

Towards a New Architecture of Knowledge: Big Data, Culture and Creativity



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Subversive Marketing and the Conscious Consumers

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Structured Abstract

Purpose – Subversive advertising – or just subvertising, a word made by the words "subvert" and "advertising" (San Nicolas Romero, 2004) – deals with the lack of ethics in modern advertising and how has impacted young people, modifying the purchasing intentions and the refusal to continue shopping brands related with non-ethical practices (Aouina et al., 2011). Subvertising becomes the mean to generate awareness that allows clarifying the full range of practices of companies that use advertising. So people can display a model of respect for human rights, the environment, and freedom of expression and open a small way of alternative thoughts (Cortés, 2009).

Design/methodology/approach – The study enables the hypothesis that there is greater resistance to continue consuming the products of a particular brand if the youth persons are exposed to a longer time of subvertising. An exploratory and descriptive research based on a pretest and post-test experiment shows the reaction of viewers to the subvertising, this allows determine the relationship between young people and these content. Exploratory study is generally used when the research question is not clear or when the available literature does not seem clear enough or directly related to the object

of study (Aouina et al., 2011) or when the objective is to examine a issue or problem little studied, of which you have many questions (Hernandez Sampieri et al., 2007).

Originality/value – An experiment where the impact of publicity against the impact of subvertising is important because we can determine whether exposure to the latter modifies the perception that young people have for brand advertising, letting know more about this phenomenon and how is evaluated for those affected by it.

Practical implications – Joseph D. Rumbo (2002) found that young consumers goes against postmodernism, which is due to the saturation of advertising culture, having the feeling of be more and more invaded by the hyper-reality, a fantasy created by manufacturers to encourage to consume and marketers from large firms stimulate this with advertising (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995, p. 251), which for young people is not entirely true, because what companies want to show is different from what reality is.

Subvertising can increase the chance in the same way that viewers of such content may stop buying goods and services from not ethical corporations, and also these types of actions help governments and NGOs to press for better ethical conducts.

Keywords – Subvertising, Consumer Resistance, Marketing Ethics, Advertising, Social Responsibility.

1 Introduction

Consumerism is a tendency to acquire immoderate, spend or consume goods, not always necessary (RAE, 2011), becoming in a primary ritual of a modern society where only consuming the necessary is no longer important, now people are looking to belong in groups, to be viewed as somebody that owns power or someone that represents a stereotype for others who guides them to buy goods and services that are not really necessary but are acquired due to this stereotypes, only to not be left out of those interest groups (Zoja, 1989). This trend emerged with the industrial growth of the US from the postwar, where they started to make criticisms in the form of consumption due to the 1970's US with a 6% of the world's population consumed 33% of global energy resources, in raw materials 40%, never lower than 24% (Dumont, 1975).

Consuming in excess has taken people to invest more capital in goods that are not really necessary and instead they create a resource exploitation due to the actions taken by the companies to elaborate their products or services, which promotes through primarily publicity and through other marketing actions that are intended to satisfied misguided consumer desires.

The excess in consumption has started to generate a change in the mindsets of some groups of people, this is due to changes in the environment that affect the demand for certain products and services, process decisions will be left to the consumers (Biddle, 2008) they will accept products that have minor environmental damage and reject those perceived as harmful products for the welfare of living being, as a consequence they will create social movements or seek the means through which they can share their concerns about business practices of the traditional market.

These groups of people or consumers have signified since the 60's and 70's a segment of the population that has been growing due to the access of information and the power that brands gave users with the marketing 2.0 through the information technologies.

In the early 90's with the advent of the internet there was the possibility for people to interconnect through a network that would unite them more (Kotler, Setiawan, & Kartajaya, 2010), and with much power network users had an increasingly robust way to achieve changes in the legislations, generating other people to look at them, to identify with them on some level, sharing philosophy of their resistance to use or purchase traditional brands that cause a damage to the environment, concern that had been increasing due to the climate change.

2 What is subvertising?

Subvertising is the union of words "subvert" (subverting) and "advertising" (advertisement). "Advertising is the nonpersonal communication of information usually paid and persuasive about products, services or ideas by sponsors identified through various means" (Bovee et al., 1992, p.7), which collectively refers to those attempts to transform the social order already established and the structures of power, authority and hierarchy that have been generated through advertising. The web subvertise.org defines subvertising as:

Graffiti on the wall, the sticker on the lamppost, the modified phrase form a billboard, the t-parody ... The key is to redefine and reconquest our environment yanking from the hands of large companies (2012).

