The Role of Attitude and Intent in Ethical Decision Making of Advertising Practitioner in Digital Age
บทบาทของทัศนคติและความตั้งใจที่มีต่อการตัดสินใจทางจริยธรรม ของนักโฆษณาในยุคดิจิทัล

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the advertising practitioners' attitude toward ethical problems in the digital age, especially the factors that influence ethical behavioral intentions of advertising practitioners. The respondents are Thai advertising practitioners. A self-administered questionnaire was used in data collection. Totally, 305 usable questionnaires were returned. The Path analysis via regression was used to test the hypotheses. Findings reveal that attitude is the variable that has most influence on behavior intention. It is also the mediating factor for gender and age that indirectly affects behavior intention. Gender and age have a direct effect upon attitude. Males have more positive attitude to the ethical problem in the digital age than females. Younger participants in this study also have more positive attitude than those who are older. Subjective norm has no influence on behavior intention, whereas communication climate has influence on behavior intention.

Keywords: Attitude, Behavior Intention, Ethical Decision Making

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มุ่งศึกษาทัศนคติของนักโฆษณาที่มีต่อปัญหาทางจริยธรรมของโฆษณาในยุคดิจิทัล และ ศึกษาปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อความตั้งใจเชิงพฤติกรรมทางด้านจริยธรรมของนักโฆษณา โดยใช้แบบสอบถาม เพื่อเก็บข้อมูลจากนักโฆษณา 305 คน และใช้การวิเคราะห์เส้นทางโดยการวิเคราะห์การถดถอยเพื่อทดสอบ สมมติฐาน ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ทัศนคติเป็นตัวแปรสำคัญที่มีผลต่อความตั้งใจเชิงพฤติกรรม และเป็นตัวแปร ส่งผ่านให้แก่เพศและอายุไปยังความตั้งใจเชิงพฤติกรรม เพศ และอายุมีอิทธิพลต่อทัศนคติ โดยเพศชาย มีทัศนคติต่อปัญหาทางจริยธรรมในโฆษณาดีกว่าเพศหญิง และคนอายุน้อยมีทัศนคติดีกว่าคนอายุมาก ในขณะที่การคล้อยตามกลุ่มอ้างอิงไม่มีผลต่อความตั้งใจเชิงพฤติกรรม แต่บรรยากาศของการสื่อสารใน องค์กรมีผลต่อความตั้งใจเชิงพฤติกรรม

คำสำคัญ: ทัศนคติ ความตั้งใจเชิงพฤติกรรม การตัดสินใจทางด้านจริยธรรม

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Introduction

At present, we are in the Digital Age; the growing of technology develops new communication channels and media in advertising business. Normally, the advertising is viewed as marketing tools that communicate to persuade for profit and sales. Hence, advertising business is always asked about trustworthy and creditability from the consumers and the society. The more the advertising agencies and products can make consumers perceive the ethic of advertising, the more acknowledgement and success can be achieved (Dyck , 2014). The ethics of advertising is the important issue as Snyder (2011) explained that ethics was the critical image of the company. Consumers trust and response to ethical brands. Therefore, advertising agencies and advertising practitioners need to build confidence in brand and company by being aware of and paying attention to ethics all the time and in all processes of advertising including strategy, creation and production.

As technology grows, the advertising strategies for communication increase. As Drumwright and Murphy (2009) mentioned, new technology created new media that transformed traditional mass media advertising to nontraditional approaches such as product placement, viral marketing, direct marketing, and virtual community marketing on the Web. This may cause ethical problems, especially the issue about creditability of advertisement and violation of consumers' privacy. This problem is very important in this age. Black and Roberts (2011) presented the problems of credibility and misleading information in the blogs, Ruane (2011) reviewed the problems of consumers' privacy and Cheng (2009) also explained the concern in consumers' privacy from using behavioral targeting strategy of advertising to directly reach consumers' need by tracking consumers' habit of internet usage. Drumwright and Murphy (2009) mentioned that the growing of new and nontraditional media could cause more ethical problems that were more difficult and complicated. Therefore, the ethical problem is the topic that should be focused on as media changes the digital media landscape.

