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**FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND
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**“The Practice of Mobile Phone Advertising in Japan: A Grounded Theory Approach to Looking at
Consumer Perceptions”**

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**The Practice of Mobile Phone Advertising in Japan: A Grounded Theory Approach
to Looking at Consumer Perceptions**

Master's Thesis Presented By:

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral
Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
Master of Arts degree in Communication

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ABSTRACT

This research examines consumer perceptions towards the practice of mobile phone advertising in Japan. The research follows a grounded theory approach, guided by Strauss and Corbin (1998). The primary research was conducted in Tokyo. It was found that in Japan's technologically advanced society, advertisers desired to reach consumers on their 3G mobile phones. However, use of these devices differed among demographic segmentations and consumers held unfavourable views towards the overload of irrelevant incoming ads. As a result, the recommendations made for the Japanese mobile advertising industry were: (1) for advertisers to use Bayesian Networks to create highly targeted ads (2) to improve communication between advertisers and mobile phone engineers, and (3) to discontinue lacklustre text only ads and create innovative multi-media ads. This research contributes to the literature on new media advertising by providing insight into an important component of the mobile phone advertising phenomenon: audience research.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Consumers are consistently surrounded by advertising messages in today's society. Billions of dollars worth of advertisements are viewed or heard by consumers daily. Advertising has become so common in every day life that Leiss, Kline & Jhally (1986) say that it "is not just a business expenditure undertaken in hope of moving some merchandise off the store shelves, but is rather an integral part of modern culture" (p.7). When consumers walk down the street they see billboard ads. They then see more ads when they read the paper, watch television, or search the Internet. Some consumers are even beginning to receive advertising messages on their mobile phones.

In the recent past, advertising messages have been forced to evolve with the increased development of technology and the diverse ways consumers seek out information and entertainment. With the introduction of personal video recording devices, traditional methods of advertising, such as the television commercial, may not be as powerful as they once were. Advertising researcher Zyman (2002) goes as far as to say, "advertising, as you know it, is dead" (p.1). Although this statement may be extreme, it goes to show that the traditional formats of advertising are, at the least, evolving.

Based on this developing aspect of advertising, this study focuses on emerging advertising methods and platforms, specifically those methods that require the use of the mobile phone. Consumer perceptions towards these emerging mobile phone advertising practices are the centre of the research.

1.1 Defining Advertising

Before discussing mobile phones and what constitutes mobile phone advertising, clarification of the use of term *advertising* in respect to this research should be made. Advertising is one of the many aspects of the larger field of marketing. Marketing is a “function in an organization [which] facilitates the exchange process and development of relationships by carefully examining the needs and wants of consumers” (Belch, Belch & Guolla, 2003, p. 4). Marketing has been traditionally broken down into four Ps, which form the marketing mix. The four Ps include: “product, price, place (distribution), and promotion (marketing communication)” (p. 4). Advertising, which falls under the promotion category, is labelled as one of the many elements of the promotional mix. Other elements of the promotional mix include direct marketing, sales promotion, public relations and personal selling (Belch, Belch & Guolla, 2003). Due to the nature of the promotional mix, it is natural that advertising is used in collaboration with other aspects of the promotional mix in communicating a marketing message to the consumer. In mobile phone advertising, as will be discussed further, this aspect of element collaboration is commonly used.

Interactivity in advertising messages was brought forth in new media advertising. Interactivity is defined as “sequential messages in response to previous messages” (Yun, 2007, p. 528). The traditional advertising definition was then challenged as new media devices came about. Therefore, how advertising was once defined is no longer necessarily representative of advertising today. In order to understand advertising methods that use new media, it is important to first be able to define what is meant by the term advertising. Curran and Richards (2002) performed a study in which they

interviewed numerous experts in the field of advertising. The following definition of modern advertising was derived from the conclusions of their research: “Advertising is a paid, mediated form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action, now or in the future” (p. 74). Mobile phone advertising, in its simplistic form would be an advertising message (as defined above) sent to a mobile phone.

When advertisers and researchers discuss mobile phone advertising today, it is often hard to distinguish the advertising message from the rest of the promotional mix. In fact, “marketers have recently begun to use the term *integrated marketing communication* (IMC) to recognize this connection among various promotion tools” (Belch, Belch & Guolla, 2003, p. 5). However, in many cases reviewed in this research, these integrated marketing communications are simply referred to as *advertising* or as *marketing*, depending on the researcher or company using the term. In many advertising messages on interactive devices, a follow up step, question or direction is used. The advertising message does not necessarily only guide persuasion to purchase the product or service, but it can guide the consumer to take action towards learning more, receiving a discount, all of which are other elements in the promotional mix. For example, an interactive advertising message may include directing them to a product website or to the point of sale. It may also invite them into an exclusive product club, lead them to a product sample, or send them an electronic coupon of sorts. Therefore, when discussing mobile advertising throughout this research, it is likely that one will notice that the term *advertising* will be loosely used to also incorporate other aspects of the promotional mix with the advertising communication being discussed. However, the researcher did not

want to use the term *marketing* as the other three Ps of the marketing mix, product, place and price will not be analyzed within the research.

1.2 The Mobile Phone Industry

The mobile phone has taken the communication technology sector by storm. Mobile phone subscriptions “totalled over 1.7 billion worldwide in 2004 (about 25% of the world’s population), outpacing the growth rates for both fixed phone lines and Internet users” (Chan-Olmstead, 2006, p.51). To show how rapidly mobile use is climbing, by mid 2006 “the number of mobile subscriptions worldwide was 2.4 billion” (Merisavo, Kajalo, Karjaluo, Virtanen, Salmenkivi, & Raulas, 2007, p.2). Research provided by *Mobile Marketing Magazine* predicts that penetration of mobile phones “will rise from 53.4% at end-2009 to 64% by end-2013” (“Data to Drive AsiaPac Growth”, 2009, para. 7). With that being said, the mobile phone industry is booming worldwide.

1.3 Why Japan: NTT DoCoMo, a Leader in the Mobile Industry

When discussing mobile phones, it was useful to look at Japan’s leading edge market as a source of information. Ferris (2007) states that “Japan is leading the way into a wireless future” (p. 29). NTT DoCoMo, Japan’s famous mobile front runner, has been a leader in the mobile phone industry since the beginning of the mobile times. In fact, “the first commercial cellular network was launched in 1979 in Japan by NTT, three years before the first cellular network went commercially live in the USA” (Ahonen, Kasper & Melkko, 2004, p. 2). They have remained leaders in the industry and have also been a focus for research regarding innovative mobile phone practices. NTT DoCoMo currently “has extended its coverage to 99 percent of the populated areas of Japan” (Ferris, 2007, p.28). NTT DoCoMo was also the company that launched the first 3G mobile service

standard in October 2001 (Ahonen et al, 2004, p.6). The term 3G refers to the third generation of the mobile capabilities, representing a more advanced network than the first and second generations. The 3G capabilities, which were not available in 1G and 2G, include “seamless roaming, service concepts and models, global radio access and global solution” (Ahonen et al, 2004, p.11). *Wireless Watch Japan* states that as of September 2009, the three main mobile phone providers in Japan carry a total of 107.74 million subscribers, equalling approximately 84% of the population. Out of all mobile phone subscribers, 102.44 million, equalling approximately 80% of the population (or 95% of mobile phone users) have a 3G connection (*Wireless Watch Japan*, 2009, Table 1).