Naomi Klein in her book *No Logo* (2011), uses the concept of "culture jamming" same that assures it was invented in 1984 by the band of musical collages Negativland and refer to the act of of subvertising, she suggest starting by this culture jamming, for which proposes the following definition:

Those parodying advertisements and assaulting street billboards to reveal the deep truth behind the advertising euphemisms. Graffiti, modern art, DIY punk and the pranker spirit are mixed (p. 314).

Subvertising is in this sense a struggle against speeches and abuses of power that dominant forces in the market are used to convince society that their actions are the correct ones to help society, in essence it is a tool of resistance by protests, slogans and changes in advertising speeches against the interest of large corporations to prevent these appropriating public space through marketing and advertising that had led society to a saturation of consumption.

In the 70's Rene Dumont, recognized for his many works in the field of sociology and environmental policy, said in an interviewed for the Consumer Society, that the resident of the outskirts of New York consumed 500 times more energy and raw materials than the farmers of India in those years, which over time has been increasing and generating a cultural movement known as "branding" (San Nicolas Romera, 2004), by which the brands eventually become icons of the population by creating stories that are relevant to the consumers.

In the broad sense, more than globalization, these groups seek to demonstrate the "corporatization", understood as the power or influence of businesses in the consumption of products by the population, this influence is the one that has become the point of attack of hacktivism an acronym of the words "Hacker and Activism" Canadian publicitary as well as the Northern American and subvertising from London, which is presented as a phonetic deformation of Advertising, to refer to a boycott or mediatic subversion that complaints totalitarianism advertisement of brands.

Penaloza & Price (1993) in their work Consumer Resistance: a conceptual overview suggest that the "irresponsibility" and the unethical use of marketing have resulted in the emergence of resistance to consumerism in the society and the consumers, it has also nurtured the skepticism that has on some companies, Aouina Mejri et al (2011) in her study "why art thou resisting?" distinguishes three forms of resistance presented by consumers and society: 'resistance by guilt', 'resistance solidarity' and 'resistance identity' (see table 1) this forms of resistance are also related to personal experiences in general that an individual of society has with a brand and everything it represents.

Table 1: Characteristics of types of resistance

Types of resistance	Characteristics
Resistance by guilt	Characterized by the heaviness of deprivation and/or shortages, when people acquire guilt or fail to acquire something that they wanted and they know it was not necessary, because they had to meet basic needs before the desired product.
Resistance solidarity	Represents the solidarity shown by consumers towards local solidarity shops, local producers, in short, towards those that make an effort to deliver products that satisfied a necessity but seek to help others or the environment. Reject big business to contribute to the disappearance of traditional business
Resistance identity	Constitutes a strong rejection towards companies that try to develop practices of social responsibility identity. Consumers and society believe that companies lie to them all the time with these practices.

Source: (Aouina Mejri, Bhatli, & Benhallam, 2011)

Subvertising has become the mean to generate the awareness that allows clarify the variety of practices that companies use, clear and concise messages are established about the company's practices, in some cases messages that change the discursive message or in some other parodying what the companies seek to create in each consumer. This way it is possible to show a model of respect for human rights, the environment, freedom of speech and open a small way of alternative thoughts (Cortés, 2009).

Nowadays advertising is almost everywhere: in the streets, in the school, in sport games, music concerts, etc. offering products and idealized live styles that have produced high levels of consumption. Sometimes those ads have been questioned for its lacks of ethics, and also because the excess of products represents environmental issues for the earth and the nature.

3 Consumers resistance

For most young, internet and cellular telephone is the media of communication which is the main way to keep in touch, likewise, social media facebook, twitter and varios blogs or videoblogs in youtube are preferred to exchange information, just by looking for example twitter has 560 million users connected and facebook are counted more than 1 billion (Puon, 2014), 96% of young people worldwide use internet daily and 83% use social media in order to inform primarily, because to entertain they use traditional media such as film or television (Europa Press, 2012) in Mexico is about 43.5% of young people

who use the internet and every year the number of users increases by 13.9% (EI Universal, 2014).

Through various means, in recent years it has come to public view actions unethical by companies such as Nestle, who was accused because of the marketing they did and promoting a milk formula inappropriately for baby in third world countries (Post, 1985), in the same way it has exposed the source of Nike tennis shoes that were made in deplorable workshops located in Vietnam; that of Barbie clothes, children's work Sumatran; the Cappuccino Starbucks coffee in the coffee plantations in Guatemala and Shell oil in villages in deplorable condition of Nigel Delta (Klein, 2001), each of these events happened in an era prior to the internet, when society did not have the possibility to access this information like they have now.