Advertising practitioner is a profession playing an important role in the society. They are in the unique position as they work professionally in communicative field under challenge and pressure to provide the creative and strategic message for marketing success. They take responsibility for themselves and the organization they work for, and they must be loyal to the customer including consumers and the public. It seems that they situate at the intersection of decision-making and success among many beneficiaries and related people when they encounter ethical problems. Shaver (2003) mentioned "professional" as a specific group within society whose numbers, through the possession of special resources, role, or skills, possess the ability to provide potentially beneficial services to society or to abuse their powers in ways that may harm society or its weaker members. Moreover Drumwright and Murphy (2004) described that actually, the advertising practitioners were the interesting and important group of professionals but there were fewer acknowledgements about them including their thinking process about ethics issues; that is, how they handled and reacted to these issues.

Thailand is the developing country extremely growing in economy and technology - especially the growth of information technologies, networking and internet using. In 2017, there were 33.4 million of Thai people out of 63.1 million

who were Internet users ("National Statistical Office," 2017). According to the survey of Internet World Stats (2017), Thailand is ranked 15th out of the top 20 countries with the highest number of internet users. The Digital Advertising Association (Thailand) or DAAT - the professional association of advertising agencies of online media that together develop the administration and service for the customers among advertising industry for the sustainable growth of this media, conducted a survey (2016) and reported that the online advertising industry in Thailand has continuously grown in 2016. The budget of online media is about 9,883 million baht, which is 22% higher than the previous year. This media tends to grow well in Thailand, even though it is quite new with various modern functions for Thais. Moreover, there is not enough information to project the impact of this media. Thairath, the Thai well-known newspaper, mentioned that according to the consumer complaint report of the Office of the Consumer Protection Board of Advertising in 2012, the online advertising always used exaggerated wording and visuals ("Thairath online website," 2013).

In Thailand, there are some advertising ethics studies, but rarely of ethics in new media. Actually, the government, law, and related Acts, directly stipulates compliance with advertising guidelines. Thailand is entering the age of developing regulations for new media. Moreover, in Thailand, there are many new independent entities in charge of media management because the attribute of new media includes functions of visual, color, light, motion, and sound as an interactive media as well as the complexity of technology. The involving organizations include NBTC to manage the frequency, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society - to control the content imported into the computer system, the Food and Drug Administration to audit the food and drug advertising, and the Consumer Protection Board to protect the consumers. As well, there are many laws related to the development of new media. Therefore, when there is an issue about the new media, it comes to the complicated process of action and takes a long period to resolve the issue and/or penalize the culprit. The advertising profession is the vital key taking role in supporting and solving these problems by creating the standard of the profession and directly auditing the process.

Thus, this study aims to study the ethical decision-making in digital age of practitioners in Thailand with the intention to research the influential factors to ethical behavior intention of practitioners. The concept of Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) is used as the essential framework in this study. The crucial variables are attitude, subjective norm and behavior intention. Moreover, this study extends TRA framework by adding more interesting variables in the research model. Those are individual factors (gender, age, work experience) and communication climate in an organization. Additionally, this study also increases more knowledge and understanding about ethical decision-making for practitioners because they have a vital role to solve and reduce the ethical problems of advertising in digital age.

Research Objective

The present study aims to investigate the ethical decision making of the advertising practitioners in the digital age. It focuses on the advertising practitioners' attitude toward ethical problems in the digital age, and the factors that influence their ethical behavioral intentions.

Literature Review

This part reviews the literature regarding ethical decision making, theory of reasoned action, and communication climate.

Ethical decision making

Ethical decision-making has been studied for more than 35 years, especially in the field of business ethics. In recent years, there have been many interesting reviews of empirical data with the study of meta-analysis about ethical decision-making (e.g., Loe, Ferrell, & Mansfield [2000], O'Fallon & Butterfield [2005], Craft [2013], and Lehnert, Park, & Singh [2015]). Most of them emphasized conditions, factors, and influence on decision-making processes. Main factors to study the ethical decision-making were individual factors and organizational factors.

Lehnert, Park, and Singh (2015) explained that there were many individual factors studied such as gender, age, education, work experience, nationality, religion and many others, but gender was continuously and most studied. This study especially focuses on the variables of individual factors; gender, age, and work experience because many research studies found that gender impacted ethical intention (Beekan, Stedham, Westerman, & Yamamura, 2010; Marta, Singhapakdi, & Kraft, 2008). As well, many studies showed that gender made people different in terms of perspective and attitude to things around them as well as the way of solving ethical problems; females felt more sensitive and disagreed regarding ethical issues more than males (Roozen, Pelsmacker, & Bostyn, 2001; Singhapakdi, 1999). Age and work experience also

were interesting variables. The findings of previous research found that there were mixed results of significance and non-significance. Age is likely more studied. According to the study of Valenine and Rittenburg (2007), being older encouraged greater ethical intention. In Roozen, Pelsmacker, and Bostyn's (2001) research, age was the factor influencing ethical attitude. Pflugrath, Martinov-Bennie and Chen (2007) also found the positive relationship between work experience and ethical decision making.

