

# FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS MOBILE MARKETING IN PAKISTAN

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## ABSTRACT

The rapid change in technology and mobile phones has created new channels for marketing. Mobile marketing is an emerging marketing trend that has gained attention, and is becoming a popular direct marketing tool for marketers across the world. The Present research investigates factors affecting consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing and explores the moderating role of permission based mobile marketing. The data was gathered by means of an adapted questionnaire from 123 respondents from the twin cities of Pakistan, Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Correlation and regression analysis were used to find out the relationship between the dependent variable of attitude towards mobile marketing and independent variables of perceived informativeness, entertainment, irritation and source credibility, and a moderating affect of permission-based mobile marketing was analyzed. The study findings indicate that consumers generally have positive attitude towards mobile marketing. Entertainment was found to be the most significant factor affecting consumers' attitude followed by source credibility whereas permission-based mobile marketing did not moderate the relationship between irritation and attitude towards mobile marketing. Some of the managerial implications are that mobile marketing messages should be designed keeping in mind consumers' preferences for the information content, entertainment as well as the source credibility. Timely and relevant information should be provided to generate more favorable attitudes. Moreover, consumers' privacy concerns should be valued by companies practicing mobile marketing so that consumers show their willingness to provide companies with their mobile numbers and demographical data so that companies can send advertising messages with consumers' prior permission.

## INTRODUCTION

Mobile marketing has become the latest marketing trend and has gained popularity as a direct marketing tool across the world. Globally, the advertising industry's interest in using mobile phones as a medium for marketing communication is on its rise (Bauer, Barnes, Reichardt, & Neumann, 2005), and mobile devices are supposed to be influential channels for marketing communication (Nysveen, Pedersen, Thorbjornsen, & Berthon, 2005). Advertisers are using this tool in their marketing campaigns (Hurwitz, 2009) because of its high penetration rate and low costs associated with it (Leppaniemi & Karjaluoto, 2008; Komulainen, Mainela, Tahtinen & Ulkuniemi, 2007), and help create relationships between customers and marketers thus making it a two-way means of communication.

With the advent of mobile marketing the horizons of marketing have also expanded and now marketers can connect with their customers' any place and anytime, thereby making the connectivity easy and

efficient (Scharl, Dickinger, & Murphy, 2005). Many of the successful brands worldwide have integrated this channel for the advertising of their goods and services (Merisavo et al., 2007). Once mobile advertising succeeds in building personal relationships with its customers, it promises increase in sales of different products and services (Leppaniemi & Karjaluoto, 2005), and businesses consider it as a valuable tool for creating brand awareness and image (Okazaki, 2005).

Globally, the adoption of mobile phones has been tremendous (Stump, Gong, & Li, 2008) and mobile phones have become an essential part of our day to day lives (Bosnjak, Metzger, & Graf, 2010). According to the statistics, Pakistan is the seventh largest country in terms of mobile phone users with total number of subscriptions crossing the figure of 108 million in the year 2011, and more than 65% of the population is having a mobile phone (Telecom Indicators, 2011). This channel provides real opportunities for businesses to acquire new customers and to communicate with the current ones (Blanco, Blasco & Azorin, 2010)

thereby establishing its importance as a marketing communication tool.

Research conducted in various parts of the world usually show that consumers hold negative attitude towards mobile marketing (Drossos, Giaglis, Lekakos, Kokkinaki, & Stavradi, 2007; Tsang, Ho, & Liang, 2004; Rettie & Brum, 2001), and a weak acceptance of mobile phone marketing has been observed (Roach, 2009). Although mobile phones have been increasingly used for marketing communication, a lot is to be explored about this channel and consumers' perceptions towards this medium in order to remove possible negative effects. Little experience is possessed by the businesses for the usage of mobile marketing tool (Dickinger, Haghirian, Murphy, & Scharl, 2004), and consumers have not yet realized its importance as an advertising channel (Phau & Teah, 2009).