Dentsu, a major research firm in Japan, reported that mobile advertising expenditures for 2008 equalled ¥91.3 billion, while total advertising expenditures in Japan equalled ¥6692.6 billion (“Advertising Expenditures in Japan”, 2008, p. 11, 19). As these numbers demonstrate, the mobile phone advertising industry is fairly prominent in Japan today; however, there is plenty of room for growth. According to *Wireless Watch Japan*:

Between 2000 and 2006, the share of time that consumers spend on mobile (relative to all forms of media) has increased four-fold to 4%, but mobile-related expenditures still only account for 1% of all advertising spendings. 25% of Japanese mobile data users today respond to mobile campaigns and actually sign up for promotions or make purchases as a result. (“Mobile Marketing for the 21st Century”, 2008, para. 2).

As this example implies, mobile phone advertising in Japan has tremendous potential. Further research into this platform for advertising in Japan may guide this industry towards reaching its full potential.

Consequently, it was NTT DoCoMo’s leading edge in the mobile phone industry that guided this research to look at the Japanese market. Many techniques of mobile

advertising used in Japan over the last couple of years have either not yet been introduced, or are in their initial launching stages in the Canadian and North American mobile industry. The researcher wished to look at the consumer perceptions of mobile advertising; however, there was seemingly limited exposure to these diverse forms of mobile advertising locally. Japan therefore seemed to be the logical society upon which to base the research. Although there are numerous differences between the cultures, as will be touched upon in the discussion section, the researcher believes it was beneficial to talk to people who have had significant exposure to these forms of advertising in order to begin to understand the mobile phone advertising recipients' feelings, wants and needs. Since mobile phone use is relatively new, in comparison to other media technologies, there are a lot of unknown aspects as to how mobile advertising techniques will work most effectively. Many companies may not be willing to invest in this form of advertising in its initial stages with so many unanswered questions. Before companies put money into advertising, they would ideally like to have some degree of assurance that the advertising, towards which they put significant financial resources, will help their sales and improve brand recall and recognition. They would also like to have the confidence that it will aid their bottom line and not simply be another cost. Therefore, research about the consumer's point of view towards more recent advertising techniques may show to be extremely helpful for not only the advertising industry, but also for the companies investing in this kind of advertising platform. As a side note, it is important to clarify that the mobile phone is referred to as the "keitai" by the Japanese and this term is commonly used by people who participated in this research.

1.4 Audience Research: A Qualitative Approach

The research performed in this study focuses on the views and opinions of the recipients of mobile advertising messages. Morrison, Haley, Bartel Sheehan and Taylor (2002) said that:

We're convinced that great advertising comes only from an understanding of consumers' wants and needs. And, in order to understand those wants and needs, the consumer needs to be consulted and integrated at virtually every step of the research process. (p. 1)

In looking at the fairly recent phenomenon of mobile phone advertising, studying the audience for these messages is one of the most important aspects to be considered in making recommendations for the future in this industry.

Audience research can be performed by using either quantitative or qualitative approaches. Much of the literature that was reviewed for this study in the area of audience research in mobile advertising took a quantitative approach. A quantitative approach allows greater representation of the consumer population; however, underlying perceptions and reasons for actions performed may never be uncovered. Frey, Botan, Friedman and Kreps (1991) state that:

Quantitative observations provide a high level of measurement precision and statistical power, while qualitative observations provide greater depth of information about how people perceive events in the context of the actual situations in which they occur. (p. 99)

As the format of advertising to be researched in this study is a fairly recent one with limited years of use in the advertising industry, conducting a qualitative research study can provide beneficial insight into this phenomenon.

Morrison, et al. (2002) say that the "character of qualitative research makes it and its associated methods extremely useful for uncovering complex consumer insights that

can lead to successful advertising” (p. 1). The purpose of this study is to begin to understand the consumer perceptions of and interactions with mobile phone advertising in order to make recommendations for advertisers using this format. Therefore, a qualitative research design was determined to be the most valuable option at this exploratory stage. This research investigates the leading edge mobile advertising techniques used in Japan and the consumers’ reactions to such techniques. With the adoption of the ‘smartphone’ in North America, led by BlackBerrys and the iPhone, the need for up to date and technologically advanced advertising techniques is currently here in North America in full force. As previously mentioned, despite cultural differences, information found in this study based on the Japanese market may be used as a basis for future recommendations for other markets.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The components of this research are organized into five main sections: the introduction, the literature review, the methodology, the findings and interpretations and finally the conclusion. Following this introduction will be a chapter based on a review of relevant literature surrounding the topic of advertising. The literature review begins by looking at the topic of new media and non-traditional advertising in general and then narrows the field to look at the specific practice of mobile phone advertising.

The third chapter presents the methodological approach which was taken by the researcher. It thoroughly introduces and reviews the qualitative grounded theory approach guided by the work of Strauss and Corbin (1998). This chapter introduces the research questions and explains the steps taken to collect data by conducting interviews and focus groups and performing a document analysis of industry reports. The chapter

then looks at the participants and sample, which is then followed by introducing the methods for coding and analysing the data. This chapter also allows for reflection by looking at the role of the researcher and the trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter four consists of the original research conducted by the researcher for this study. This chapter is broken down into two main sections starting with general findings, which are followed by the advanced analysis and interpretations. It is in this chapter that the researcher reveals the findings of the extensive analysis conducted as well as introduces practical recommendations.

The last chapter of the thesis, the conclusion, begins by briefly reviewing the previous chapters. It then concisely reiterates the findings and recommendations and looks back at the limitations of the study. It then looks towards the future and offers recommendations for potential research similar in nature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The review of literature in the advertising field is broken down into two main sections. The first section focuses on previous and current forms of new media, or non-traditional advertising. A brief overview of this aspect is valuable in understanding how new media advertising has progressed from previous advertising techniques. The second section focuses on the practice of mobile advertising. This section reviews some of the commonly used techniques and examines some studies previously conducted about perceptions and uses of these advertising techniques. Mobile advertising incorporates many fundamentals of past advertising procedures; however, the mobile phone takes them one step further making them portable. A brief look at techniques that incorporate both the mobile phone and other media in the same campaign will also be included.