To study the ethical decision-making, Rest's classical framework is widely used to explain the ethical decision-making process. Rests (1986)'s model summarized that it contained awareness, judgment, intention, and behavior. All four categories were always studied as dependent variables in the topic of ethical decision-making. Intention was the important variable and had close relation with behavior. Moreover, Lehnert, Park, and Singh (2015) studied meta analyses in ethical decision-making and summarized that in the past 10 years, intention was the variable most studied in Rest's Model. It was because the ethical study was the sensitive issue and behavior study was difficult, behavior intention was therefore the better choice and the result could be used to solve and prevent the problems about ethical behavior. Therefore, this study focuses on the individual factors having influence on attitude and ethical behavior intention. The foregoing leads to the following research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Different demography of advertising practitioner causes different attitude toward ethical problem in the digital age.

1.1 Male advertising practitioners have more positive attitude toward ethical problem in the digital age than female advertising practitioners.

1.2 Younger advertising practitioners have more positive attitude toward ethical problem in the digital age than the older.

1.3 Advertising practitioners with less experience have more positive attitude toward ethical problem in the digital age than those with more experience.

Hypothesis 2: Different demography of advertising practitioner causes different ethical behavior intention.

2.1 Female and male advertising practitioners have different ethical behavior intention.

2.2 Advertising practitioners with different age have different ethical behavior intention.

2.3 Advertising practitioners with different experience have different ethical behavior intention.

Theory of reasoned action

Theory of Reasoned Action was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). This theory proposes predicting behavior via attitudes and subjective norms. It focuses on the behavioral intention, which is related to what people plan and like to do. Ethics is the sensitive issue for humans, especially for the professionals. This theory explains the professionals' behavior and decision-making when they encounter ethics issues. According to Gibson and Frakes (1997), TRA was used as a concept to study the ethics in the accounting field. The research found that TRA was the useful theory for studying the behavior. It showed that attitude and subject norm had an effect on behavior. It was in accordance with Buchan's (2005) review of TRA that establishes it as the useful and suitable framework for studying ethical decision-making. The theory detail is as follows:
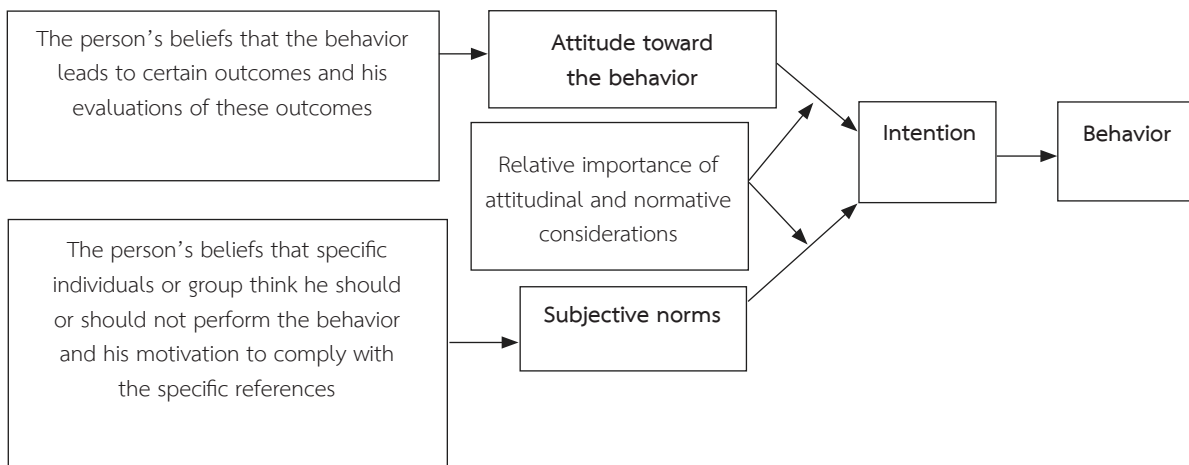
Figure 1 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)
Source: Ajzen and Fishbein (1980)

