Examining the effects of advertising credibility on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image: A qualitative approach

Abstract

Purpose – The aim of this study is to understand the concept of advertising credibility and examine its effects on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image.

Design/methodology/approach – A qualitative approach was used. Ten interviews and four mini focus groups were conducted among participants drawn from the 32 London boroughs. Data was analysed by using thematic analysis.

Findings - The findings suggest that advertising credibility is defined using terms like accurate, caring, competent, complete, convincing, ethical, honest, impressive, reliable and warranted; and on the basis that it delivers what it promises about the products/service. The findings also suggest that advertising credibility has a positive effect on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image.

Originality/value – Advertising credibility has received little attention in the literature. This is the first study, which has exploratory examined its effects on brand credibility, corporate credibility, and corporate image.

Keywords: Advertising credibility, brand credibility, corporate credibility, corporate image, qualitative study

Paper Research paper

Introduction

In the early 1950s, the very first paper on credibility was published by Hovland and Weiss (1951) in the Public Opinion Quarterly journal. Since then, researchers have examined the topic extensively. Over the years, number of papers on credibility in various marketing and advertising contexts have been published in journals including the Corporate Reputation Review, European Journal of Marketing, Global Marketing, Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Journal of Advertising, Journal of Advertising Research, Journal of Applied Social Psychology, Journal of Business Research, Journal of Consumer Psychology, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Interactive Marketing, Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Services Marketing, Marketing Sciences, and Psychology and Marketing.

Researchers (Ohanian, 1990; Newell and Goldsmith, 2001), using Hovland and Weiss's 1951 source credibility scale, have developed a number of similar scales. Ohanian (1990) created a celebrity credibility scale, Erdem *et al.* (1998) created a brand credibility scale, Newell and Goldsmith (2001) developed a scale on corporate credibility, while Lutz *et al.* (1983) and MacKenzie *et al.* (1986) developed a scale on advertising credibility. Contemporary research (Prendergast *et al.,* 2009; Kim and Han, 2014) shows that, of all these scales, advertising credibility is the most under-researched topic.

Current trends and literature (Kim and Han, 2014; Verstraten, 2015; Croucher, 2017) suggest that advertising credibility is the most crucial part of business. It plays a significant role in today's age of competition. It influences consumers' attitudes towards the advertising and brand, and as a result increases the chances of purchase intention (MacKenzie *et al.,* 1986; Verstraten, 2015). Firms spend large sums of money to make advertising credible, so that the cues in the advertising can enhance the credibility and image of the brand and corporation. It can be suggested that high advertising credibility can enhance brand and corporate credibility and can have a positive effect on overall corporate image (Choi and Rifon, 2002; Wang *et al.,* 2009). On the other hand, a low level of advertising credibility can badly damage these relationships. Despite the importance of advertising credibility for brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image, the literature (Cotte *et al.,* 2005; Prendergast *et al.,* 2009; Yakoop *et al.,* 2013) suggests that most researchers have examined its effects on attitude towards the brand, purchase intention, different product types, different advertising media,

and different demographics. There is very little research examining advertising credibility's effects on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image.

This study minimises the gap in the literature by examining advertising credibility and further studying its effects on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image. To explore these effects, qualitative research was carried out by conducting interviews and focus groups with marketers, advertisers, academics and consumers. This qualitative research method has helped in understanding the topic from the participants' perspectives. Most researchers (MacKenzie *et al.,* 1986; Cotte *et al.,* 2005; Van-Tien Dao *et al.,* 2014) have examined the topic using a quantitative method; very little research in this area has used a qualitative method.

This paper starts by examining the existing literature on advertising credibility. Next, the methodology is explained, followed by presentation of the findings and the discussion. Finally, the researcher has discussed the paper's limitations, contributions and avenues for possible further study.

Literature review

Advertising credibility is defined as "the extent to which consumers perceive the message in the advertising to be believable, and based largely on the trust a consumer places in the source of the particular advertising" (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989). It refers to the objective and subjective components of consumers' beliefs regarding the advertising, which play a significant role in the formation of their attitudes and behaviours (Soh *et al.,* 2009; Yakoop *et al.,* 2013). Researchers (Moore and Rodgers, 2005; Indu and Raj, 2012) have revealed that advertising which is highly credible influences confidence and responses, while advertising which lacks credibility fails to achieve persuasive impact and is mostly ignored and avoided by consumers.