With advertising that companies use in traditional media such as television, billboards, radio, appears in a less visible reflector for some, subvertising through internet mainly reflects complaints from consumers, as well as from youth society by going against traditional culture of consumption. It is a cultural resistance, in which, "is not about parody, but to intercept" (San Nicolas Romera, 2004, p. 172), where they must develop discursive changes in communication of companies to the market to issue at the same time an opposite message you are trying to give and also make use of the way that advertising is drawing so that the message reaches more people.

Studies have shown the advertising impact on young states where there is a "dose-response" so that the greater the number of advertising "spots" they see of one brand, the greater the amount of product of this the viewer acquires, this supports the fact that advertising increases the likelihood that young people or any other consumer purchase more goods or services of a brand (Anderson, 2009) therefore subvertising can increase the probability the same way that viewers of such content may stop buying goods and services. The influence of the advertising or advertising on consumers and their response subsequent purchase show that a brand through visualization, anticipated emotions, testing and hedonism can cause consumers to feel more encouraged to buy goods or services.

4 Research and Hypothesis

The research process was flexible in that several information gathering techniques were used and a suitable measuring instrument for research needs was created. The

information collected was analyzed through a content analysis, Bardin presents this analysis as:

“Set of analytical techniques of communication designed for systematic procedures and objective procedures of the description of messages, to obtain indicators (quantitative or not) for the inference of related knowledge to the conditions of production/ reception of these messages.” (1993)

This means to analyze both the information qualitative and quantitative obtained through the experiment, in addition to this an interpretation was realized of the findings in the instruments used for this experiment, the observation of subjects tested and also an analysis of the results found through the investigation in social networks of subvertising movements.

Based on the premise that the repeating units of analysis of discourse (words, expressions or meaning, phrases or paragraphs) reveals what respondents perceived as areas of interest and as part of their concerns (Allard-Poesi et al., 1999), the experiment helped determine certain inherent characteristics to those who are affected by the subvertising.

H1: Exposure to content of subvertising causes attitudes of rejection due to unethical brands.

H2: The subvertising helps promote awareness of environmental and social concerns.

H3: The greater the exposure to subvertising the lower positive perception of young people by brands.

For this experiment 3 advertisements of Coca-Cola where used, two of them created and launched by the brand, the third one was created by the organization known as The Real Bears, these videos were selected by the following features:

- Visual content. All videos contain images that arouse emotions and transmit values.
- Audio content. The advertisements contain songs and sound effects that arouse the interest of viewers.
- Textual content. Phrases or quotes included in the ads to emphasize the visual and auditory content.

Advertising videos created by the soft drink brand were compared with the one created by the non-governmental organization the real bears, both ads selected for the experiment were as follows:

Coca-cola 150 calories of happiness: <https://youtu.be/lZUkEhWw0RI>

Coca-cola “catch” starring NE_Bear: <https://youtu.be/S2nBBMbjS8w>

Finally the video subvertising selected for the experiment was the following:

The real bears - The unhappy truth about soda

<https://youtu.be/myxwCEGcBYc> made by an ngo called the real bears that is informing about the hi content of sugar in the carbonated drinks <http://therealbears.org>

These two test were developed in classrooms of the University of Guadalajara who had the conditions necessary for for audio and video transmission subvertising advertising content of the brand Coca-Cola, two documents was given to each subject:

1. A pretest containing demographic data, value data and lifestyles, internet usage and relationship with advertising.
2. A post-test containing the same questions asked in the post test in the part of relationship with advertising to measure the change generated by exposure to subvertising.

The data is collected and analyzed using the SPSS statistical program to determine the reliability of the experiment and demonstrate the relationship between the exposure to subvertising and its impact on the perception that people who are exposed to this type of content.

4.1 Universe and population

The study population consisted of university students from the administrative economic sciences center (CUCEA) in year age groups ranging from 15-40, same as for research are estimated at 17.332; of which 16,270 were undergraduate and 1,062 graduate level, all taking into account that there are no studies proving that a number of experiments is the ideal and to develop the experiment requires audiovisual conditions under optimum conditions, it was decided to consider a infinite population, to apply the highest possible number of instruments, same that will be used to determine a trend regarding subvertising and youth.

