

## Special Holiday Mobile Advertising

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**Abstract:** The current study addresses the effectiveness of special holidays (e.g., Thanksgiving) ads for GPS-aware mobile advertising to distinguish the effectiveness of specially targeted holiday ads from non-targeted ads during a specific holiday period. MANOVA and t-tests were conducted to test hypotheses. Findings show that scenario-based mobile app users' ad responses for the specially targeted holiday ad menu group differ from the non-targeted ad group between the high prior trust group and the low prior trust group. The key finding that the level of prior brand trust (high trust vs. low trust) between the specially targeted holiday and non-targeted ad menu groups had the greatest influence on intention to click and visit the brand of all the factors addressed in this study.

**Keywords:** Special holiday mobile advertising, scenario-based mobile app users' ad responses, mobile platform

### 1 Introduction

Digital marketing, especially advertising on mobile platforms, is an emerging area of research. Advertising agencies generate personalized or behavioural mobile advertising based on algorithm for targeting mobile app users. Previous studies have found that personalized or behavioural online ads are more effective than non-targeted ads (Turker 2014; Bleier and Eisenbeiss 2015). The current study focuses on mobile advertising tailored to consumer's behaviour when they check in on the app during a holiday such as Thanksgiving Day. Past research establishes that holidays play a role in determining consumer needs (Wallendorf and Arnould 1991). The present research compares the effectiveness of mobile advertising between special holidays and non-special mobile ads with a moderator—prior brand trust. Trust has been a key factor that influences consumer behavior in previous studies (Gefen et al. 2003; Bleier and Eisenbeiss 2015; Toure-Tillery and McGill 2015). Thus, high brand trust will affect mobile advertising responses.

Based on previous studies, hypotheses 1 and 2 are proposed in the mobile platform:

Hypothesis 1: When specially targeted holiday menu mobile advertising (vs. non-targeted ad) in the mobile platform, (a) consumers' ad-clicking intention is higher, and (b) consumers' advertised-brand website revisit intention is higher.

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Hypothesis 2: Prior brand trust moderates the relationship between holiday-related menu advertising and ad responses such that higher brand trust increases (a) ad-clicking intention and (b) website revisit intention.

## 2 Method

### 2.1 Participants and Procedure

The sample consists of 292 participants, online consumers from Amazon Mechanical Turk in the United States (52.7%=male). Participants completed a scenario-based experiment online survey for monetary compensation.

Design and procedure. The scenario-based online experiment employed a between-subjects design based on two factors, brand trust and advertising type (holiday menu targeted vs. non-targeted ads). Thanksgiving Day is a holiday celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November in the United States (Brown 2012). Those who received the targeted ads read a scenario-based message about a special menu for Thanksgiving at Panera restaurant while those received non-holiday targeted menu advertising. Panera is a US chain of fast casual restaurants, that is, it provides a higher quality of food than fast food restaurants but require visitors to order at the counter (Moskin, 2014).

In the special holiday menu targeted advertising scenario condition, participants were asked to imagine that they had received an ad when they checked in through a mobile app during in the days before or just after Thanksgiving. The app instructions how the mobile app (i.e. Swarm) works were presented to participants with a step-by-step tutorial screen shot and explanation. They viewed a Panera Bread menu the researcher had manipulated to tie items into Thanksgiving (i.e., pumkin, turkey). In the *non-targeted* advertising condition, participants received a regular menu from Panera Bread in a non-holiday season. Likert scales (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) were used to determine brand trust (Verhoef, Franses, and Hoekstra 2002), ad-clicking intention (Yoo (2007), and website visiting intention (Yoo and Donthu 2001) after participants received ads. Prior trust was a measured continuous variable. Responses were split into two groups for analysis according to their prior brand trust.

## 3 Results

*T-test.* A t-test was conducted to test H1 (a) and (b) for two dependent variables (ad-clicking and website revisit). Hypothesis 1 posits that targeted mobile advertising increases (a) consumers' ad-clicking intention and (b) consumers' advertised-brand website revisit intention. H1 (a) and (b) were not supported ( $t_{(290)}=3.58, p>.05$ ). The mean score of consumers' ad-clicking intention is  $M=4.10$  ( $SD=1.74$ ) for the specially targeted holiday ad, while the mean score of the non- targeted ad scenario condition was

4.02 ( $SD=1.83$ ). Hypothesis 1(b) was not supported ( $t_{(290)}=1.14, p>.05$ ). The mean scores for both conditions were below 4 on a Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

*Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)*. To test H2 (a) and (b), a MANOVA test was conducted for two dependent variables (ad-clicking and website revisit) using a post-hoc test on four groups: high trust with special holiday (Thanksgiving) targeted ad (HTS), high trust with non-targeted ad (HTN), low trust with special holiday (Thanksgiving) targeted ad (LTS), and low trust with non-targeted ad (LTN).

Hypothesis 2 posits that specially targeted holiday mobile advertising (vs. HTN, LTS, and LTN) leads to (a) higher ad-clicking intention and (b) higher revisit intention. Hypothesis 2(a) was partially supported. Findings show that compared to the low-trust groups, both LTS and LTN, the HTN group ( $M_{clickIn}=3.41, SD=2.04$ ) had a higher intention to click on targeted advertising than the LTS group ( $M_{clickIn}=2.42, SD=1.86$ ) or the LTN group ( $M_{clickIn}=2.44, SD=1.93$ ) at  $p \leq .05$  in the mobile platform. Thus, hypothesis 2(a) is supported. However, there is no significant difference between the high trust groups, HTS ( $M_{clickIn}=3.75, SD=1.99$ ) and HTN ( $M_{clickIn}=3.41, SD=2.04$ ), in terms of mobile ad clicking intention. The overall results might not be meaningful since the average, even for high trust group, is in the overall disagree range on the 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) Likert scale.

Hypothesis 2(b) was also supported: when brand trust is higher, specially targeted holiday mobile advertising leads to higher website revisit intention as compared to the lower brand-trust group. There was significant difference ( $p<.05$ ) between the high-trust group with a specially targeted holiday ad ( $M_{revisit}=4.34, SD=1.65$ ) and both low-trust groups, LTS and LTN ( $M_{beharevisit}=2.75, SD=1.68$ ;  $M_{Nonbeharevisit}=2.81, SD=1.94$ ). Thus, hypothesis 2(b) is supported. However, there was no significant difference between specially targeted holiday ad and the non-specially targeted ad for higher revisit intention ( $M_{revisit}=4.34, SD=1.65$  vs.  $M_{revisit}=4.22, SD=1.75, p>.05$ ) in the high-trust group.

## 4 Conclusion

For H1, there was no significant difference between specially targeted holiday (Thanksgiving) and non-targeted ad for ad responses for Panera Bread. Participants answered similarly regardless of whether they received a specially targeted holiday ad. The special menu targeted at the holiday did not influence ad responses differently than the non-targeted food menu. This may suggest that Americans expect to have Thanksgiving related to food items (e.g. pumpkin lattes) around November and targeted food menus do not change their expectations. However, for H2, of greatest interest to researchers and managers in the current study is the key finding that prior brand trust had the greatest influence on intention to click and visit the brand of all the factors addressed. The current research may have been limited by the choice of brand. Non-restaurant brands might produce different results of special holiday advertising.

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