2.1 New Media Advertising

Internet advertising tends to be one of the first practices to come to mind when researchers discuss new media advertising. Park, Shenoy and Salvendy (2008) state that “online advertising has three characteristics; ease of targeting; personalised contents; and interactivity” (p. 356). Of these components, the aspect that Park, Shenoy and Salvendy consider most important is interactivity. This aspect is one that also sets new media advertising apart from previous, more traditional advertising formats. Yun (2007) states that it is a common notion “that the interactive character of the new medium is what makes it different from the conventional media and it is this characteristic that has intrigued media consumers to adopt it” (p. 527). Interactivity in communication, as previously defined in the introduction, is “sequential messages in response to previous messages” (p. 528). Also, Yun (2007) discusses a non-interactive communication as:

When person A asks something of person B and person B pays attention to the question but does not choose to answer. The fact that person B pays attention to the message indicates that the communication has occurred. However, from A's point of view, B provides no sign of the message reception and the message was in vain. (p. 528)

After reviewing this definition, one may see how this example resembles the communication of a traditional advertisement. Person A, being the advertiser, asks something of person B, the consumer. The advertiser sends the consumer a message, as in the case of a television commercial message. This message attempts to sell the product, basically asking the consumer to purchase the product. The consumer, if watching the commercial, may be attentive to the message; however, the consumer cannot directly answer to the advertiser. With interactive new media advertising, if the consumer chooses to answer the advertiser, the option is available. For example, in the case of an Internet banner ad, the consumer can communicate back to the advertiser by clicking on the banner. This communicates interest, and the advertisement brings the consumer to the advertised product's website where communication can continue to occur. Interactive aspects are present in many forms of mobile advertising, as will be discussed in the second section.

Interactivity may be a main differentiation between new media and traditional advertising. However, whether this makes advertising more successful is still a question many researchers still have. Sohn, Ci and Lee (2007) found in their study that interactivity is a productive approach if interactive features are expected with the medium the advertising uses. For example, as the television is not an interactive device, consumers would not expect the advertisements on the television to be of an interactive approach. The researchers also found that the expected degree of interactivity had an

effect on the participants' perceptions of the advertisement. As the mobile phone can be perceived as an interactive device, since it facilitates two-way communications, one could speculate that, based on Sohn, Ci and Lee's research, interactive advertising could be expected.

Due to the ongoing communication that interactive advertisements provide, the initial messages have also changed in many circumstances. Sicilia, Ruiz, and Munuera (2005) looked at how the consumer's control of the communication messages is changing due to the interactivity of the Internet. They use the example of banner ads. The consumer has no control of this more intrusive technique; however, whether or not they choose to click on the banner ad and follow that message is completely in the consumer's control. The message is changing in that instead of more traditionally 'inviting' the customer to purchase the product, the advertisers are "inviting" consumers to learn more about it. An example of this is "inviting" them to the product website. Whether or not the consumer takes action to receive messages past the invitation is in that person's control.

An experiment conducted by Sicilia, Ruiz and Munuera (2005) exposed students to interactive and non-interactive websites. Their purpose was to investigate whether the levels of interactivity affected the processing of information by the consumer. The participants viewed two different product websites, which had varying levels of interactivity. In these cases, the responses were based on the information on the website, not the advertising message. They found that higher interactivity leads to a more knowledgeable view of the product and "that processing increases as interactivity increases" (p. 40). This suggests that the more interactive the website format, the more aware of the message the consumer was, due to increased cognitive processing.

As with all advertising techniques, both pros and cons exist. If this interactive form of advertising with new media, such as the Internet, seems so productive, what is hindering greater success? With the ability to bring the consumer straight to the point of sale, Internet advertising is very practical. However, declining click through rates, compared to the initial use of Internet advertising, have turned some advertisers against the idea of using this tactic (Cho & Cheon, 2004). Cho and Cheon explored the reasoning behind Internet ad avoidance, meaning the consumers' tendencies to avoid clicking on Internet ads. Some of the reasons include perceived ad clutter, prior negative experience and perceived goal impediment, meaning they interrupt the consumers' prior purpose for being on a given site. In the study conducted by Cho and Cheon, much of the reasoning has to do with the intrusive nature of the ads, rather than the interactivity aspects. Finding this balance continues to be a struggle for some new media advertisers. Cho and Cheon therefore suggest that in order to "develop consumer continuance intention for clicking Internet ads, it is essential to create consumer satisfaction toward ad services and increase perceived incentive and utility for clicking on banner ads" (p. 93). This leads to the idea of convincing consumers, by showing them perceived benefits of opting-in to receive the advertising, and creating positive perceptions towards advertisements.

As previously mentioned, with new media come new expectations from consumers and new ways messages must be presented to the consumer by advertisers. Newell and Meier (2007) stated that with "traditional media, audiences come to the medium to consume entertainment and information content. In consuming the content, the members of the audience implicitly accept the accompanying advertising" (p. 54). New media devices themselves have become more interactive, thereby leaving more

choice to the consumer. Consumers are no longer always forced to “implicitly accept the accompanying advertising”. They can use their personal video recorders to avoid television ads, close a pop up Internet ad or simply opt not to click on a banner ad. For these reasons, the notion of opt-in advertising has become increasingly popular. Opting-in occurs when the consumer is exposed to an advertisement and the option of opting-in, or accepting, to receive more messages or promotions are available. Opting-in can occur in numerous ways. For example, a consumer visiting a website reads an ad on the webpage about the chance to win a vacation. By clicking on this ad and entering one’s personal information, he or she is opting to release his or her personal information to the advertiser. At this point there is usually an option to receive further product information and contest or sales information from the provider. If one desires to receive this information, one is opting-in to the advertising. As seen in this example, this method usually uses incentives to convince a customer to opt-in to the advertising.

New media capabilities, interactive messages and opt-in techniques bring forth the notion of “integrated marketing”. As previously introduced, in integrated marketing, emphasis is put on moving away from passive media and advertising and moving towards the individual customer experience (Calder & Malthouse, 2005). The idea of a company creating a relationship with the customer and therefore making messages more customized is what many researchers, such as Calder and Malthouse, see as the way of the future. The individual customer experience, not just individual messaging, is the focus of integrated marketing. This stretches beyond the original definition of advertising, and overlaps into other marketing practices, becoming as broad as individual product customization. Interactivity in the initial advertising messages is the first step in

building the customized messages. The act of consumers opting-in and volunteering information is a necessity to the success of integrated marketing.

The continuous evolution in new media's interactive environment has brought forth a changing platform upon which advertising messages can occur. The Internet has led the way in introducing more interactive, customized and innovative advertising techniques. Internet advertising, as demonstrated in this section, has opened the doors for advertising messages that are more personalized and highly targeted. Many of these techniques have also been used with mobile phone advertising, as will be demonstrated in the following section.