To obtain the sample a statistical formula was used for finite populations under 100,000 subjects (Hernández Sampieri, 2003).

$$n = \frac{Z^2PQN}{(N - 1)e^2 + Z^2PQ}$$

Where:

Z= represents the confidence level required, for this case was 95%, leaving 5% for troubleshooting because people who refuse to answer or incomplete questionnaires, as the confidence level is 95%, the value of Z= 1.96 according boards areas under the curve.

P= .50 Proportion of people whose feasibility of being selected in the sample is a success.

Q= .50 Proportion of the people whose no possibility of being selected.

N= Total population subject of study, it is of 17,332 according to data from the University of Guadalajara.

e= sampling error, its value was 5% for the convenience of study.

The sample result was:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2(.5)(.5)(17,332)}{(17332 - 1).05^2 + (1.96)^2(.5)(.5)} = 375 \text{ studies}$$

5 Results

The final sample consisted of 305 studies applied (due to the 18 instruments that had to be discarded and that completed the 323 studies) in pairs, 57% female and 43% male, the range most frequent age was 20 to 24 years with 75%, followed by 25 to 29 years with 13%.

The reliability analysis was positive since Cronbach's alpha showed a result of .895 (see Table 2), which shows that the values for which the perception of the young was measured results is acceptable (García-Bellido et al. 2010; Hernandez Sampieri, et al., 2007).

Table 2 Analysis of reliability of Cronbach's alpha Statistical reliability

Cronbach's alpha	N elements
.895	14

Source: compiled from results

To measure the perception of these 2 groups regarding advertising the following factors:

- Consideration of that advertising is a tool to sell more
- Advertising does not tell the whole truth

- Belief that advertising pollutes
- Belief that advertising is only a communication tool
- I think that advertising lies
- Advertising is attractive
- Consideration of that advertising is reliable

During the analysis it was found that in each of the above items significant results were obtained in larger or smaller scale (see Table 3), the most significant of them is the fact that users believe that advertising pollutes, as before being exposed to subvertising, the group of those who were not affected subvertising (00), granted an average of 5.34 and who decreased their taste for publicity to see the subvertising (1.00), granted an average of 6.15, this means that both groups believed that advertising moderately contaminated, although this perception was higher in the second group, after the screening of subvertising the result was unexpected, as the group of people that were not affected by subvertising perceived that advertising pollutes, more than those who were affected (1,00), the numbers obtained were 7.16 and 6.88 respectively, which could be because the second group was more aware of this than those who were not affected by the subvertising, this fact we can say that this first group of users still have a high advertising taste for Coca-Cola, but in the short term they are convinced that the brand pollutes.

Table 3 Perception of factors regarding the taste for advertising Coca-Cola brand, before and after subvertising

Vmot1	N	Media	Deviation typ.	Error typ. of the media	Vmot1
I believe that advertising is a tool to sell more	,00 1,00	202 103	8.2475 8.3981	2.62747 2.58707	.18487 .25491
I believe that advertising is a tool to sell more	,00 1,00	202 103	7.7228 7.5437	2.99625 3.21996	.21082 .31727
Advertising does not tell the whole truth	,00 1,00	202 103	6.6535 6.7961	2.55267 3.02719	.17961 .29828
Advertising does not tell the whole truth	,00 1,00	202 103	8.0941 8.5534	2.21395 2.03271	.15577 .20029

Vmot1	N	Media	Deviation typ.	Error typ. of the media	Vmot1
I believe that advertising pollutes	,00 1,00	202 103	5.3465 6.1553	2.68934 2.71075	.18922 .26710
I believe that advertising pollutes	,00 1,00	202 103	7.1634 6.8835	2.24784 2.73790	.15816 .26977
I think advertising is just a communication tool	,00 1,00	202 103	6.5000 6.3689	2.51216 2.77944	.17675 .27387
I think advertising is just a communication tool	,00 1,00	202 103	6.2624 6.6602	2.73461 2.62922	.19241 .25907
I think that advertising lies	,00 1,00	202 103	5.4653 6.1650	2.45178 2.57475	.17251 .25370
I think that advertising lies	,00 1,00	202 103	7.4455 7.6311	2.10885 2.27945	.14838 .22460
For me advertising is attractive	,00 1,00	202 103	7.4010 6.8058	2.70297 2.55549	.19018 .25180
For me advertising is attractive	,00 1,00	202 103	6.4158 5.6311	2.94313 3.22366	.20708 .31764
I believe that advertising is trustworthy	,00 1,00	202 103	5.2079 4.9417	2.45686 2.48456	.17286 .24481
I believe that advertising is trustworthy	,00 1,00	202 103	4.2277 4.0291	2.55830 2.45930	.18000 .24232