Similarly more features are to be identified that create positive and negative attitude towards mobile advertising (Saadeghvaziri & Hosseini, 2011). Therefore, this study tends to investigate consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing in Pakistan and the underlying factors that can enhance consumers' perceptions towards this medium of marketing. In a country like Pakistan, where the usage of mobile phones is sky high and observed to be increasing tremendously, marketers should pay emphasis as to what factors contribute towards the effectiveness of mobile marketing campaigns and its acceptance by consumers, because in the present time, the potential of this tool for marketing communication is observed to be underutilized in Pakistan. Many of the past studies have focused only on young consumers' perceptions of mobile marketing while ignoring the other half. As the use of mobile phones is same across all age groups, therefore, this study tends to explore consumers' attitude across all age groups and their relevant perceptions regarding this channel of marketing communication, specifically, in terms of factors such as informativeness, entertainment, source credibility and irritation that are linked with mobile marketing messages.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Mobile Marketing

Mobile marketing makes use of mobile devices such as mobile phones and personal digital assistants for the transmission of advertising messages (Lee, Hsieh, & Huang, 2011), where SMS messages are sent by marketers to their customers and general public (Boadi, Boateng, Hinson, & Opoku, 2007). With the emergence of new technologies, mobile phones have become attractive for consumers and has gained huge

acceptance (Pajnik & Tusek, 2002) and throughout the developed world, the use of mobile phones has been tremendous among teenagers and young adults (Axelsson, 2010). Therefore, advertisers have uncovered the importance of mobile marketing medium for the initiation of communication between customers and company, thereby resulting into superior customer relationship management (Sinisalo, Salo, Leppaniemi, & Karjaluoto, 2005). By making use of mobile technology, companies have reached their customers in an efficient manner which had not been possible with the use of traditional media as mobile marketing is an innovative and effective way of communicating with customers (Sinisalo, Salo, Karjaluoto, & Leppaniemi, 2006).

Mobile phone is a very personal device and consumers have it with them all the time thereby making its use anywhere and anytime. Hence it is easy to transmit marketing information by means of messaging (Okazaki, 2005), and with the use of SMS/MMS companies can build emotional relationship with their customers, and can become a part of their daily lives, thereby strengthening their loyalty to the brand (Nysveen, Pedersen, Thorbjornsen, & Berthon, 2005).

Short messaging service (SMS) is one of the most successful mobile services in present times and is largely used for the purpose of communication and interaction (Nysveen et al., 2005). Similarly, SMS channel provides companies with a communication platform which is an excellent mean of transmitting information about new products and services, thereby allowing the company to grow and expand (Kleijnen, Lievens, Ruyter, & Wetzels, 2009). According to Radder, Pietersen, Wang, and Han (2010), mobile marketing will remain a leading direct marketing tool because of lower costs associated with it and because of the novelty of the medium, therefore, to increase its acceptance, incentives should be provided to the early adopters as consumers only accept advertisements which benefit them and are of their interest.

### Factors Affecting Consumers' Attitude towards Mobile Marketing

#### Informativeness

Informativeness refers to the effectiveness of advertising programs in providing consumers with necessary information that helps them in decision making (Lee-Wingate & Xie, 2010). Advertising is a primary source of information for consumers (Wang, 2007), and as perceived utility and informativeness are the main determinants of mobile marketing, therefore, latest information should be provided to consumers in

order to tie them more closely to the firm (Merisavo et al., 2007). Similarly, the information service quality of advertisements should be improved so as to build consumers' loyalty towards mobile information services (Kondo, Hirata, & Akter, 2010).

The diffusion of mobile phones and its usage as a marketing medium is growing rapidly, therefore, it is important that the advertising messages should be kept simple and relevant, containing content that consumers desire for in order to achieve the desired outcome (Jenkins, 2006). According to Coursaris, Sung, and Swierenga (2010), while designing mobile advertisements, both utilitarian and hedonic values should be incorporated into the advertising messages. Utilitarian value means that advertisements should make consumers learn something new about the advertised brand or product and hedonic value in terms of mobile ads being humorous so as to gain consumers' attention. Bamoriya and Singh (2011) observed that consumers who are information seekers tend to have more favorable attitude towards mobile advertisements as compared to those who are not, therefore, informative and entertaining advertisements should be designed to increase consumers' acceptance, as advertising informativeness generates positive consumers' attitude (Saadeghvaziri & Seyedjavadin, 2011). Therefore, it is suggested that:

*Hypothesis 1. The perceived informativeness of mobile marketing messages positively affects consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing.*

## Entertainment

One of an essential factors for mobile advertising is entertainment. So, short and humorous messages should be designed in order to catch consumers' attention instantaneously (Haghirian, Madlberger, & Tanuskova, 2005). Entertainment enhances the advertising value and generates favorable attitudes as it is observed to have a strong positive effect on the value of advertisement (Xu, Oh, & Teo, 2009). Consumers consider advertising messages more valuable if they are perceived as entertaining and fun containing and hence place high importance on this aspect of advertising (Oh & Xu, 2003).

