

**THE MODERATING ROLE OF CONSUMER EXPERTISE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MATERIALISM AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS ADVERTISING:
STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS**

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to contribute to our existing understanding of antecedents of the attitude toward advertising in general, by suggesting a relationship between materialism and attitude toward advertising. Additionally, we posit that consumer expertise will moderate this relationship.

The hypotheses for our study are as follows:

H1. Consumer materialism is positively related to attitude toward advertising.

H2. Consumer expertise moderates the relationship between consumer materialism and attitude toward advertising.

Data collection was part of a cross-country consortium and three waves of surveys were conducted between 2006 and 2008 in the United States, China and Japan. A total of 1,854 respondents participated in the study: 824 from the U.S., 308 from China and 720 from Japan. Both hypotheses were tested using a 3-step hierarchical regression. Hypothesis 1 was tested in the first step of the regression where materialism was the independent variable and attitude toward advertising was the dependent variable. The second step of the regression added consumer expertise as an additional independent variable, and was not directly used for hypothesis testing. In the third step of the regression, a cross-product term was used to

capture the moderating effect of consumer expertise on the materialism-attitude towards advertising relationship.

Results support Hypothesis 1, whereby it was predicted that materialism would have a positive relationship with attitude towards advertising. Additionally, results also suggest that consumer expertise moderates the relationship between materialism and attitude towards advertising, as the cross-product term was significant in the third step of the hierarchical regression.

Our findings provide support for our theoretical model and general thesis that materialism strongly influences consumers' attitude toward advertising and consumer expertise plays a moderating role. The results of the empirical analysis suggest that materialistic consumers have more positive attitude toward advertising than less materialistic consumers, this relationship is strongly positive. Additionally, materialistic consumers with higher levels of expertise have the most positive attitude toward advertising, followed by materialistic consumers with low expertise, then come less materialistic consumers with low expertise, followed by less materialistic consumers with high expertise. Strategic implications of this research for practicing managers are discussed.