Source: Elaborated from the compiled results

The last set of results at this stage had very similar numbers to those of the above groups about the affectation that was witnessed in both groups, although in this unlike the previous results was more equitable 159 against 146 with respect to the number of people which they were affected in the motivation to buy products to buy products of the later mark to ads, that is, the desire to purchase the product, which is different from the action

of purchase (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008). But besides this equality, the impact generated in the perception of values, was in some cases wider for example found in the value of respect (see Table 4), because in this category those who had a motivation to acquire the brand products even after seeing the subvertising perceived the brand as disrespectfully (7.42) and even less than those who said no longer feel motivated to buy products (7.69), but the change however was more significant in those if there was direct involvement as this second group (1.00) decreased their perception to 3.96, a few points below the first group (00), in this case the change was more dramatic in the second group.

Table 4 Perception of brand Coca-Cola before and after subvertising regarding the purchase motivation (Vmot1) and respect, and advertising

	Vmot1	N	Media	Deviation typ.	Error typ. of the media
Respect	,00	159	7.4214	2.78873	.22116
	1,00	146	7.6986	2.47015	.20443
Respect	,00	159	4.2893	2.86477	.22719
	1,00	146	3.9658	2.87298	.23777
Advertising does not tell the whole truth	,00	159	6.7044	2.91342	.23105
	1,00	146	6.6986	2.49792	.20673
Advertising does not tell the whole truth	,00	159	8.1887	2.23372	.17715
	1,00	146	8.3151	2.08692	.17271

Source: Elaborated from compiled results

6 Conclusions

The hypotheses are checked that had been raised to develop the experiment, first with the measurement of perception of values and factors related to advertising are checked with variations in average after the subvertising in effect:

H1: Exposure to content subvertising causes attitudes of rejection from unethical brands.

Since people have a taste for publicity, purchase probability and high motivation of purchase for the brand, after seeing the contents of subvertising, have shown their discontent through the weights in each category towards the brand, also it should be noted that the probability of purchase (resistance to consume) was the category where more

direct impact generated subvertising with 208 respondents who said they would be unlikely to return to buy the brand products, against 97 who said that they would buy it again.

In second place, 92% of respondents reported being concerned about the environment and the social, the subvertising showed that awakens the consciousness of those who see it, because with the experiment it was found that not only those who said they were affected by advertising were more aware, but also those who said they stayed the same, this was visible through the comparison of means before and after where upon H2 is accepted.

It is also clear to point out that hypothesis 3 talking about the perception of young people for the brands is accepted. This because if the projection of a video of subvertising perception decreased from time to time as to the measurement of securities and other factors of advertising, frequent exposure can generate not only a positive decline in young people by marks but a negative perception of them, the proof are the weights obtained in the research work that in some cases reached the level of 2 or 3 points.

It is stated with the work done up to this point does exist influence of subversive marketing on people who see it, no matter if it affects them directly in their taste for advertising, your likelihood of purchase (resistance to consume) or your purchase motivation, the fact is that seeing this type of content, the perception is generally for brand advertising which declines and more particularly the perception that people have from the values of companies are trying to transmit.

But this does not mean that the subvertising is only a negative for companies because through their movements are impacting revenue or perception of brand image, the fact understand the subvertising provides the opportunity for other companies to enter in the market, with product ideas or services generated by the same members that demonstrated with the boots created by Adbusters, who saw in the movements created against companies that pollute, an opportunity to launch a product with features that sector of the market requires.

With the research done, as well as the experiment and observation is possible to precise that subvertising marketing are not merely a form of social expression that does not affect organizations, but are social movements that begin with a person and they are able to change the way that transactions between businesses and consumers are

performed, along with such actions to press governments and other NGO's that join and achieve more and better changes.

The expected results are checked and were even better than expected as the view that the subvertising somehow affects the perception consumers have for brands, gives pattern so that later can be made in-depth studies and obtain profit for the company, society and the environment.

It is suggested that more thorough investigation of the variables found as a correlation, to determine the level of significance of each factor and thus know what is what weights the most to the perception of young people by the marks is diminished. In addition to this, the movements of subvertising already existed for some time, although the aim of these is lighter than the same publicity, it was found that many respondents were unaware of its existence therefore suggested closer to youth marketing concepts subversive because this way you can contribute to there being more social and environmental awareness, coupled with the knowledge of the reason generates the social consciousness.

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