Al-alak and Alnawas (2010) observed that consumers who perceived SMS advertising messages entertaining showed more willingness to participate in mobile marketing, and a positive association was observed between entertainment and consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, humor appeal should be made an integral part of advertisements in order

to make them as entertaining as possible (Bamoriya & Singh, 2011) as it is the most significant factor affecting consumers' attitude towards mobile advertising (Tsang et al., 2004). Hence, it is hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 2. The higher the entertainment factor of mobile marketing messages, more positive attitude consumers have towards mobile marketing.*

## Source Credibility

Source credibility refers to the skills and ability of the communicator conveying the messages and the extent to which the communicator is trusted by the recipient of that communication (Buda & Zhang, 2000). Similarly, it refers to the expertness and knowledge of the message provider and the message provider's reliability, honesty and trustworthiness for building and increasing consumers' trust (Wu & Wang, 2011). According to Muzaffar and Kamran (2011) credibility refers to the trustworthiness and efficiency of the source, hence if the source is perceived as credible by consumers, they will be having a positive response towards the advertisement. Therefore, source credibility is observed to have a significant impact on attitude towards the ad and the purchase intention (Clow, Fames, Kranenburg, & Berry, 2006).

Mobile media advertisements are considered to be more credible as compared to internet advertisements (Jordaan, Ehlers, & Grove, 2011); hence, by focusing upon strong and positive media presence through advertising, marketers can gain consumers' trust as it is the main factor affecting consumers' participation in mobile marketing (Jayawardhena, Kuckertz, Karjaluoto, & Kautonen, 2009). Consumers allow advertisers to use their personal information, and appear to trust and accept mobile advertisements only if the company is well-known to them (Kautonen, Karjaluoto, Jayawardhena, & Kuckertz, 2007). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 3. Higher the perceived credibility of mobile marketing messages, more positive attitude consumers have towards mobile marketing.*

## Irritation

SMS channel provides marketers with immense opportunities of transmitting marketing information to the targeted customers, but at the same time makes a company vulnerable to many threats one of which is causing irritation and turning away of potential

customers (Westell & Wessing, 2003). Likewise, as mobile phones offer personalization and greater possibility of reaching customers, marketers have been excited for the use of this medium but it has been observed that young consumers relate this medium with irritation, intrusion and mistrust (Grant & O'Donohoe, 2007).

The perceived irritation of mobile marketing messages negatively influences advertising value (Oh & Xu, 2003), and it has been observed that unsolicited ads create annoyance and consumers are less likely to purchase products on the basis of advertisements that are sent on their mobile phones (McCasland, 2005). Similarly, a greater frequency of exposure to advertisement messages can result into negative attitude towards ads (Saadeghvaziri & Seyedjavadain, 2011). According to Wang, Oh, and Wang (2009), perceived ad intrusiveness in mobile advertising is observed to be causing irritation and ad avoidance, and it can be reduced by providing relevant and informative content to consumers. Similarly, advertisements are perceived as less intrusive and do not cause irritation if they are promoting products of consumers' interest (Wehmeyer, 2007). Hence it is suggested that:

*Hypothesis 4. The perceived irritation of mobile marketing messages negatively influences consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing.*

### **Permission-based Mobile Marketing**

Permission based mobile marketing is defined as a marketing strategy where SMS advertisements are sent only to the consumers who have granted permission and have shown interest in receiving promotional information on their mobile phones (Waldt, Rebello, & Brown, 2009). Permission-based mobile marketing will become a vital direct marketing tool in near future as it allows targeting of potential customers on the basis of their present location and disclosed interests, thereby increasing the response rate (Reyck & Degraeve, 2003).