Ajzen (1989) explained that the TRA was a model with a main objective to understand and predict human behavior. It was believed that humans were social animals who rationally chose and made decisions with the available information. That was why individual's behavior was logically derived from information about their attitudes. Benoit and Benoit (2008) additionally explained that attitude toward behavior meant the degree to which the behavior was viewed as favorable or unfavorable. Behavioral intention was what a person would like to do, or plans to do, but subjective norms was the extent to which a person was aware of the expectations of others and prepared to comply. Moreover, Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) explained that subjective norm was the social influence that put pressure on what individuals should do or not do. The influence was from the important person that an individual believed that he or she wanted them to do some specific act, then they tended to do so. At the same time, there were many studies that used TRA as the critical framework and found that attitude and subjective norm were the significant variables that caused human behavior (Buchan, 2005; Gibson & Frakes, 1997; Kurland, 1996; Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992; Randall & Gibson, 1991). Based on the TRA, it leads to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3: Advertising practitioners' attitude will positively predict ethical behavior intention.

Hypothesis 4: Advertising practitioners' subjective norm will positively predict ethical behavior intention.

Communication climate in organization

Communication has an important role in the organization and is a drive that affects achievement. Ober (2001) stated that communication was the most important activity because to make all employees work well together, and both verbal and nonverbal communication is needed to inform goals, plan, and need between one another. Therefore, organizational communication is the important communication field having been studied for a long time. Organizational communication means communication in the workplace; organizational communication and internal communication are the same thing (Moyer, 2011). It is to interchangeably send both formal and informal message and information among the network in the organization to convey the meaning and influence to people in the organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Sharma (2015) stated that among the change of technology and competition, the organization was more complicated; the effective communication was increasingly more important in the workplace. There was also an innovation to invent tools to measure the efficiency of organizational communication including Organizational Communication Questionnaire (OCQ) (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974); Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) (Downs & Hazen, 1977); ICA Communication Audit (Goldhaber & Rogers, 1979).

This study also focuses on the climate of internal communication in an organization because the effective internal communication can motivate and support more trust and engagement among people in the organization and build the atmosphere of story sharing

(Moyer, 2011). If the organization can handle the ethical problem in a good way, it will gain recognition from other people and consumers; if not, it may cause the organization to fail. Actually, ethics and communication are correlated as Gerstein (2014) stated that ethic code cannot be used to change anything without communication; Suchan (2006) explained that lack of communication had unfavorable effect to solve ethical problems as well as the employees would feel less guilty when they unethically behaved; there was lack of openness and the ethical problem was unsolved. This also affected organizational rule and norm. In Drumwright and Murphy's (2004) research, they found that when ethical issue happened, advertising practitioners did not talk or communicate. They used the words 'moral muteness and moral myopia' to explain this problem and also proposed that the problem about ethical issue needed seeing and talking and the organizational community or agency context had important role to support and build awareness to handle the ethical issue. Hence, internal communication was important to ethical decision-making and was able to reduce ethical problem in the organization (Verbeke, Uwerkerk, & Peelen, 1996). Therefore, this study adds the communication climate in the organization as a variable to research the factor having influence on ethical behavior intention in the dimension of organization. Based on the literature, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 5: Communication climate has influence on the ethical behavior intention.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach by using the self-administered questionnaire to collect data from advertising practitioners in Bangkok, Thailand.

Sample and procedure

The sample size was determined by using G* Power software based on the use of the multiple regression in data analysis (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009), that required the minimum sample size of 146 participants. From the perspective of Johnson and Christensen (2008), studies should attempt to collect the largest sample size possible (p. 242). Therefore, the study was designed to use the total of 420 participants as this was the appropriate sample size for this study.

After that, the multi-stage sampling was conducted by using simple random sampling, quota sampling, and accidental sampling to collect data from the practitioners in the advertising agencies listed from the Advertising Association of Thailand (AAT), the oldest advertising association in Thailand. There were 64 advertising agencies being members of AAT. Then, 12 agencies were randomly selected and 35 practitioners from each agency were the participants. Most of 12 agencies were large international companies expanding branches in many countries; but there are only two local agencies in Thailand. In each agency, there was a coordinator distributing and gathering the questionnaires from the practitioners in the departments of creative, client service, media planning, graphic design as well as mainly digital related department.