2.2 Advertising Strategies Using the Mobile Phone

This section introduces mobile phone advertising practices and examines which techniques of mobile advertising are currently being used in different countries. This section also looks at initial studies of consumer reactions and attitudes towards these advertising formats. The techniques to be introduced are Short Message Service (SMS) ads, quick response (QR) codes, Bayesian networks and location-based advertising. This section concludes by briefly looking at a common technique of cross-media advertising with one of the media being the mobile phone. As these techniques are reviewed some common characteristics of Internet advertising are brought forth. Although many similarities between Internet advertising and mobile advertising exist, Park, Shenoy and Salvendy (2008) state that the main point to remember is that:

These characteristics are more significant in a mobile environment because it has highly personalised settings. In the mobile environment, everybody has a personal identification number and mobile devices usually stay with the audience almost all day. Moreover, advertisers can specify both location and time simultaneously in order to increase the accuracy of targeting because the location of the audience can be identified. (p. 356)

This brings us back to the point that the tactics may not be entirely new; they have just been made mobile.

SMS, more commonly known as text messaging, was one of the first platforms for mobile advertising and it is perhaps one of the most well-known techniques used by advertisers. As of “February 2006, SMS-based mobile marketing [was] still the most popular method in the industry” (Okazaki & Taylor, 2008, p.6). Okazaki and Taylor revealed that this format of advertising is one that has typically been a push strategy. The communication with this approach tends to be one-way and requires less cooperation from the consumer than many more recent techniques. This often disregards the opportunity to be interactive. The SMS practice seems to be losing its novelty as many current mobile advertising campaigns in Europe and Asia have moved beyond this technique to MMS (multimedia messaging service) messages.

Today, however, SMS is still widely used as it is “inexpensive, interactive, and can yield a high response rate. It thus becomes an extremely desirable method of targeting young consumers” (Zhang & Mao, 2008, p. 788). Zhang and Mao studied the influences of SMS on the Chinese market and found that the money being put into SMS advertising continues to grow even though other mobile advertising techniques have been brought forth. Although SMS advertising is one of the most basic mobile advertising techniques, it is extremely cost effective, possibly bringing the best return for the advertiser.

Looking to some of the more advanced techniques, quick response (QR) codes and image recognition are becoming more popular in mobile advertising and are currently being explored in Europe and Asia. Ramkumar (2007) looks at the image recognition opt-

in method using the two dimensional QR codes which he explains are most common in Japan and South Korea. Ramkumar (2007) explains the QR code technique as:

An opt-in mechanism that is similar to image recognition in that it uses the camera on the mobile phone. However, there is a significant difference: 2-D code recognition is performed by client software that resides on the mobile phone; the consumer does not send the image to a destination server as with the image recognition opt-in. The 2-D code is recognized by the mobile phone and the consumer is directed to information associated with code. (p. 46)

The reason behind the QR code's success so far is its simplicity. The two dimensional code stores all relevant information, leaving little work for the consumer to do. This technique is considered an opt-in method because "a consumer opts in to a mobile promotion by taking a picture of an advertisement or object" (p. 42). The QR code is placed by companies in publicly accessible areas, for example in a magazine ad or on the product. As consumers scan the QR code, it brings them to a website for the product or service, which they want to know more about, and then allows them to access further information and sometimes even a digital coupon.

Image recognition opt-in methods can also occur without the specific QR codes. This method can also be practiced when "a consumer expresses interest in a marketing campaign by taking a picture of a specified object and sending it to a specified address" (Ramkumar, 2007, p. 43). For an image recognition opt-in campaign to work, a "call to action" from the advertiser must occur in the ad to make the customer aware that he or she can take a picture of the advertisement and send it to the listed address either by SMS or e-mail. The reward for this opt-in is usually "mobile content such as a ringtone, video, wallpaper, mobile Web site, promotion or coupon" (p. 44). Ramkumar lists some best practices for image recognition opt-ins such as "the call to action should be as simple as possible, ideally requiring just two steps from the consumer; taking the picture and

sending it to the specified destination” (p. 45). Again, the goal of this technique is simplicity, requiring little work from the consumer.

One of the set backs to this method is that it does require some of the most advanced mobile phone systems to operate. Having 3G capabilities on the mobile, as well as the QR bar code scanner in the phone’s picture options, are about the minimum requirements for this practice to succeed. The use of QR codes is therefore becoming more popular in parts of Europe and Asia where the more advanced phone systems are in common use.

The next technique to be considered, also one of the most advanced to date, is the Bayesian network structure. The Bayesian network, which Xu, Liao and Li (2008) explored, is a network which:

Contains a user model that describes the user’s profiles and preferences, a context model that describes contextual information, and a matching engine that integrates information from the two models and the content information to predict the most likely interested customer. (p. 711)

This complex network attempts to make mobile advertisements as personalized and applicable as possible to each individual consumer. Xu, Liao, and Li found that “78% said they would be happy to receive mobile advertising that was tailored to their interests” (p. 712). Due to findings such as these, they focused on ways to customize advertisements to best suit customers’ needs. This led them to study networks that can aid in customization. The Bayesian network was found to be most successful for purposes of customized advertisements. Cooperation from the consumer was vital for this practice, as the mobile phone users had to provide their personal information, such as product likes and dislikes, in order for the network to be built. The network will allow a list of users to be provided in “descending order of probability, indicating the likelihood of the users

being interested” in the given product or service (p. 719). Some of their findings included the understanding that “the most important factor influencing personalization is the context factor, followed by user preference and content respectively” (p. 718). All of these aspects helped Xu, Liao and Li to use the Bayesian network to the best of its ability to produce highly specific and personalized advertisements which led them to create successful advertising campaigns. Again, these techniques do require advanced mobile phone systems.

Another aspect of mobile advertising that is currently in use in some countries and being researched by many in the field, is the idea of location-based mobile advertising (LBA). This method focuses on the GPS system that mobile phones have and the GPS’ ability to provide advertisers the function of location-based advertising. Unmi and Harmon (2007) define location-based services (LBS) as “services that are enhanced by and depend on information about a mobile device’s position” (p. 2). More specifically, they define LBA as “targeted advertising initiatives delivered to a mobile device from an identified sponsor that is specific to the location of the consumer” (p. 2). The GPS in the consumers’ phone identifies their location and depending on their geographical position, sends pertinent promotional pop up ads to their phone by text message or a mobile Internet pop-up ad. Unmi and Harmon state that “LBA was relatively more effective when it becomes available upon explicit request by the consumer than when consumers are alerted to location-specific advertising or promotions for preferred product categories relevant to a specific location” (p. 2). This means that rather than allowing the consumer’s GPS to do the work by simply tracking the consumer’s whereabouts and notifying advertisers in that area, it allows the consumer to make the notification that he

or she is looking for something. A good example would be a consumer requesting restaurant advertisements in a certain area once out in the market looking for a place to dine.

Within the LBA sphere of advertising, researchers explored whether the push or pull technique is more successful. The two questions Unmi and Harmon (2007) posed were: “(1) would consumers see greater value in LBA that is ‘pushed’ to them than LBA that consumers receive only upon request (‘pull’), and (2) would consumers perceive greater value in LBA with brand advertising than LBA with promotional offers?” (p. 3). According to survey results, perceived benefits and value were both greater for pull rather than push LBA techniques. Essentially this means that the consumers tended to find the advertisements of greater value for their use when they reached out for the information, rather than it simply popping up on their phone when they may not even be in the market for that product or service at that time.