One of the most common mistakes in conducting m-marketing campaigns is sending marketing messages to consumers without their permission (Salo, Sinisalo, & Karjaluo, 2008) because it has been observed that permission based mobile advertising creates positive attitude whereas sending advertising messages without permission generates negative attitude (Tsang et al., 2004). Therefore, permission-based mobile marketing should be adopted in order to reduce customers' irritation because if the messages are sent with customers' consent, there are more chances that

the messages would be read and absorbed (Haghirian, Madlberger & Inoue, 2008). Similarly consumers are more willing to participate in m-marketing activities if they have granted permission to the advertisers. So, in order to make mobile marketing an effective tool, consumers' prior permission should be obtained (Standing, Benson, & Karjaluo, 2005).

By providing relevant, requested and interactive content to consumers, mobile marketing can become a successful and lucrative industry but it is important to respect consumers' privacy (Kavassalis et al., 2003) because even if the advertisements are informative and relevant, consumers do not like to be bombarded with advertising messages or receiving advertisements at inappropriate time and place (Zhang, Guerrero, Wheatley, & Lee, 2010). Moreover, company's reputation may also get damaged by means of sending SMS advertisements without prior permission (Muzaffar & Kamran, 2011). Therefore, in order to turn consumers' attitude positive towards mobile advertising, messages should be sent with their prior permission (Mir, 2011). Therefore, it is stated that:

*Hypothesis 5. Permission-based mobile marketing moderates the relationship between irritation and consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing.*

### **Attitude towards Mobile Marketing**

Consumers' attitude towards advertisements affects their attitude towards the brand (Tan & Chia, 2007). According to Wang (2007), effective mobile marketing requires a deep understanding of customers' preferences, i.e., what the customers are really looking for in mobile marketing and how they perceive mobile promotions and offerings. Despite the potential of mobile marketing, reluctance has been observed by customers for its adoption and certain challenges are being faced by mobile advertisers (Wilken & Sinclair, 2009). Consumers hold negative attitudes towards SMS advertisements especially when they are unsolicited, therefore, in order to avoid negative attitude, marketers should not ask for information which the consumers are not willing to provide (Bamba & Barnes, 2007). Similarly in another study conducted on college students, it was observed that in general, consumers' attitude towards mobile promotions was not positive (Wang & Acar, 2006) and they perceive SMS as a less effective channel for marketing communication as compared to traditional media. However, as the use of SMS is highest among younger population, young consumers' are more likely to accept offers sent via SMS (Danaher & Rossiter,

2011).

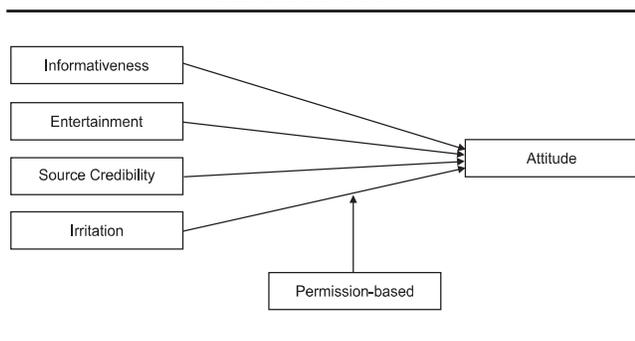
Keshtgary and Khajehpour (2011) observed that Iranian consumers do not hold negative attitudes towards mobile marketing but taking prior permission may generate more favorable attitude. Moreover, traditional mobile advertising messages that comprise of impersonalized marketing messages are usually treated as junk messages (Chen, Hsieh, Cheng, & Lin, 2009). So, in order to increase the acceptance of mobile marketing and to enhance its usage among customers, personalized messages should be delivered as they offer additional value for the customers (Gurau & Ranchhod, 2009).

The value of location based mobile advertising significantly drops if it is pushed at consumers therefore, care should be taken regarding consumers' privacy concerns and timely and relevant information should be provided (Unni & Harmon, 2007). Moreover, the degree of risk acceptance and consumers' personal attachment to their mobile phones also determine the acceptance of mobile marketing whereby providing incentives can increase consumers' acceptance of advertising messages (Gao, Sultan & Rohm, 2010). Similarly consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing is also predicted on the basis of its perceived usefulness (Hosseini, Ghazizadeh, Noroozi, Goharpad, & Mobarekeh, 2011).