Measure

This study aimed to study the practitioners' ethical decision-making on ethical problems in the digital age, as they were new problems from the growth of technology and media. Moreover, ethical issues were sensitive and the sample may feel uncomfortable to provide information. Hence, Scenario was used as a tool in the questionnaire to collect data about practitioners' attitude and behavior intention to ethical problem in this age. This focused on ethical issue in digital age, especially on credibility and privacy issue. Therefore, 6 scenarios were used to reflect the advertising ethical issue in digital age: Scenario 1-3 are about credibility of online media and Scenario 4-6 are about consumers' privacy affected by the growth of media and technology. More detail follows:

Scenario 1 Hit the votes: A popular website announces a creative contest that will be decided by the number of "hits" each competing ad received. Agency A enters its ad, after which its employees use special computer programs that automatically and repeatedly generate hits to their own ad, resulting in tens of thousands of computer-generated "votes" (Fullerton, Kendrick, & McKinnon, 2013).

Scenario 2 Photo for ads: In the ad that an agency is producing for various media including print ad, online ad and on the company website. The client, a fast food restaurant chain, wants their burger to appear much larger than it actually is. A photographer uses a camera lens and retouching to make the background objects look smaller (adapted from Keith, Pettijohn, & Burnett, 2008).

Scenario 3 Blog: The well-known hypermarket is launching new campaign by hiring the agency to manage all marketing media. The agency publicizes photos, information and activities about this campaign in the blog by paying the blogger to describe the photos and share the impressive story about the hypermarket. All photo, information and stories in the blog are made up to propagandize the company's image and make the campaign successful (adapted from Black, & Roberts, 2011).

Scenario 4 Mobile network company: Company B, a mobile network company, uses the program Carrier QQ to track consumer behavior and writes to ask permission in the policies. The consumers have little information and understanding about this. They have no choice to deny this and do not know the extent of using this personal information, whether it will be sent to which third party (adapted from Smith, 2011).

Scenario 5 Search engine company: The company C, an international search-engine company, is launching the new advertising strategy called behavioral targeting. It is the interest-based advertising tracking the consumers' internet usage habit and search history. With this strategy, the company can access the consumers' information and serve the appropriate ad for them. The company knows lot about the consumer, on the other hand, the consumer rarely knows what the company knows about them and how their information is used (adapted from Cheng, 2009).

Scenario 6 Mobile advertising: The development of mobile technology increases the capacity and opportunity to collect, store, use and disclose a lot of consumers' personal information. Therefore, the company D can easily access the consumer by using the communication with more accurately target advertising campaign, for example, personalized advertising, behavioral advertising but they do not consider consumers' consent and permission and less attend to data protection (adapted from Cleff, 2007).

To measure attitude, five 7-point, semantic differential scales were used. Bad : Good, Foolish : Wise, Unethical : Ethical, Useless : Useful (Randall & Gibson, 1991 (α = 0.78); Gibson & Frakes, 1997 (α = 0.75)), and Harmful : Beneficial (adapted from Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). To measure behavior intention, there are 3 questions with 7-point scale as well. The questions are: If I had the opportunity, I would perform the behavior in the scenario (Extremely likely-Extremely unlikely), I would never perform the behavior described in the scenario (True-False), and I may perform the behavior described in the scenario in the future (True-False). The higher score indicates ethical behavioral intentions adapted from Beck and Ajzen (1991) (α = 0.85 to 0.90) and Buchan (2005). For the subjective norm factor, the respondents were asked: Most people who are important to me would probably think (I should : I should not) perform the behavior described in the scenario All scales are 7-point. (Randall & Gibson, 1991; Gibson & Frakes (1997) (α = 0.75). To measure communication climate, the Likert-type scale was employed with 1-7 scale, ranging from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. It was adapted from Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) of Downs and Hazen (1977) (α = .94).

Data Collection

A total of 305 questionnaires were received from the target of 420 participants, or 72% of response rate. The relatively moderate response rate might be because the participants had tons of work and were always busy so that they did not have time to complete the survey. Getting the return questionnaire from them was thus quite difficult. Although, the data collection was not as set in the target, the response rate was more than 70% and 305 participants were much more than the minimum requirement of participants to be calculated with G* power software, which mentioned that the required minimum samples were 146 participants. Therefore, 305 participants were enough to be analyzed and tested in the statistic research.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using Path analysis via regression to test the hypotheses. The acceptable statistical significance level was specified as alpha (α) ≤ .05.

Finding

The result showed that 305 participants included 195 females and 110 males. Most of them had Bachelor's degree (76.4%). They had working experience in advertising business from 1-30 years and the average was 7.3 years. They mainly worked in the large organization where there were more than 100 employees (50.2%). Most of their positions were Account Executive and Account Management (37.0%) and in Account Management Department (33.6%).