Research on the topic of advertising credibility is mainly derived from a landmark study carried out by Hovland and Weiss (1951) on source credibility. Hovland and Weiss (*ibid*) analysed the factors leading to the perceived credibility of the communicator, and found that two factors, expertise and trustworthiness, explained the concept of source credibility (Ohanian, 1990). Trustworthiness implies that the source is willing to deliver what is promised, while expertise implies that the source is capable of delivering what is promised.

Information from sources with higher levels of expertise and trustworthiness can change attitudes, while sources seen as low in expertise and with biased characteristics cannot result in any change in attitude (Greer, 2009). These two factors, along with the concept of source credibility, have also been adopted by other researchers (Lutz, 1983; MacKenzie *et al.,* 1989; Yakoop *et al.,* 2013) within the context of advertising credibility.

Various researchers have differentiated between advertising credibility and other similar constructs. MacKenzie *et al.* (1989) differentiated between advertising credibility and ad credibility, suggesting that ad credibility, which is defined as "consumers' perceptions that claim about the brand in the ad are truthful", is the possible perceptual response to a commercial stimulus and is a subsystem of advertising credibility. Its determinants are (i) the perceived claim discrepancy of the ad; (ii) advertiser credibility; and (iii) advertising credibility (Verma, 2014). On the other hand, as noted earlier, advertising credibility is one of several perceptual dimensions along which consumers may assess advertising as an institution (MacKenzie *et al.,* 1989). Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) differentiated between advertising credibility and advertising scepticism. Although they did not explicitly mention the difference between advertising credibility and advertising scepticism, the conceptual and measurement characteristics suggest that the constructs are similar (Soh *et al.,* 2009). Advertising scepticism is not different from advertising credibility, but it views the latter from the opposite viewpoint, *i.e.* from the perspective of consumers' disbelief or negative attitudes towards the advertising. Soh *et al.* (2009), meanwhile, differentiated between advertising credibility and advertising trust. The researchers suggested that even though advertising credibility and advertising trust are distinct constructs, the latter is a dimension of the former.

The literature on advertising credibility (see Table 1: Literature on advertising credibility) is mostly divided into four main areas: the impact of advertising credibility on consumers' attitudes and behaviours; different media; different products and services; and finally different demographic groups. Results from the first area suggest that advertising credibility positively and directly increases consumers' attitude towards the advertisement, brand and purchase intentions (MacKenzie *et al.,* 1989; Choi and Rifon, 2002; Chowdhury *et al.,* 2006; Delafrooz and Zanjankhah, 2015). A high level of credibility is positively associated with consumers' attitude towards the advertising and brand, and increases the chances of purchase intention, while a low level of credibility has a negative impact (Haghirian and Inoue, 2007).

Studies on this topic also suggest that advertising credibility positively influences brand and corporate attributions, increases consumers' willingness to access and accept information, increases the advertising value, and increases positive persuasion (Okazaki, 2004; Cotte *et al.,* 2005; Multani *et al.,* 2013; Van-Tien Dao *et al.,* 2014; Kim and Han, 2014).

In the second area, the impact of advertising credibility on different products and services has been examined. The results suggest that different types of products have different levels of advertising credibility (Prendergast *et al.,* 2009). For example, weight-loss products have received criticism due to misleading and unreliable information, which can impact on the level of advertising credibility and can cause a higher level of ignorance (Prendergast *et al.,* 2009).

In the third area in the literature, the impact of advertising credibility based on different media and other promotional methods are examined. Researchers (Prendergast *et al.,* 2009) have suggested that each medium is different and therefore has its own image and personality, which results in different levels of perception regarding advertising credibility for each one. Marshall and WoonBong (2003) revealed that the internet had less credibility than the print medium. Belch and Belch (2007) suggested that direct mail and print had a lower level of credibility than broadcast media. Prendergast *et al.* (2009) examined the effects of radio, broadcast television, cable television, direct mail and the internet. They suggested that the old media (*e.g.* radio, television and direct mail) had higher levels of credibility than modern media (*e.g.* the internet). These results were also validated by Moore and Rodgers (2005) and Jordaan *et al.* (2011), who found a difference between the media type and advertising credibility, and suggested that credibility was higher for the older media than the new media. However, none of these findings was confirmed by Yakoop *et al.* (2013).