It has been advised that marketers should formulate specific marketing plans in order to improve customers' attitude and their acceptance of m-commerce (Pavlou & Lie, 2006). Managers believe that by means of using appropriate marketing techniques, the acceptance of mobile marketing can be increased among consumers in a short time span and as younger consumers are early adopters of mobile advertising therefore, for marketers, the younger segment of the society is an attractive one (Okazaki & Taylor, 2008).

On the basis of the reviewed literature following theoretical model has been developed that shows the links between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Theoretical Model**



**METHODOLOGY**

**Sample Size**

Convenience sampling technique has been used for data collection and the data was collected from twin cities of Pakistan, Islamabad and Rawalpindi, by means of personal delivery of questionnaire. The individuals targeted for the collection of data for this research were users of mobile phones and consisted of undergraduate and graduate students of various universities and general consumers who make use of mobile phones. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed however, only 126 of them were returned so the response rate remained only 82 percent. The respondents included 85 males and 38 females. 70.7 percent of them were between 18 to 30 years of age with the mean respondent age M= 27.63, whereas 45.5 percent of the respondents were students, which indicates that the respondents' were primarily young and well educated.

**Instrumentation**

The instrument used for data collection was a structured, closed ended questionnaire adapted from the study of Tsang et al. (2004) and Kautonen et al. (2007) that studied five dimensions of mobile marketing messages i.e. informativeness, entertainment, source credibility, irritation and permission-based. The questionnaire consisted of two major parts. The first part collected the respondents' demographic data, such as age, gender, education and occupation. The second part asked about the respondents' general attitude towards mobile marketing as measured by five major attributes: informativeness, entertainment, irritation, source credibility and permission based marketing. The questionnaire consisted of 12 items in aggregate. Attitude consisted of one item, informativeness consisted of two items, entertainment consisted of two items, irritation consisted of two items, source credibility consisted of two items and permission-based consisted of three items. Two scales have been used by this research for gathering data from respondents. A five point Likert scale with options ranging from 5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= neutral, 2= disagree to 1= strongly disagree, was used to measure respondents' responses towards the dimensions of mobile marketing whereas nominal scale was used for the collection of the demographical data of respondents.

Cronbach alpha values for individual variables of informativeness was (.762), entertainment (.901), irritation (.796), source credibility (.606) and permission based (.668). The value for the entire questionnaire was .737. As the value of Cronbach

alpha for most of the variables and the entire questionnaire was above 0.70, hence, it ensures the reliability of the collected data and its suitability for further analysis.

## RESULTS

For the purpose of data analysis, statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 14 was used. Statistical tests were applied to check the reliability of the data and correlation analysis and regression analysis

were conducted in order to see the impact of independent variables over the dependent variable and the effect of moderation.

The correlation analysis, as shown in Table 1 below, depicts that all variables are significantly related to the attitude towards mobile marketing. Informativeness, entertainment and source credibility are positively correlated with the attitude towards mobile marketing whereas irritation is found to be negatively correlated. These results are in accordance with the findings of previous researches.

TABLE 1

	Attitude	Informativeness	Entertainment	Irritation	Source Credibility
Attitude	1				
Informativeness	.538**	1			
Entertainment	.689**	.608**	1		
Irritation	-.372**	-.284**	-.390**	1	
Source Credibility	.641**	.458**	.495**	-.297**	1

Note. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ ,  $N = 123$

Entertainment has got the highest correlation value of (.689). Hence a strong positive significant association is observed between entertainment and attitude towards mobile marketing which shows that the entertainment element of mobile advertising greatly affects consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing. Pleasing and entertaining advertisements catch consumers' interest and attention thereby increasing the impact of advertised product or service.

Source credibility turns out to be the second most influential factor affecting consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing. A high significant correlation value of (.641) indicates that consumers only accept and trust the information coming from a trustworthy source. Therefore, source credibility plays an important role in generating positive consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing. Higher the credibility of mobile advertisements, more positive attitude consumers would have towards them.