The sample's communication climate in the organization was in the level of fair to somewhat good. The dimension of communication with supervisor had highest mean (M = 5.08, or

somewhat good, SD = 1.50). Furthermore, when the samples face the ethical problems of advertisement, the important reference group that samples wanted to consult the most was immediate supervisor (65.9%), second was co-workers (61.3%), and third was close friend at work (35.7%).

In terms of advertising practitioners' attitude, subjective norm and behavior intention to the ethical problems of digital-age advertisement in Scenario 5 Search Engine Company (neutral) was the story toward which the samples (practitioners)

had the best attitude and had the most behavioral intention, whereas Subjective Norm showed a slightly different result. They perceived that the influencers were least opposed to Scenario 2 Photo for ads (neutral). Scenario 1 Hit the Votes was the story that they had the worst attitude in poor level and had behavioral intention not to do this the most in the unlikely level. However, Scenario 1 still was the story that the practitioners did not accept the most and they believed that their subjective norm opposed to this story the most as well (See the detail in Table 1).

Table 1 The Results of Advertising Practitioners' Attitude, Subjective Norm and Behavior Intention to The Ethical Problems of Digital-Age Advertisement

Scenario	Attitude			Subjective Norm			Behavior Intention		
	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Scenario 1 Hit the Votes	2.42	1.19	Poor	-0.75	1.92	Slightly oppose	2.58	1.51	Unlikely
Scenario 2 Photo for ads	4.25	1.23	Neutral	0.33	1.65	Neutral	4.32	1.42	Neutral
Scenario 3 Blog	3.99	1.44	Neutral	0.09	1.71	Neutral	3.99	1.49	Neutral
Scenario 4 Mobile network company	3.20	1.28	Somewhat poor	-0.56	1.72	Slightly oppose	3.26	1.57	Somewhat unlikely
Scenario 5 Search Engine Company	4.40	1.45	Neutral	0.10	1.69	Neutral	4.40	1.50	Neutral
Scenario 6 Mobile Advertising	3.36	1.37	Somewhat poor	-0.66	1.66	Slightly oppose	3.50	1.54	Somewhat unlikely

Note: Interpretation of attitude Means: 1.00 - 1.85 Extremely Poor; 1.86 - 2.71 Poor; 2.72 - 3.57 Somewhat poor; 3.58 - 4.43 Neutral; 4.44 - 5.29 Somewhat Good; 5.30 - 6.15 Good; 6.16 - 7.00 Extremely Good

Interpretation of Mean of subjective norm is -3 - -2.15 Strongly Oppose; -2.14 - -1.29 Oppose; -1.28 - -0.43 Slightly Oppose; -0.42 - 0.43 Neutral; 0.44 - 1.29 Slightly Support; 1.30 - 2.15 Support; 2.16 - 3.00 Strongly Support

Interpretation of Mean is 1.00 - 1.85 Extremely unlikely; 1.86 - 2.71 Unlikely; 2.72 - 3.57 Somewhat unlikely; 3.58 - 4.43 Neutral; 4.44 - 5.29 Somewhat likely; 5.30 - 6.15 Likely; 6.16 - 7.00 Extremely likely
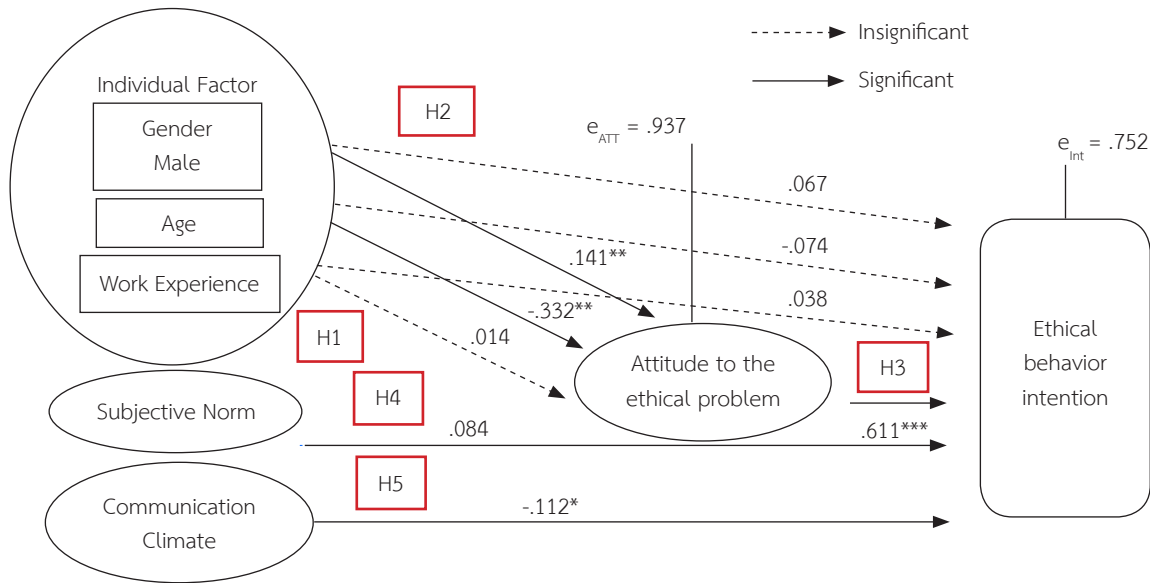
Figure 2 Model Testing
Notes: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