Salmon *et al.* (1985) and Jo (2004) studied the credibility level of advertising compared to other promotional methods like news. They found that advertising had a higher level of credibility than news. Celebi (2007) found that publicity was more credible than advertising for new fast-moving consumer goods. Celebi (*ibid*) also examined the difference between publicity including a promotional endorser, and advertising including a promotional endorser, based on credibility. The results revealed that publicity including a promotional endorser had higher levels of credibility than advertising including a promotional endorser.

A few researchers (Ibelema and Powell, 2001; Greer, 2009) have also examined the effects of age, gender and income on advertising credibility. Some (Celebi, 2007; Multani *et al.,* 2013) have suggested that the level of credibility varies from person to person based on their demographic profile. Ibelema and Powell (2001) found that men with high social economic status found advertising in newspapers more credible, while women with low social economic status found advertising on television more credible (Greer, 2009). Shavitt *et al.* (1998) found that non-white consumers with less education and income, and aged between 18 to 34, found advertising more credible than other groups. These findings were validated by Multani *et al.* (2013). In contrast, Liu (2002) suggested that better educated individuals strongly believed in the credibility of advertising and did not show much difference, while Celebi (2007) and Greer (2009) failed to show any difference between consumers based on their age, education, gender and income. Table 1 presents the literature on advertising credibility.

[Table 1 Here]

Defining advertising credibility

Previous researchers have defined advertising credibility in various ways. Lutz *et al.* (1985) and Prendergast and Wong (2009) defined it in terms of claims made about brands or products to be truthful. MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) defined it as the extent to which the consumer perceived claims made about the brand in the advertising to be truthful and believable. Pavlou and Stewart (2000), Chowdhury *et al.* (2006), and Kim and Han (2014) defined it as consumers' perception of the truthfulness and believability of advertising. Daugherty *et al.* (2007) explained it as an expression of consumers' expectations regarding the fairness and factualness of advertising. A few (Liu and Gupta, 2011) have explained it as the extent to which a consumer perceives the company to be a credible source of information, and in turn it assures the consumers of the company's reputation, integrity and goodwill, while others (Yakoop *et al.,* 2013) defined it as the extent to which the consumer believes or trusts in the media or advertising claims.

Based on the explanations from the previous research and the findings of the current study, this study has defined advertising credibility based on terms like accurate, caring, competent, complete, convincing, ethical, honest, impressing, reliable and warranted. It delivers what it promises about the products/services.

Methodology

A qualitative research method was used for this study, owing to the lack of previous research on advertising credibility and its effects on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image (Creswell, 2009; Priporas *et al.,* 2017). Nearly 11 interviews and four mini focus groups were conducted with academics, advertisers, marketers and consumers. These numbers are suggested to be adequate by previous researchers (De Ruyter and Scholl, 1998; Priporas *et al.,* 2012; Foroudi *et al.,* 2017), who indicated that the use of a small sample was acceptable. According to past researchers (Hellstrom, 2008; Priporas *et al.,* 2012), the value of qualitative samples should depend on the ability of interviewees to provide insightful information, because they are representative of larger groups. The involvement of selected academics, advertisers, marketers and consumers was the best choice for this study, owing to their relevancy, knowledge, expertise and usage. This approach has helped the researcher to gain insights into the topic.

A semi-structured interview protocol was created, based on the existing literature and with the help of other researchers and academics. Its focus was to ask participants how they defined advertising credibility and what effects they thought it could have on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image. In addition, there were questions on participants' age, gender, ethnicity and income.

The participants were academics, advertisers, marketers and general consumers. Their ages ranged between 18 and 50. They were chosen to represent different ethnic backgrounds, genders and social classes. Most were from the 32 London boroughs. They were contacted by phone, email or post, and were sent a brief to inform them about the topic. Most of the interviews and focus groups were held in locations convenient to the participants. Each interview and focus group lasted between 24 minutes and more than an hour. All were recorded to increase the accuracy of the data and minimise bias. Details of the interviews and focus groups, with information on the participants, durations and topics, are given in Table 2 and Table 3.

