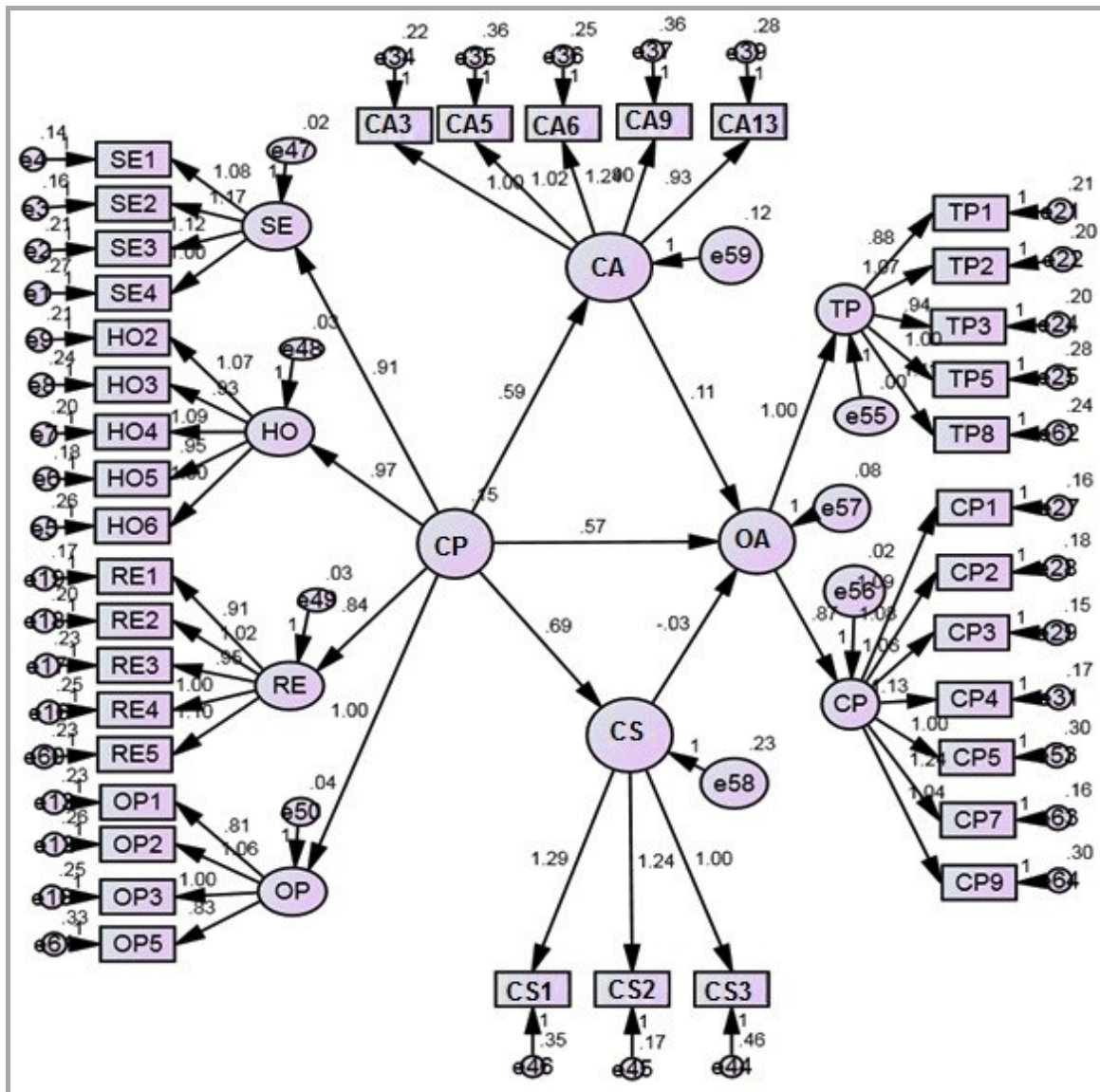
Figure 2: Structure Equation Modeling

Table 4: Model Fit Indices for the Initial Structural Model for the Framework

χ^2	df	χ^2 / df	GFI	RMSEA	RMR	NFI	CFI	IFI	TLI
1428.79	653	2.188	0.909	0.048	0.020	0.866	0.918	0.918	0.906

Table 5 demonstrates the results for path estimates and their associated p-values. The P-statistics associated with the standardized estimates show that path estimates between the exogenous variable and the endogenous variables are significant at a minimum 0.05 level. The standardized regression estimates of CP --> CA, CP --> CS, CP --> OA are statistically significant at the 0.001 level of significance and CA --> OA is significance at 0.05 significance level. They are consistent with the expected direction and proposed relations. However, the SRW of CS --> OA is not statistically significant.

Table 5: Regression Weights for the Structural Model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	SRW
CA	<---	CP	.586	.069	8.455	***	.548
CS	<---	CP	.686	.087	7.875	***	.493
OA	<---	CA	.106	.052	2.055	.040	.119
OA	<---	CS	-.032	.036	-.903	.366	-.047
OA	<---	CP	.567	.078	7.252	***	.596

The multivariate normality for structural model was measured using Marida coefficient of multivariate Kourtosis. Since this value is more than 05, the assumption of normality is not met. Thus, 1000 bootstrap re sample was used and Bollen – Stine p value is 0.69 which is more than 0.05. Thus model correctness is accepted. Since the standardized residual covariance are less than two in absolute value, the model fit well to the data.