Some may wonder why this technique has not taken off more rapidly if it has the ability to send the consumers personalized, targeted advertisements while they are close to a location where this information is useful. It seems like a win-win situation to both the advertiser and the consumer. For example, the consumer is given this useful information, such as a coupon or notification of a sale, for the store which the advertiser knows that the consumer loves, at the exact time the consumer is walking past the store. Out of all the mobile advertising techniques reviewed in this research, this was one of the most current and seemingly most controversial due to the use of the GPS function. For this reason, a question was placed in the interviews specific to the LBA format to see if

participants had any first hand experience with this practice and what their perceptions of it were.

Initial research on LBA ads showed concerns about consumer privacy. Gow (2005) discussed the wireless use of 9-1-1 in North America and how that brought about issues regarding privacy since wireless users can now be geographically tracked. Gow looked at laws pertaining to privacy as well as the notion of customer consent. There are two ways in which mobile phone users' locations can be disclosed: "lawful access" and "customer consent". The Customer Proprietary Network Information, CPNI, which is the "body of data generated within a telecommunications network for the purposes of customer billing" (p. 78), cannot, by law in many countries such as the United States and Canada, disclose this geographical information unless authorized by the mobile customer or demanded by legal authorities for lawful purposes (Gow, 2005). In this early stage of mobile advertising, many North American consumers are still very wary about what advertisers can or will do with the personal information that they provide. Therefore, gaining permission from a consumer to be geographically tracked may still be seen as a risky step. This aspect of customer consent is obviously essential to understand before creating mobile ads. In Unmi and Harmon's (2007) study discussed above, they found that the "greater levels of trust in the cell phone service provider should lead to fewer concerns about privacy arising from location tracking, and greater perceptions of benefits and value" (p. 13). However, how to not only gain that trust, but extend it to the advertiser is still something that needs to be considered. Due to this consideration, a question regarding privacy concerns was asked in the research in an attempt to gain any insight into the degree of concern participants had and how advertisers may gain trust.

While all of these mobile advertising techniques work logistically, their levels of effectiveness are still in the early days of research. Some researchers have looked at prior social and technological theories in order to help explain this phenomenon of mobile advertising. Hanley, Becker and Martinsen's (2006) research posed three questions regarding what incentives college students would consider sufficient in return for accepting mobile ads on their mobile phones. Having consumers volunteer to receive mobile advertisements is one of the main ways advertisers are working around privacy issues. Some of Hanley, Becker and Martinsen's (2006) findings included that 29% of participants would accept ads if they got something free in return, and 66% said they would accept ads if there was a monetary incentive. They also found that 59% of participants said the monetary incentive would have to be of \$1 value or more per ad. Overall, the bottom line shows that if a consumer accepts mobile ads and gives one's personal information and one's time, most expect something in return.

Looking further into the aspect of offering incentives to entice opting-in, Newell and Meier (2007) conducted a study looking at reasons behind opting-in. The experiment the researchers performed was in a confined segment, an advertising class at a Midwestern university. The researchers offered the advertising class a chance to opt-in to receiving mobile advertising. The advertising included mobile texts, at a max of three a day, which would offer the mobile user coupons to local bars, restaurants and stores. If the students had an unlimited texting plan with their mobile provider, there would be no cost. However, if they did have to pay for texting, they would end up with texting charges from the ads. Out of the 206 students, 75 accepted to receive the ads. In a following class, the students then had to write why they chose to accept or reject receiving the ads. Their

major findings included the novelty of new advertising and receiving coupons as the main reasons for opting in. The main reasons behind rejection were avoiding advertising, technical constraints, and cost of text messages.

The idea of opting-in has gained some significant attention in terms of research in the advertising field. Further research into this intriguing practice showed that it holds great potential for the advertiser if fittingly executed for a specific product and with the appropriate demographic target.

At the stem of reasoning behind participating in mobile advertisements are individual perceptions about the practice. Mobile phone users' perception is an important area to investigate, especially in the initial stages of the use of these techniques. Merisavo et al. (2007) conducted a study which contained five hypotheses all pertaining to different aspects of mobile advertising perceptions. These aspects included perceived utility, utilization of contextual information, perceived control, perceived sacrifice, and trust in privacy. Based on survey results, the two strongest drivers found for acceptance were perceived utility and utilization of contextual information. The researchers concluded that "mobile advertising should provide consumers with either useful information or a way to save time or money based on the consumer's situation, location, or personal profile" (p. 11). Perceived control was the only aspect that was rejected as a driver of acceptance. The researchers believed that due to permission-based laws for mobile devices, this aspect was not a concern.

Many researchers believe individual perceptions are thought to be considerable drivers behind the adoption or failure of a mobile advertising practice. Research by Ahonen, Kasper and Melkko (2004) focuses on this aspect and looks at how important

the individual consumer's perceptions are for mobile advertising to succeed. They state that, "the mobile portal will need to select its advertising methods carefully. Choosing the wrong form of advertisement in order to gather short-term revenue can easily result in severe backlash in the 3G customers' behaviour" (p. 134). This study looked more specifically to the success of mobile advertisements in terms of return for the company advertising.

An important practical application of the mobile phone, which is essential for many of the advertising techniques to operate, is the use of Internet on the phone, also referred to as mobile Internet. Funk (2005) discusses how there are currently many limitations of mobile Internet, including network speeds, which can impede mobile advertising techniques. With the advancement of mobile Internet, mobile advertising practices will also have the potential to advance. One of the major advantages for the advertiser at this point in time is, "that firms can use the same URL for both PC-based and mobile phone-based Web sites" (Troutman & Timpson, 2008, p. 1). However, there are still many kinks to be worked out in the technical side of this regarding the ability to have content and text sizing and functionality to be consistent between both PC and mobile applications.

Wang (2007) reiterates an earlier point discussed above stating that "consumers must be contacted in ways that affect their media experience and lead them to a brand concept. Cross-media integration of advertising can create a specific set of contacts that affect media engagement and brand experience" (p. 35). For example, an Internet URL can be seen on display in a print ad. There are many combinations of cross-media advertising which numerous campaigns have previously used. The most current

combinations include the use of a mobile phone within the mix. It is becoming ever more familiar to see television ads, Internet ads or print ads providing a number for consumers to text to in order to receive the product or follow up information. This is a clever use of a combination of the push information with the opt-in technique, as discussed above. The cross use of Internet and mobile advertising is one which has also gathered some attention as both platforms are interactive.