The model was tested by using Path Analysis via multiple regressions with two layers. First, multiple regression was used for the full model in Hypothesis 1 attitude toward the ethical problem as the criterion and the demography including gender, age and working experience as the predictors. Second, in Hypothesis 2 - Hypothesis 5 the multiple regressions was used in testing with the ethical behavior intention as the criterion and demography, attitude, subjective norm, and communication climate as the predictors.

As shown in Figure 2, containing the result of testing research hypotheses, results conclude that 3 hypotheses out of 5 were supported. Hypothesis 1 was supported in some parts, as individual factors including gender and age had a direct effect upon attitude, but working experience did not. Male ad practitioners had significantly more positive attitude toward ethical problem in the digital age than female (male β = .141, p < 0.01); Younger ad practitioners had

significantly more positive attitude toward ethical problem in the digital age than the older (Age β = -.332, p < 0.01). Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 4 were rejected. Hypothesis 2 was rejected as individual factors including gender, age, and working experience had no direct effect on behavior intention (Gender : male β = .067, p > 0.05; Age β = -.074, p > 0.05; Work experience β = .038, p > 0.05). Hypothesis 4 was rejected as subjective norm had no effect on ethical behavior intention (β = .084, p > 0.05). Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 5 were supported. Hypothesis 3 indicated that attitude had a direct effect upon behavior intention (β = .611, p < 0.001), whereas it was also mediating variable for demographic information including gender and age that did not have direct effect on behavior intention (Gender : male β = .067, p > 0.05; Age β = -.074, p > 0.05) but indirect effect through attitude (male β = .090, p < 0.05; Age β = -.203, p < 0.05). Therefore, attitude was the most

important variable influencing behavior intention. According to the model, communication climate had negative influence on ethical behavior intention. If the communication climate in the organization increases, behavior intention about unethical mistake decreases. The influence of communication climate to ethical behavior intention was significant but low (β = -.112, p < 0.05).

Discussion

The present study focuses on the advertising practitioners' attitude toward ethical problems in the digital age, and the factors that influence ethical behavioral intentions of advertising practitioners. The results of the study partly supports the first hypothesis, individual factors including gender and age have a direct effect upon attitude, but working experience does not. Hypothesis 2 was not supported: individual factors have no direct effect on behavior intention but gender and age have indirect effect on behavior intention through attitude. These results are in accordance with previous research; individual factors are the variable studied for a long time in the area of ethical decision-making. Especially for the variables related to gender and age, many studies found that gender and age had influence on ethical behavior intention (Age: Valenine & Rittenburg, 2007; Gender: Marta, Singhapakdi, & Kraft, 2008; Beekan, Stedham, Westerman, & Yamamura, 2010). Even though this study shows that individual factors have no direct effect on behavior intention; it finds that gender and age have the direct effect upon attitude as well as have the indirect effect through attitude on ethical behavior intention. Therefore, gender and age are still the important variable in the process of ethical decision-making through attitude. It

is the fact that gender and age make people different in terms of perspective and attitude to things around them as well as the way of solving ethical problems (Gender: Singhapakdi, 1999; Age: Roozen, Pelsmacker, & Bostyn, 2001).