[Table 2 Here]

[Table 3 Here]

Before each interview and focus group, the participants were given a brief about the purpose of the research. It was explained that the interviews and focus groups were voluntary and were based on their thoughts and feelings. The participants were informed that the interviews and focus groups would be audio recorded and would be used for the research purpose only, and that their identities would not be revealed. It was suggested that their honest opinions were what the researcher was interested in. They were given an opportunity to withdraw from the research at any stage. Overall, ethical considerations such as anonymity, informed consent and no harm were kept central to the research (Priporas *et al.,* 2017).

Data from the interviews and focus groups was analysed using thematic analysis. All six steps of thematic analysis were used: familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining the themes and producing the report. In this study, theoretical thematic analysis was used, which means that the researcher focused only on a particular feature in the data while coding it. In addition, contextualist thematic analysis was used, which sits between the two poles, *i.e.* it lies between essentialism and constructionism (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This approach has coined the term critical realism, which recognises the way people make meanings of their experiences, and in return, the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings, while retaining a focus on the material and other limits of reality (*ibid*).

Findings

The findings of this study are in line with those of previous studies (Lutz *et al.,* 1985; Kim and Han, 2014). These findings suggest that advertising credibility is defined on the basis of terms like accurate, caring, competent, complete, convincing, ethical, honest, impressing, reliable and warranted. It delivers what it promises about the products/service. The study further suggests that advertising credibility has a positive effect on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image. However, these effects could vary in different situations.

Advertising credibility definition

The definitions of advertising credibility found from the qualitative findings were highly consistent with the definitions given by previous researchers (Lutz *et al.,* 1985; MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989; Greer, 2003; Yakoop *et al.,* 2013; Kim and Han, 2014). The findings of the exploratory study suggested that advertising credibility was defined by the participants on the

basis of the need for claims made by advertisers and marketers to be honest, reliable, open and trustworthy. Participants mentioned that advertisers should provide realistic and detailed information regarding the product and the brand, and should not include any information which was not true or did not reflect the real meanings of the brand. They further suggested that consumers would only trust the advertising if, when they bought the brand, they found similar attributes to those advertised; if the final experience was not similar to what had been shown in the advertising, then it could badly affect the brand and the firm. Some of the academics, advertisers, marketers and customers stated:

> "Advertising credibility is [that] what they are trying to advertise should provide enough information at the moment of purchase." (Interviewee 1)

> "Whatever is being advertised, [if] it's alright, they're telling the truth and it's showing the right picture, and the reality is going to be same as it is advertised, I think that advertising will be credible for me." (Interviewee 7)

> "Advertising is very important, yes. I think advertising is the way that corporations or brands communicate, so credibility is really important. I am trying to think how else you can communicate with me, so there is no other way really. I need to trust your advertisement." (Interviewee 9)

> "Advertisements need to be credible, because I bought products based on what I liked, I saw and I won't be testing before. actually recommended it, like this one the shampoo, Alpesso, the German engineering for your hair and I had a friend, I recommended it, why don't you buy it, you are German, it works and he did" (Participant 2, Focus Group 4)

Effects of advertising credibility

Effect of advertising credibility on brand credibility

The participants suggested that advertising credibility and brand credibility were associated. They suggested that advertising credibility had a positive effect on brand credibility. They further mentioned that advertising was a sort of window which showed the brand and related products. Advertising creates the first impression regarding the brand. It suggests what the brand is, what it does and how it is different from other brands. It becomes necessary for

firms to be mindful of the possible consequences when they advertise the product, as one wrong move can have a negative impact. Credible advertising can help enhance consumers' perception of the credibility of brand, which further encourages them to buy or use the brand.

These findings are consistent with the outcomes of previous studies (Choi and Rifon, 2002; Koslow, 2006), where researchers using similar constructs proved the positive effect. Choi and Rifon (2002) examined the effect of advertising credibility on brand attitude and suggested significant outcomes. Koslow *et al.* (2006) found a positive effect of advertising on increasing brand image. Goldsmith *et al.* (2000) and Lafferty *et al.* (2002) examined the effects of attitude towards the advertisement on attitude towards the brand and found a positive effect. Feiz *et al.* (2013) examined the impact of attitude towards advertising on brand attitude and suggested a positive effect. Buil *et al.* (2016) examined the effect of attitude towards advertising on brand equity and suggested that it had a positive influence. The results of this study are a step forward, as they demonstrate the effects of advertising credibility on brand credibility, based on participants' views. According to the participants:

"Advertising for the majority of consumers is like a sort of window, where they can see the product and the brand and the company. So I think there is a direct connection [between] what you advertise and how you depict yourself, so I think it is really, really important how you advertise yourself and what you show in that advert." (Interviewee 1)

"Advertising [affects] brand credibility, yes of course. As the brand appears in the advertisement, that advertisement plays an important role for stakeholders and not general for customers. Yes it has an effect, because advertisements are media you use as a promotional tool, used by marketers to send or deliver a message, sometimes to customers or sometimes to stakeholders in general, potential customers, *etc*. Therefore it is a very sensitive tool we use, and it plays an important in affecting brand credibility." (Interviewee 8）

"If I don't think advertising is credible, I will view the brand negatively, and that's how I am going to change how I view the brand. You cannot change how I view the

brand: you project how you want me to view your brand, but I still decide how I view the brand, if I add all these components." (Interviewee 9)

"Yes, depending on your advertising: if your advertising is ridiculous, then your brand is ridiculous too." (Participant 4, Focus Group 3)

Effect of advertising credibility on corporate credibility

Participants suggested that advertising credibility had a direct effect on corporate credibility. They said that if the advertising was credible, it suggested that the corporation was credible too, while if the advertising lacked credibility, it could have a direct negative effect on the credibility of the firm. These findings are consistent with the previous literature (Cotte *et al.,* 2005; Yakoop *et al.,* 2013), where researchers using similar constructs proved the positive effect of advertising on corporate credibility. Cotte *et al.* (2005) proved that a positive relationship existed between advertising credibility and corporate attributions. Yakoop *et al.* (2013) confirmed the positive effect of advertising credibility on attitude towards the firm. Wang *et al.* (2009) found positive effects of advertising on a firm's assets and suggested that they were sustainable and accumulative and supported the asset characteristics of advertising expenditures. Other results have suggested that advertising has a positive effect on a firm's performance (Peterson and Jeong, 2010) and value (Luo and de Jong, 2010). According to the participants:

"Advertisements are a company's first impression and there is really no getting it back. If you see one negative advertisement from the company, that will probably stay with you, whether it's subconsciously [or otherwise]. It's a risk and it might only be in the short term that it has a negative impression." (Interviewee 6)

"They feed each other, don't they? I don't think that I can ever think of an advertisement and disassociate it from the actual corporation or the brand or the image. I can't do that, because it's top down […] so all these components definitely have an effect." (Interviewee 9)

"Yes, you always find out the lead, the source. If it's bad, you will already recognise the brand, it actually projects." (Participant 2, Focus Group 3)

Further findings suggest that if a firm and brand have dissimilar names, or are not associated with each other, the advertising will not have the same effect as when the firm and brand have similar names. These findings are consistent with those of previous researchers (*e.g.* Keller and Aaker, 1997; Milberg *et al.,* 1997; Goldsmith *et al.,* 2000; Berens *et al.,* 2005).

Participants also suggested that this scenario could also be beneficial owing to the nature of one construct's effects on the other. As these constructs have a direct effect on each other, it can be suggested that negative advertising credibility can have a negative effect on corporate credibility. These findings are consistent with those in the literature, where researchers have suggested the effect of one negative construct on the other (Till and Shimp, 1998; Doss, 2011). Participants expressed this in some of the following ways:

> "In some cases, organisations use product branding and they do not involve the organisation's name in the product brand. For example, you talk about UniLever, if we talk about Lux, one of their brands, or Ariel, they don't associate their organisation's name with their product names, which could create problems in associating the brand with the firm. However, in that case, there can be some benefit for the organisation, such as that if something turns negative for the product, it may not hurt the credibility of the organisation as a whole to that extent. If we compare that with the organisations who use their own names in their products, for example Gillette or Nike, if the image of anything goes wrong, it may hurt the image of the organisation as a whole." (Interviewee 7)

Effect of advertising credibility on corporate image
This study also suggests that advertising credibility has a positive and direct effect on corporate image. According to the participants, corporate image is perceived from the consumers' perspective, and advertising credibility could play a role in changing consumers' perceptions. However, if advertising credibility is low, then it can cause harm to the overall image of the corporation. These findings are consistent with those of previous researchers (Reid and Buchanan, 1977; Ashikali *et al.,* 2017), who have confirmed that advertising plays an important role and is one of the most efficient means to convey the image of the corporate. According to the participants:

"I think [advertising credibility and corporate image] are definitely related. Corporate image is perceived from the consumers' perspective, and ad credibility could change corporate image, because people relate to the last thing that has happened. The ad can definitely cause harm to corporate image." (Interviewee 4)

"I think it brings out the truth of what the company started on, the basis of what the company started on, so I guess yes." (Participant 5, Focus Group 3)

Conclusions

The findings suggest that advertising credibility is defined on the basis of terms like accurate, caring, competent, complete, convincing, ethical, honest, impressing, reliable and warranted. It delivers what it promises about the products/service. It also suggests that advertising credibility has positive effects on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image. These effects are lower when the brand and corporation have different names than when the brand and corporation have similar names. The findings also suggest that dissimilar names can be of some benefit, especially when brands or firms are faced with a crisis.

Theoretical and managerial implications

This study has both theoretical and managerial implications. In terms of the theoretical contribution, this study has provided new insights. Firstly, this research has contributed to exploring the topic using a qualitative method. Most previous researchers (Cotte *et al.,* 2005; Okazaki, 2004; 2013; Yakoop *et al.,* 2013) have examined this topic using a quantitative research method, and there is very little evidence exploring advertising credibility based on qualitative research. The qualitative research method has helped in understanding the feelings and attitudes of participants in exploring advertising credibility and its effects.

Secondly, this research has minimised a gap in the literature by understanding the meaning of advertising credibility based on qualitative research. Again, most researchers (Cotte *et al.,* 2005; Okazaki, 2004; 2013; Yakoop *et al.,* 2013) have used a quantitative research method, and there is very little evidence exploring the definition of advertising credibility using a qualitative research method. The explanations and definitions found by this study are mostly in line with the definitions given by prior researchers.

Finally, this study has minimised a gap in the literature by examining the effects of advertising credibility on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image. The results show that there is a positive effect of advertising credibility on each of them. These results are consistent with most of the previous findings, where researchers (Cotte *et al.,* 2005; Wang *et al.,* 2009; Ashikali *et al.,* 2017) have examined the effects of similar constructs. Most previous studies have examined these effects using a quantitative research method, and there has been little use of qualitative research method. Again, this is the first study to explore the effects of advertising credibility on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image using a qualitative research method.

Alongside these theoretical contributions, this study also makes managerial contributions. First and foremost, this study could help managers in understanding advertising credibility in more detail. It could help them to understand the term equally from the perspectives of academics, advertisers, marketers and consumers. It could also help them know the terms that are usually used by participants in defining advertising credibility.

Moreover, the findings could also help managers understand the role that advertising credibility could play in having a positive effect on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image. The findings illustrate that credible advertising has a positive effect on each of the other constructs, while advertising that lacks credibility damages the credibility, reputation and image of the brand and corporation. Therefore, managers need to be very careful with their advertising and should take each and every aspect of it into consideration.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study has several limitations, which could suggest avenues for future research. First and foremost, as this study uses a qualitative research method, a future exploration of this topic based on empirical research using a quantitative research method would help in increasing generalisability and validity. Secondly, a future study could examine the effects of boundary conditions. Future researchers could examine the effects of various types (humour, guilt, *etc.*) of advertising (product, corporate, financial, *etc.*), and methods of advertising (television, radio, news, print, online, *etc.*) and could examine their effects on the brand and corporation. Furthermore, a future study could examine the effects of advertising credibility levels (*i.e.* high, moderate and low) on other constructs. A future study could also examine the effects of advertising credibility on other attitudinal and behavioural constructs, *e.g.* the effects of

advertising credibility on attitude towards brand, attitude towards corporation, and purchase intention. Finally, a future study could also examine the effects of advertising credibility on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image, based on different cultures.