Wang (2007) states that “studies about cross-media integration are limited” (p. 35). However in his study, it was found that the cross use of mobile advertising and Internet advertising “is positive for advertisers” (p. 36). He goes on to state that:

Websites may also increase the interest and relevance of advertising messages to mobile phone users because the web is not only an ideal but also a complementary medium to develop consumer relationships. Mobile phone users can become enthusiastic with various interactive and engaging features on the websites. (p.36)

Not only does this coupling allow stronger brand awareness and cohesive messaging, but it has the ability to build brand attitude by leaving communication open between the consumer and the advertised firm.

Although Wang concentrated on the use of cross-media techniques within the new media sphere, Davis and Sajtos (2008) looked at the benefits of coupling the mobile phone with a passive medium: television. Davis and Sajtos state that with television, “consumer activity in this environment is pure reception. There is no interaction required from the viewers” (p. 377). However, “the existence of two-way communication means by definition that the marketer/firm sends a message to the consumer, which generates a response” (p. 376). This, of course, cannot occur within the television medium alone. Hence, the call to action is made for the consumer to respond by the mobile phone. This is comparable to the above description of interactive advertising by Yun (2007). The

major difference is that the call to action is in the passive medium, and it is then up to the consumer to respond by taking the next step in turning to the mobile phone to continue in a two-way conversation. Some companies, which may be hesitant to dive head first into the land of mobile advertising may be eased in by use of such cross-media techniques.

As was displayed in this review of literature, the platform for mobile phone advertising is vast. There are numerous techniques that can be applied with the advanced technology of the mobile phone; some are new while others were previously used with traditional advertising and Internet advertising. As the mobile phone in some societies has become a human-like extension of the body, it creates great opportunity for advertisers to reach their potential consumers. Due to the potential that this advertising platform has for advertisers, further research into consumer perceptions on the reception of these advertising messages will be beneficial. The literature examined in this chapter provided a foundation for the research project discussed in this paper. This literature inspired not only the research project, but more specifically the questions which the research participants were asked.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter will thoroughly explain the methods the researcher chose to follow in order to conduct the primary research. It will also present a rationale for why this approach was taken and will walk the reader through all steps of the process. The first section will begin by explaining the decision to use qualitative methods to carry out the research.

3.1 Qualitative Approach

The research followed a qualitative approach, using document analysis, focus groups and interviews. As previously mentioned, qualitative methods were chosen due to the nature of the research, insofar that it is an exploration of the mobile phone advertising industry in Japan. The exploration of a new phenomenon can be very useful for future research, even if it begins by enhancing understanding of a limited number of participants' views who have had experience in the field. Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that "qualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods" (p. 11). At this early stage of mobile phone advertising, a better understanding of feelings, thought processes and emotions towards mobile advertising is beneficial for a potential future advertiser looking to use mobile phone advertising. The qualitative findings from this research will also provide a foundation for future research in this area.

As previously mentioned, due to the recent advancement to advertising by mobile phone, there is limited research available to review and a lack of theories specific to this phenomenon upon which to base further studies. Significant research has been performed

in this area in the last few years; however, the research is still at an exploratory stage. For this reason, the researcher elected to use grounded theory to guide the research. The term *grounded theory* refers to “theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process. [...] A researcher does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12). Grounded theory works to build understanding which may lead to new theory, rather than testing existing theory. According to Strauss and Corbin, (1998) “[g]rounded theories, because they are drawn from data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action” (p. 12). Since advertisers and advertising researchers could benefit from further insight and enhanced understanding in this new field, grounded theory appears to be the best fit for the purpose of this research. As previously mentioned, this research looks at three data sources in order to begin to expand the researchers’ understanding of the mobile phone advertising practices. The next section of this chapter will look at the questions the researcher proposed prior to conducting the research.

3.2 Research Questions

As was previously stated in the introduction, the purpose of this research is to begin to understand the consumer perceptions of mobile phone advertising in order to create recommendations for advertisers using this advertising platform. The following research questions were formed in order to guide and accomplish this purpose.

RQ1: What are the perceptions of Japanese consumers towards the practice of mobile phone advertising?

RQ2: What are the reasons that explain these perceptions?

In order to satisfy the research questions, the following qualitative data collection methods were utilized.

3.3 Focus Groups

The focus group was chosen as a format of data collection due to its discussion-provoking environment. As there are many new things to learn about this recent phenomenon, discussions from current mobile advertising users could bring forth many thoughts and reactions that the researcher may not have previously conceived. The focus groups have a theoretical application, which is to “help us understand phenomena so that we can generalize beyond the specific applications under the study” (Fern, 2001, p. 4). In this research, the focus groups also hold an exploratory task; Fern (2001) describes the purposed said groups to be, “creating, collecting, identifying, discovering, explaining, and generating thoughts, feelings and behaviors” (p. 5). Discovery of thoughts and feelings towards mobile advertising is the main goal of these focus groups.

The original plan was to hold three to four focus groups in Tokyo consisting of five to seven participants. This was planned based on suggestions from Keyton (2006) that the focus groups, should last 60 to 90 minutes and should consist of five to ten participants. However, due to a limited time frame in Japan and limited contact resources, the original plans were not feasible. In the end, four focus groups and four individual interviews were conducted instead. The focus groups consisted of two to four people and the sessions lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes in length. All focus groups took place over two days, January 21st and 22nd, 2009, in the Tokyo University Communication lounge. In these focus groups the researcher acted as the moderator and took notes, as well as tape recorded the discussions in order to be transcribed at a later date.

According to Morgan (1997), focus groups should begin with an icebreaking question, meaning that “each person around the table gives a very brief self-introduction” or discussion starter questions, meaning that the researcher should “present the basic topic for the session and throw the discussion open to the group as a whole” (p. 49). Each focus group began with a discussion starter question, which asked each participant to briefly describe their experience with mobile advertising or give an example of a memorable mobile advertisement they had received in the past year. Whether it was due to the language barrier or the unselfish and rather shy qualities of the Japanese participants, this question was often responded to very briefly, but did open them up to more comfortable conversation.

3.4 Interviews

As previously mentioned, interviews were not originally planned as a method of data collection for this research. However, as time grew closer to the researcher’s departure she began to see that due to the short time frame in Japan and scheduling conflicts that were already occurring, she would have to be prepared to interview participants one-on-one. These interviews took place between January 18th and 22nd, 2009; each took approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The interviews were conducted by the researcher who took notes as well as tape recorded all conversations.

As the original focus group questions were modified to ones that were more specific and direct due to findings in the pre-test, as will be discussed later, the researcher did not find that it was necessary to adjust the focus group questions significantly for the individual interviews. However, the individual interviews left more room for follow-up questions that were individually inspired. All participants of both the interviews and

focus groups had to sign a consent form thoroughly explaining the study and guaranteeing the privacy of their identity prior to commencing the discussions (Appendix A).

3.5 Document Analysis

Media reviews on the mobile phone industry were analysed in order to compare and contrast opinions given by the industry experts with the opinions of the participants who are the recipients of the advertising messages. The documents that were analysed came from three different sources; *Nikkei Advertising & Marketing*, *Wireless Watch Japan*, and *Mobile Marketing Magazine*.