A significant correlation value of (.538) is observed between informativeness and attitude towards mobile marketing, which shows that both the variables have a strong positive association with each other. Informativeness plays an important role in generating positive consumers' attitude. Therefore, up to date, timely and accurate information should be provided and the messages should be made as valuable as possible so that they may benefit consumers'.

Other constructs are positively associated with consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing but correlation value of (-.372) indicates that irritation is

negatively associated with consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing. Though the relationship is not very strong but a significant value of correlation depicts that consumers do get irritated by mobile advertisements, as they are observed to be intrusive in nature and therefore result in negative consumers' attitude. Repeatedly sending same advertisements, containing same content frustrates the consumers and generates negative attitudes.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to see the combined effect of all independent variables over the dependent variable of attitude towards mobile marketing (See Table 2). The R-square value of (.615) indicates that the independent variables namely informativeness, entertainment, irritation and source credibility cause 61.5% variation in the dependent variable of attitude towards mobile marketing, whereas 38.5% of the variation is explained by other variables that are not studied in this model. A significance value of .000 shows the fitness of the model.

Table 2 shows the t-values and significance values of the independent variables. The first variable, i.e. informativeness has a significance value of (.205) and a corresponding t-value of (1.274). This shows a non-significant relationship between informativeness and consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing which means that informativeness does not have any impact on attitude towards mobile marketing. These results are in accordance with the findings of Blanco et al. (2010) and Muzaffar and Kamran (2011).

The second variable of entertainment has a

significance value of (.000) and a t-value of (5.606) which is above the acceptable value of 1.96. Hence the results show that entertainment significantly impacts consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing. Likewise, a significance value of (.000) and t-value (5.286) shows that source credibility also significantly impacts consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing.

The last variable i.e. irritation shows a significance value of (.286) and a t-value of (-1.071). These insignificant values depict that irritation does not impact consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing.

**TABLE 2**  
**Regression Statistics**

Variable	Beta	t-value	p-value
Informativeness	.094	1.274	.205
Entertainment	.438	5.606	.000
Irritation	-.067	-1.071	.286
Source Credibility	.361	5.286	.000
<b>R-square</b>	.615		
<b>Adjusted R-square</b>	.602		

In order to see whether permission-based mobile marketing moderates the relationship between independent variable of irritation and dependent variable of attitude towards mobile marketing, a moderated regression analysis was carried on. Table 3 shows the results of moderated regression analysis.

**TABLE 3**  
**Regression Statistics**

Variable	Beta	t-value	p-value
Interaction term	.285	1.151	.252

The table above shows a significance value of .252 and a t-value of 1.151. As the t-value is below the acceptable value of 1.96 so, these insignificant results show that permission-based mobile marketing does not moderate the relationship between irritation and attitude towards mobile marketing.

## DISCUSSION

On the basis of the above analysis,  $H_1$  is rejected and hence it is concluded that the perceived informativeness of mobile marketing messages does not result into positive attitude towards mobile marketing. The study findings are contradictory with the findings of researches conducted in other parts of the world. The main reason for such results is that in Pakistan the mobile advertisements are not designed by keeping in

view the interests of the recipients. No attention is paid to the individual interests. So, same kind of messages are designed for everyone including youth segment as well as for the middle age and older group of people which reduces the effectiveness of mobile advertising messages, and hence does not create any value for the recipients. Moreover, consumers believe that mobile advertisements do not provide timely information or the information that is required by them, which further worsens their attitude.

Entertainment significantly and positively impacts attitude towards mobile marketing. Therefore,  $H_2$  is accepted. The findings of this study are in accordance with the findings of (Tsang et al., 2004; Haghirian et al., 2005). Pleasing and entertaining advertisements should be sent in order to attract consumers' attention towards the advertised product or service. The incorporation of games and other fun elements in advertisements create value for the recipients and increase the acceptance of mobile marketing, especially when the target segment of a mobile marketing campaign consists of younger population, entertainment should be made an essential part of advertising messages to increase the response rate from their campaign as young consumers' are more receptive to entertaining content.