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Table 2: Literature on advertising credibility

Researchers	Purpose	Findings	Methodology
Mackenzie *et al.* (1989)	The study examined the effects of advertising credibility, advertising perceptions, attitude towards advertiser, attitude towards advertising, and on ad attitude	The study found that advertising credibility, advertising perceptions and attitude towards advertising were found having an effect on ad attitude. However, attitude towards advertiser did not have any effect on ad attitude	Structure equation modelling
Flanagin and Metzger (2000)	The study investigated people's perceptions of the credibility of various categories of internet information compared to similar information provided by other media	Overall, the respondents reported that they considered internet information to be as credible as that obtained from television, radio, and magazines, but not as credible as newspaper information	ANOVA
Choi and Rifon (2002)	The present study explored antecedents and consequences of online advertising credibility and examined the effects of (1) website credibility, (2) ad relevance, and (3) advertiser credibility on advertising credibility, advertising attitude, brand attitude, and product purchase intentions	The results suggested that source credibility was vital to understand the web advertising effectiveness	Structure equation modelling
Greer (2003)	The study investigated participants' views on advertising when the news and story were surrounded by high credibility source compare to low credibility source	Participants did not show any difference on advertising when the news and story were surrounded by high or low credible source	ANOVA
Cotte *et al.* (2005)	The study examined whether the consumers' evaluations of an advertising credibility could enhance, and perceptions of manipulative intent can disrupt, the emotional response intended by the advertiser. The study also investigated the effects of these two variables on attitude towards the advertising and corporate attributions, including attitude towards the sponsor of the advertising We examine a commonly employed emotional tactic—the guilt appeal—and report the results of an experimental study	The results suggested that credible guilt advertisements that were not overtly manipulative induce guilt feelings and positive attitudes. However, when consumers inferred manipulative intent by the marketer, consumers did not feel guilty, but did have negative attitudes toward the sponsor of the advertisement and the advertisement	Correlation
Haghirian *et al.* (2005)	The study examined the effects of message content (i.e. entertainment, informativeness, irritation, and credibility), message exposure, attitude towards privacy, and age of consumers on advertising value of mobile marketing	The results indicated that the message content, message exposure, attitude towards privacy, and age of consumers had greatest relevance for the perceived advertising value	Regression Analyses

Chowdhury *et al.* (2006)	Based on the existing literature about attitudes toward advertising and consumer behaviour models, a research framework was constructed to illustrate the factors (i.e. entertainment, informativeness, irritation, and advertising credibility) affecting consumer attitudes toward SMS-based advertisements in Bangladesh	The findings of this study showed that if mobile advertisers could present mobile ads pleasingly, with appropriate information, consumers will not be annoyed and there was a fair possibility that they will gradually like the ads. Furthermore, advertising credibility, a construct of this study, found to be the most significant of the factors affecting respondents' attitude toward mobile ads	Structure equation modelling
Celebi (2007)	The purpose of this study was to investigate the credibility of advertising vs. publicity; to examine the credibility of advertising including a promotional endorser (APE) and publicity including a promotional endorser (PPE); to compare the credibility of advertising across the different demographic segments; and to explore the important factors affecting consumers' shopping considerations of new fast moving consumer goods (FMCGs) in Turkey.	Advertising was found to be more credible by the participants with higher income. Respondents' shopping decisions of new FMCGs were affected by price and quality more than the other factors. Consumers tended to rely on publicity more than advertising; more than APE; and more than PPE. They also tended to count PPE more credible than APE	T-test and Pearson chi-square
Drossos *et al.* (2007)	The research investigated the significance of a number of factors i.e. location, interactivity, incentive, advertising credibility, appeal, product involvement, attitude towards mobile advertising, on attitude towards advertising, attitude towards brand, and purchase intention	The findings indicated that incentive, interactivity, appeal, product involvement, and attitude toward SMS advertising in general directly influence attitude toward the advertisement, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intention.	ANOVA
Haghirian and Inoue (2007)	The paper discussed the relevance of advertising on the mobile internet as a marketing tool and investigated the antecedents of Japanese consumer attitudes towards the new advertising channel. The elements of consumers' attitude included in this study were entertainment, informativeness, irritation, and credibility.	The outcomes suggested that all the elements of consumers' attitude had a positive effect on the consumers' attitudes towards the advertising	Structure equation modelling
Moore and Rodgers (2007)	The purpose of the study was to examine differences in consumers' perceptions of advertising credibility for five media, i.e. newspapers, television, radio, magazines, and the internet - and the moderating role of persuasion knowledge in those perceptions	The results indicated that advertising credibility was highest for traditional media and lowest for the internet. Advertising skepticism was highest for new media and lowest for print media. Moreover, knowledge about advertising influenced skepticism towards advertising in radio and newspaper, while, suspicion of advertising affected credibility of advertising in each media. The findings were congruent with the persuasion knowledge model of	Regression Analyses