Nikkei Advertising & Marketing was the first choice for review due to the fact that *Nikkei Inc.* is one of the largest business publishers in Japan. The *Nikkei* website reports that “in addition to publishing five newspapers, including *The Nikkei*, the world's largest business daily, the *Nikkei Group* supplies business information around the globe through a variety of channels, from electronic media to broadcasting, books and magazines” (*Nikkei*, 2009, para. 1). As *Nikkei Inc.* is such a well know business publisher in Japan, this seemed to be a very credible source.

Wireless Watch Japan was chosen due to its concentration on the mobile industry and the fact that it is an English publication based out of Japan. The *Wireless Watch Japan* website states that it “is the original, independent English news source on Japan’s mobile industry and provides in-depth and original coverage via news reports, analytical articles, streaming video & audio programs and a free email newsletter” (*Wireless Watch Japan*, 2009, para. 1). This source is very thorough and covers all aspects of the wireless world in Japan.

Mobile Marketing Magazine was chosen due to its specialization in the exact topic area of this research. Although this magazine is based out of the United Kingdom, it reports on world wide information. All articles reviewed in the document analysis discussed issues that examined Japan's mobile market in detail.

The three publications were reviewed in order to find all articles on mobile advertising that were specific to Japan and written in the year 2008. Articles selected from all three publications were then scanned, looking for specific subject matter in order to narrow down the articles. To make the short list, the articles had to be explicitly about practices in Japan and about campaigns that distinctively used the mobile phone. In the end, the short list of articles to be reviewed consisted of three articles from *Nikkei Advertising & Marketing*, five from *Wireless Watch Japan*, and four from *Mobile Marketing Magazine*.

Each article was then thoroughly reviewed in order to make note of the main contributions. The main items to be analysed were: formats of mobile advertising discussed, the selling point of the technique and the success or failure of the technique, and mobile phone advertising expenditures. The interview and focus group participants were asked questions that revealed information about these similar aspects but from their point of view. Therefore, these items were selected not only because they were items that were prevalent in most industry reports, but also because they addressed a common subject area, which could be compared and contrasted with personal communication responses.

3.6 Participants and Sample

3.6.i Target Audience

The criteria for selecting participants were that they had to be between the ages of 18 and 35, and be Japanese citizens who had been using a mobile phone for a minimum of two years in Japan. The target was fairly broad for two reasons. Finding a sufficient number of contacts was a concern, and the researcher wanted to allow a more representative view of mobile phone users.

3.6.ii Participant Recruitment

Due to minimal contacts in Tokyo, a snowballing technique was used to gather participants. This method, “a nonprobability sampling technique, is used when participants help researchers obtain their sample by identifying other similar participants” (Keyton, 2006, p. 128). The researcher began by talking to Japanese exchange students, University of Ottawa faculty members and friends to see if anyone had any leads. As all the Japanese exchange students the researcher met in Ottawa were from cities other than Tokyo, that road did not lead to any contacts. However, a faculty member at the University of Ottawa had a contact in Nagoya. This was the most significant lead. The researcher e-mailed this professor at Nagoya University and asked if he had any contacts in Tokyo. The researcher was put in touch with a PhD student at Tokyo University who was later sent the letter of recruitment (Appendix B). This contact then forwarded it on to acquaintances at Tokyo University. This contact was then able to help the researcher set up three focus groups equalling fifteen participants. Upon arrival in Japan, this contact informed the researcher that a student departmental meeting had been called for the dates that the focus groups were scheduled; therefore, five students could no longer attend.

Two of those students were then met at a later time for individual interviews. In the end, there were four focus groups at Tokyo University, equalling ten participants and two individual interviews. All of these focus groups and interviews took place in the Communication lounge at the University.

The researcher was put in contact with the last two interviewees by a contact that a relative had. These two participants were full-time workers whose schedules were not very flexible, so the researcher met them individually at their convenience. These two interviews took place at coffee shops in Tokyo.

3.7 Role of the Researcher

Maxwell (2005) described the importance of the researcher's role in a qualitative study by stating that "the researcher is the instrument of the research, and the research relationships are the means by which the research gets done" (p. 83). The researcher of this study is a Canadian citizen who had never previously been to Japan or conducted any previous research on the Japanese culture. The researcher has previously studied in the areas of advertising and marketing in the School of Management, as well as in media communication studies. The researcher has also worked in the field of marketing for six years. Due to the amount of time the researcher has spent in advertising and marketing, she had to be careful in acknowledging that a bias might be held in favouring advertising techniques that are successful in terms of profit, yet may not be sensitive to consumers' individual situations.

The researcher is a mobile phone user in Canada, but did not use the mobile phone when abroad in Japan. The researcher's mobile phone is not a 3G phone. The researcher does not use Internet on her mobile phone, nor has the researcher received

mobile phone advertisements in the past, other than text messages from her mobile phone provider. The researcher uses the mobile phone strictly for phone calls and text messaging. The researcher's previous knowledge of mobile phone advertising came from industry reports and academic studies. No personal accounts or discussions on the reception of mobile phone ads had previously occurred. Nonetheless, the researcher had to be aware of the biases that may occur due to the knowledge of success or failure rates of techniques or campaigns using mobile phones.

Acknowledging one's biases is the first step in guarding against their intrusion into the study. Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that:

Analysts, as well as research participants, bring to the investigation biases, beliefs and assumptions. This is not necessarily a negative trait; after all, persons are the products of their cultures, the times in which they live, their genders, their experiences, and their training. The important thing is to recognize when either our own or the respondents' biases, assumptions, or beliefs are intruding into the analysis. (p. 97)

Biases that the researcher believes may have affected the study will be addressed in the limitations of the research.

3.8 Data Collection and Analysis

This analysis was conducted based on the perceptions of the mobile phone user in Tokyo, Japan and the interpretations of the researcher who observed and experienced the culture. Many research studies begin with an idea of why a phenomenon occurs and a theory that explains this phenomenon and guides the research. However, as this research followed the grounded theory approach, this study relied on the data produced by focus groups and interviews to generate the theory. A total of four focus groups and four interviews were transcribed verbatim for the analysis to commence.

The focus group and interview transcripts were analyzed guided by the procedures and practices outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Grounded theory uses open coding to discover concepts and axial coding to interpret and uncover relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this process, theory is derived inductively by closely examining all the data, identifying themes and subsequently coding those themes. From the themes, categories can be created and explanations can be given for the occurrence of certain phenomena.

As this research was conducted with participants whose first language was not English, the responses and meanings in the text to be coded created a special challenge for the researcher. For this reason, as well as to allow the researcher to create a closer relationship with her data, the researcher chose not to use a qualitative analysis computer program to analyze the data. Both open coding and axial coding were preformed using the functions available in *Microsoft Word*. The steps taken and functions used in *Microsoft Word* will be described in greater detail in the following sections.