The Table 6 demonstrated that AVE values for the entire constructs are greater than 0.5. Further to this, the CR values are greater than the AVE values which indicates the convergent validity.

Table 6: AVE and CR Values for the Structural Model

Variables	AVE	CR
Consumer Perception	0.82	0.96
Online Advertising	0.92	0.96
Consumer Acceptance	0.52	0.79
Consumer Satisfaction	0.57	0.83

The Table 6 demonstrated that AVE values for the entire constructs are greater than 0.5. Further to this, the CR values are greater than the AVE values which indicates the convergent validity. Moreover, Table 7 demonstrates the summarised results of the five hypotheses.

Table 7: The Results of the Hypotheses Testing

	Hypothesized Paths			SRW	P
H1:	CP	-->	OA	.596	***
H2:	CP	-->	CA	.548	***
H3:	CA	-->	OA	.119	.040**
H5:	CP	-->	CS	.493	***
H6:	CS	-->	OA	-.047	.366

Note: *** *p*-value is statistically significant at the 0.001 level
　　　 ** *p*-value is statistically significant at the 0.05 level

Based upon the standardized regression weight and significant level shown in Table 7, the following result in Table 8 was derived for hypotheses.

Table 8: Decision for Hypothesis One

Hypothesis	Conclusion
H$_1$: Consumer Perception is positively and significantly correlated with Online Advertising	Supported
H$_2$: Consumer Perception is positively and significantly correlated with Consumer Acceptance	Supported
H$_3$: Consumer Acceptance is positively and significantly correlated with Online Advertising	Supported
H$_4$: Consumer Perception is positively and significantly related with Consumer Satisfaction	Supported
H$_5$: Consumer Satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on Online Advertising	Not Supported

This research study mainly focuses on four main variables; Consumer Perception, Online Advertising, Consumer Acceptance and Consumer Satisfaction. The researcher examined the level of Consumer Perception, Online Advertising, Consumer Acceptance and Consumer Satisfaction using a questionnaire.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study provide evidence that increased Consumer Perception is associated with increased Online Advertising. There is a direct positive, significant relationship between Consumer Perception and Online Advertising of the respondents in the online advertising in Malaysia. It was also found that all sub dimensions of Consumer Perception positively and significantly affect to Online Advertising and its dimensions. The results of this research also revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between Consumer Perception and Online Advertising. However, the managers of the online advertising consider Consumer Perception of the respondents as an insignificant factor that can influence their Online Advertising. Therefore, it is recommended that managers become highly concerned and acquainted with this newly developed concept because it has a direct relationship with Online Advertising, other work outcomes and work attitudes. Consumer Perception is a collection of positive psychological capabilities of the individual. According to the results, all the dimensions of Consumer Perception have positively and significantly correlated with Online Advertising and its two dimensions. Therefore, it is recommended that managers embrace and concern themselves with each dimension of Consumer Perception of their respondents. By examining the Consumer Perception and its impact on Online Advertising, this research helps to address this deficiency. This study will help to

generalize the result of Consumer Perception on Online Advertising, Consumer Acceptance and Consumer Satisfaction among different context in different countries.

This study has introduced Consumer Acceptance and Consumer Satisfaction as the mediators to the established model of Consumer Perception and Online Advertising. The researchers have pointed out the need to test the mediators and moderators between Consumer Perception and Online Advertising. This study helps to address the existing gap introducing mediators to the model. And also the findings add new knowledge to the online advertising.

Considering the findings of the study, it was found that the Consumer Acceptance and Consumer Satisfaction are not significant predictors of Online Advertising. It stressed that the managers to think about the importance of the factors on Online Advertising than traditionally accepted factors in online advertising, whereas Consumer Perception has positively and significantly affected Consumer Acceptance and Consumer Satisfaction. This phenomenon also needs to be tested further. On the other dimension of this, therefore, it is recommended that stakeholders correctly use this new capital to enhance Consumer Satisfaction of the online advertising to the respondents. Thus, it is recommended that advertisement and marketing managers should go beyond the traditional assumptions and consider the new approaches to enhance online advertising to their consumers. Therefore, it can be concluded that the concept of consumer perception and its' dimensions have direct impact on online advertising.

Like any research, this research study has several limitations which may have affected the results. One of the limitations of this study was relying on self-reported data. The survey was self-reported, and may include a response bias (Hutter, 2015; Kirsten *et al.*, 2016; Rashmi, 2016; Sekeran & Bougie, 2016). The level of Consumer Perception, Online Advertising, Consumer Acceptance and Consumer Satisfaction of respondents were measured according to the respondents' own attitudes. Besides, the cross-sectional study design prevents the ability to infer causation as data was collected at a single point in time (Margaret-Anne *et al.*, 2016; Suzanna *et al.*, 2016). This study was cross-sectional by design and therefore causality cannot be proven. Longitudinal quasi-experimental studies may be useful in order to demonstrate causality. Despite the limitations of the study, the results still demonstrated the relationships between Consumer Perception, Online Advertising, Consumer Acceptance and Consumer Satisfaction; providing preliminary evidence that studying these constructs together is valuable. Therefore, future research should focus on examining the antecedents of Consumer Perception.

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