Hypothesis 3 was supported. Attitude has a direct effect upon behavior intention, whereas it is also mediating variable to intention. Therefore, Attitude is the most important variable influencing behavior intention. At the same time, Hypothesis 4 is not supported; Subjective norm has no effect on ethical behavior intention. In the context of ethical behavior intention, to reduce the unethical behavior intention problems, attitude needs to be changed. Attitude relates to belief; more information and knowledge including negative consequence from unethical behavior should be given to the practitioners, as well as training and coaching from the company and clear policy directives would encourage better ethical decision-making for them. These also reduce unethical behavior in advertising. In various professional fields, there are many ethical decision-making findings that the significant variable effecting behavior intention is attitude. According to previous research of medical profession by Randall and Gibson (1991), attitude was the most important predictor influencing intention. In the accounting field, the research of Gibson and Frakes (1997) showed that attitude toward the behavior was the factor significantly explaining unethical intentions. Additionally, Buchan (2005) studied ethical behavior in accounting professional and findings were in the same way that attitude had direct effect on ethical intentions. Rabl and Kuhlmann (2008) examined organization corruption and mentioned that attitude toward corrupt action had effect on the desire to do

the corruption. In the point of subjective norm, it found that subjective norm had no effect to behavior intention. This was a surprising result. However, there were many studies showing that subjective norm had no effect on behavior intention (Binge drinking: Rhodes, 2011; Stop smoking: Bierman, 2012). Although subjective norm was a significant variable in TRA to drive behavior intention, Ajzen (1991) explained that the relationship between subjective norm and behavioral intention was less tight and lighter than that between attitude and behavioral intentions. Moreover, Fishbein & Ajzen (2010) stated that there were many studies about meta analysis of the empirical literature and there was a clear proof that predicting intention with attitude clearly had a higher impact than subjective norm. Nevertheless, this study finding shows that subjective norm has no effect to the ethical behavior intention because it finds the outstanding outcome of attitude as the significant variable to behavior intention in ethical issue in the digital age.

As for Hypothesis 5 that communication climate has influence on ethical behavior intention. It is the inverse correlation. If the communication climate in the organization increases, behavior intention about unethical mistake decreases. Although the influence of communication climate to ethical behavior intention is quite low, communication climate is an interesting variable influencing on advertising practitioners' ethical behavior intention. Agencies should develop and encourage communication regarding climate and internal communication should occur to solve the ethical issue for the practitioners. Jovanovic and Wood (2006) proposed that to make organization members understand the importance of ethics, it needed communication

activities including talking and interacting with one another to build ethical culture in the workplace because ethics was not the rule to guide behavior. If communication climate in the organization is good, the practitioners will have more chance to talk, exchange idea and discuss about the ethical issue and the practitioner will be happier; the organization will develop and gain more acknowledgement from the society. This study showed that communication climate was the interesting variable and made this study more valuable. This study extended to the influence of communication climate in the organization on ethical behavior intention of people in the organization. To make better communication climate in the organization could make the practitioners better decide the problems about ethical issues. To improve the communication climate in the agencies was necessary. If the practitioners could make a good climate - for example, the subordinator openly talked to the supervisor or colleagues discuss together, everybody understood company goal and policy, there were more both formal and informal communication channel as well as the training and seminar for interchanging and sharing information - the ethical problems in the digital could decrease. Moreover, it would enhance long-term trustworthy and achievement for the agency.

Future Directions

This study is about ethical issue that is a sensitive issue; it is a self-report. Therefore, samples' honesty in responding to the questionnaire is very important. However, scenario and questionnaire are used in the study to reduce uncomfortableness in responding the question about ethical issue; at the same time, it is not the

in-depth research. Therefore, the future research should be designed with separated phases or conduct double studies or use more research tools such as in-depth interview or focus group so that to add in-depth information, validity, and accuracy to the research. Finally, TRA Theory has limitation to assume that behavior is under volitional control. This study is about intention; therefore the actual behavior is probably not like that. Future research may explore other contexts or use other interesting variables.

In conclusion, The research findings support that TRA is the useful theory to explore human behavior, especially the ethical issue, a sensitive one that is difficult to study. The study shows many interesting results; attitude is the significant variable causing ethical behavior intention, gender and age have influence on attitude and indirectly on behavior intention through attitude. This study also finds that communication climate is the variable effect to behavior intention. It should be attended by the advertising agency to promote both formal and informal internal communication, to enhance working environment of consulting and discussing so that to reduce ethical problem at work. Advertising practitioner is an important profession to the society with role of responsibility to various parties including organization, customers, and consumers. Hence, among the change and growth of technology, attention to ethical decision-making of advertising practitioner in digital age is required.

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