	information processing and support the position that individuals used their persuasion knowledge when making judgments about advertisements	
Xu (2007)	The study investigated the factors, i.e. entertainment, informativeness, irritation, credibility, and personalisation affected consumers' attitude towards mobile advertising in China	The outcomes suggested that all the factors in the study had affected the attitude and intention towards mobile advertising	Structure equation modelling
Prendergast *et al.* (2009)	The aim of the research was to identify for which types of products and services consumers find the advertising to lack credibility and in which media this effect was most serious. The association between self-esteem and skepticism towards advertising was also explored.	The results showed that ads for weight-loss products were considered the least credible. The broadcast media (radio, broadcast television and cable television) were considered the most credible advertising media, while direct mail and the internet were considered the least credible. Self-esteem was found to be positively related with skepticism towards advertising	Multiple regression
Yaakop *et al.* (2013)	The paper aimed to examine the online factors (such as perceived interactivity, advertising avoidance, privacy and advertising credibility) that influenced consumers' perceptions and attitude towards advertising on facebook	The results suggested that there were three online factors that significantly influenced consumers' attitudes towards advertising on Facebook. These three factors were perceived interactivity, advertising avoidance and privacy. However, advertising credibility was not proved a significant factor of predicting consumers' attitude towards advertising on Facebook.	Multivariate analysis
Kim and Han (2014)	The study suggested a comprehensive advertising model that combined a web advertising model, personalization and flow theory in understanding the antecedents of purchase intention and influence processes in the context of smartphone advertisements	The results showed that personalization had a positive association with informativeness, advertising credibility, and entertainment of the advertising message while having a negative association with irritation. Purchase intention was increased by advertising value and flow experience. Advertising value had a positive relationship with advertising credibility, entertainment, and incentives. Flow experience was positively associated with advertising credibility, entertainment, incentives. Irritation negatively affected flow experience but advertising value.	Structure equation modelling
Delafrooz and Zanjankhah (2015)	The study examined the factors (i.e. entertainment, informativeness, advertising credibility, personalisation, irritation, permission, and risk acceptance) affecting consumers' attitude towards	The results of data collected by structural equation modelling (path analysis) indicated that consumers had a positive attitude toward mobile advertising; moreover, subjective norms and perceived behaviour	Structure equation modelling

	mobile advertising. Further, the study also examined the effect of factors (i.e. attitude towards mobile advertising, perceived behaviour control, and subjective norms) on the intention of accepting the mobile advertising	control are other factors affecting the intention of using mobile advertising	
Aydin (2016)	The study examined the factors (i.e. perceived informativeness, perceived entertainment, advertising credibility, and irritation) that have a positive effect on attitude towards advertisements in digital channels	The results based on the regression analysis suggested that all the relations were significant except irritation effect on attitude towards advertising in digital channels	Regression Analyses

Table 3: Interviews

Interviewee number	Profession	Age	Gender	Approximate duration
1	Marketer	36	Male	54 minutes
2	Academic	33	Male	50 minutes
3	Academic	36	Female	34 minutes
4	Marketer	29	Female	37 minutes
5	Academic	45	Female	30 minutes
6	Academic	47	Male	70 minutes
7	Marketer	36	Female	25 minutes
8	Marketer	26	Female	50 minutes
9	Advertising	31	Female	35 minutes
10	Advertising	24	Female	26 minutes
11	Marketer	24	Male	25 minutes
Topics discussed				
- Discussion on the definition of advertising credibility				
- Discussion on the effects of advertising credibility on brand credibility				
- Discussion on the effects of advertising credibility on corporate credibility				
- Discussion on the effects of advertising credibility on corporate image				

Table 4: Focus groups

Focus group number	Number of participants	Age range	Gender	Duration
1	5	20-45	Mixed	35 minutes
2	6	23-41	Mixed	30 minutes
3	6	19-47	Mixed	30 minutes
4	6	18-34	Mixed	38 minutes
Topics discussed				
- Discussion on the definition of advertising credibility				
- Discussion on the effects of advertising credibility on brand credibility				
- Discussion on the effects of advertising credibility on corporate credibility				
- Discussion on the effects of advertising credibility on corporate image				