On the basis of the study findings,  $H_3$  is also accepted. The results depict a positive relationship between source credibility and consumers attitude towards mobile marketing. So, it can be concluded that higher perceived source credibility results into more favorable attitude towards mobile marketing. These findings are congruent with the studies of (Muzaffar & Kamran, 2011; Tsang et al., 2004; Haghirian et al., 2005) who came up with the same results. The credibility of the source providing information is very important as consumers only accept and trust information coming for a trustworthy source. Advertisers should build higher source credibility in order to increase the acceptance of their advertisements and to build a positive image of their company or brand in consumers' mind as it strengthens the link between company and its consumers. Furthermore, if consumers perceive information to be truthful and coming from a trustworthy source, they may share it with their family and friends which eventually enlarges and broadens the influence of mobile marketing campaign by the incorporation of viral effects.

Irritation has no significant impact on consumers attitude towards mobile marketing, therefore,  $H_4$  is rejected as the results show that perceived irritation of mobile marketing messages does not result into negative attitude. These findings are also in contradiction with many of the western studies which came up with the results that irritation results into negative consumers' attitude. Such difference in the study findings can be

supported on the basis of the cultural differences. The tolerance level among Pakistanis consumers is observed to be quite high, hence they do not get much bothered by such advertising messages. Likewise, consumers show reluctance towards complaining against such activities of advertisers which further encourages advertisers to continue practicing mobile marketing without taking prior permission. Moreover, as the sample studied for the purpose of this research mostly consisted of young population and the interaction of youth with technological devices, like mobile phones is observed to be quite different and its usage is relatively higher, so they do not get irritated by unwanted SMS advertisements (Muzaffar and Kamran, 2011).

The insignificant results for the moderation affect of permission-based mobile marketing between irritation and consumers' attitude towards mobile marketing leads to the rejection of  $H_5$ . Although many of the previous researches such as Tsang et al. (2004), Dickinger et al. (2004) and Bamba and Barnes (2007) stated that sending mobile advertisements without consumers consent results into irritation and resentment among message recipients, and acquiring prior permission leads to favorable attitude. The present study findings negate them.

Consumers are not willing to grant permission to advertisers so that they may indulge in the process of permission-based mobile marketing and hence for this reason advertisers continue sending unsolicited mobile advertising messages to consumers without their consent. A major reason for not granting permission is that in our culture, consumers resist sharing their personal information like demographical profile or mobile numbers with companies as it can be used for illegal purposes as a country like Pakistan is vulnerable to terrorist activities and people do not consider it safe to impart their personal information to any company. Hence, advertisers unethically track consumers' data without their permission and use it for mobile marketing purposes.

### Implication for Marketers

Marketers can make use of the study findings to devise mobile marketing campaigns that build positive consumers' attitudes and reduce negative effects. Similarly, the findings may also help advertisers emphasize on dimensions of mobile marketing messages that have not been paid much attention lately, but are likely of receiving recipients' attention as this medium has got the potential of creating value for companies by means of reducing costs. Likewise, by carefully designing advertising messages, advertisers can increase the influence of their campaigns and can generate a

response rate much higher as compared to the traditional mediums used for advertising products and services. Moreover, for making consumers a part of mobile marketing campaigns, incentives should be provided to consumers so that they may take part in promoting the campaign effects by sharing it with their family and friends, as it will further increase the source credibility.

Companies should indulge themselves in activities that build positive image of the company in consumers' minds. They should enforce that they have concern for their consumers' privacy rights and hence, take measure for the protection of consumers' rights. By doing this they may gain their consumers trust and eventually consumers would grant permission to the companies willing to practice permission-based mobile marketing.

### Limitations

Some of the limitations identified during the course of this research are that due to the shortage of time the data was collected from a limited number of people. A larger sample size could have generated even better results. Likewise, the data was collected only from the twin cities, Islamabad and Rawalpindi, which limits the generalizability of results across Pakistan. Future studies can be conducted by gathering data from various cities across Pakistan and by taking a larger sample size. This would assist in confirming the findings of this study and would also help to explore the topic in more detail.

### CONCLUSION

For the promotion of mobile marketing tool and its acceptance among consumers it is important for marketers to firstly understand consumers' attitude towards this communication medium because only when advertisers have thoroughly looked into consumers' attitudes and perceptions, they would be able to formulate effective mobile marketing campaigns for the promotion of their products and services. Mobile marketing messages should be providing relevant and timely information to the message recipients in order to create value for them as message relevance is an important element for the success of this marketing tool along with the other factors.

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