Noticing how the participants responded and the feelings or meanings they attached to words is just as important as the actual words said. Therefore, at the same time as the text was being coded, the researcher also made memos about the responses or memories of the interview or focus group to which she could later refer. Memos are used as the “researcher’s record of analysis, thoughts, interpretations, questions, and directions for further data collection” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 110). Some memos were concerned with how the actual focus group or interview process went. For example, a note made by the researcher while coding data stated “N3: Maybe if I were talking to more non-students or more affluent people, this idea of a discount would not have been

so common: possible limitation”. Other memos were about observations the researcher made about how the participant discussed a certain matter. For example, “N15: This fear seems to be so great that this participant would not even go to an unknown company website. This could be a great problem for a new or more obscure company trying to advertise by this format”. The memos significantly ranged in content; however, their purpose was the same: to record analytical ideas and insights that may help guide the researcher at a later point in the analysis.

These memos were recorded in *Microsoft Word* by adding a comment bubble and labeling it N#, then ordering the notes in numerical sequence. On a second *Microsoft Word* document the memos were written and listed in their successive order. There were 55 memos written in total.

3.8.i Open Coding

Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that in the open coding process “data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and differences” (p. 102). Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that the researcher examine the texts to be analyzed line by line, sentence by sentence or paragraph by paragraph. Due to the limited English of the participants in this study, it was decided to code the text sentence by sentence in order to better grasp the full meaning of responses given by the participants. Therefore, each sentence was examined and a range of interpretations were considered.

Open coding was useful for this exploratory research since “the researcher is not looking for data that fit a set number or type of categories. [...] Rather, the researcher is ‘open’ to all possibilities of categories” (Keyton, 2006, p. 295). As the Japanese mobile

phone system is much more technologically advanced than the North American system, participants brought forth concepts in their discussion which a North American researcher may have never considered. By not restricting the data to pre-conceived categories, a researcher may be able to openly investigate some of these unknown concepts.

In order to organize the data, the researcher created a coding system. During open coding, as the data was examined sentence by sentence, concepts, or themes, were identified and labeled. Using the *Microsoft Word* function of adding comments, the themes were labeled by adding a comment bubble and writing the coined theme in the bubble. In labeling these concepts, a “name may be one placed on the objects by the analyst because of the imagery or meaning they evoke when examined comparatively and in context, or the name may be taken from the words of respondents themselves. The latter often are referred to as ‘in vivo codes’” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 105). Both *in vivo* codes and names given by the researcher for concepts were used in this step. For example, the participant response “on the phone, I find them annoying” was labelled using the *in vivo* code “annoying”. While the response, “I worry sometimes that they have a catch to them, like they might rip you off” was labelled “fear of scam”; a name selected by the researcher.

After all interviews and focus groups were coded for themes, these themes were then reviewed by the researcher to draw connections amongst them. This next step, according to Strauss and Corbin (1998), is when “events, happenings, objects, and actions/interactions that are found to be conceptually similar in nature or related in meaning are grouped under more abstract concepts termed ‘categories’” (p. 102). In total,

62 different themes were labelled. All of these themes were carefully examined in order to discover relationships between concepts. Continuous evaluation of the themes reassured the researcher that the theory is grounded in the data, providing a more objective way to create categories with similar properties within the constraints of the research.

The coding method the researcher created for categorization of themes was done by use of a colour system. Each category was given a colour in the highlight hue in the *Microsoft Word* program to represent it. For example, the initial category of “Positive Feelings” was given the colour green. The researcher then went back through all of the transcripts and highlighted the theme labels according to the colour of the category in which it was placed. Upon completion of open coding, the axial coding process began.

3.8.ii Axial Coding

The use of axial coding allows the researcher to take the categories constructed in open coding and connect “together categories in a meaningful way” (Keyton, 2006, p. 295). Keyton (2006) describes this process as allowing the researcher to “continually compar[e] parts of the data to other parts and the research literature” (p. 295). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), axial coding is performed in order “to begin the process of reassembling data that were fractured during open coding. In axial coding, categories are related to their subcategories to form more precise and complete explanations about phenomena” (p. 124). Not only is the relationship between categories and their subcategories revealed but the relationship of other categories to one another is examined.

In the axial coding process nine categories were originally created. Upon further analysis, by mapping out connections amongst characteristics of the categories, these categories were then narrowed down to three main categories, which will be introduced and examined in the following chapter.

3.9 Trustworthiness

3.9.i Focus Group Pre-Test

Before leaving for Japan the researcher held an informal pre-test focus group with three Japanese exchange students studying at Carleton University. This test was extremely useful in clarifying the questions to be asked to the participants. This test was a chance to see if the researcher could communicate well with this population. Many helpful lessons were learned from this process.

The researcher began by sending an e-mail request to both University of Ottawa and Carleton University asking to pass along contact info to any Japanese exchange students in order to help the researcher prepare for her trip to Japan. One student from Carleton replied. Meetings were held on a couple occasions and she helped prepare the researcher for her cultural experience in Japan. As she attended school in Nagoya she did not have contacts for focus groups in Tokyo. However, she had other Japanese exchange friends, whom she invited to participate in our discussions. It was at this point that the pre-test focus group was held. This pre-test was extremely helpful and some interesting insight was gained in this experience. From the pre-test, it was learned that the language used in the questions did not pose difficulty for the pre-test interviewees. However, there was still a concern with keeping the language simple, as it was realized that some

participants in Japan may not have the same grasp of the English language as the students who came to study in Canada.

The researcher had originally wanted to take the role of a low moderator while conducting the focus groups. Morgan (1997) distinguishes focus groups into two classes. Taking the role of a low moderator means the groups are less structured, and only two broadly stated questions are asked (Morgan, 1997). The two questions that originally started the focus group were: “What are your perceptions of, or attitudes about, the practice of mobile phone advertising?” and “Which specific aspects of mobile phone advertising do you like or dislike?”. Follow-up questions and prompts were also prepared for when gaps in the conversation occurred (Appendix C). This format of moderation was chosen as Morgan (1997) suggests that a low moderated focus group is useful for exploratory research as it allows the discussion to pursue areas of interest to the participant. As a result of the pre-test, it was found that this role was not very successful. The cultural differences between Canadian participants and Japanese participants were overlooked. In the researcher’s experience, she learned that Japanese citizens tend to be much more polite, are soft spoken and prefer order. Therefore, when general questions were given the participants all looked at each other in silence wondering who was to speak first. When one person was speaking no one else ever interrupted, and they silently nodded in agreement. In order to engage better conversation, the questions had to be directed towards one person at a time, and when that person was finished speaking, the researcher moved in order around the table to ask if the next person had anything to add.

The Japanese participants were also non argumentative. If one disagreed with something another participant discussed, they usually stopped nodding in agreement, but

they did not necessarily express their differences. Some even passed on a question if they did not think they had a “correct” answer. It was more common to simply state they did not know, rather than express thoughts and feelings towards a subject, especially if negative.

For these reasons, the researcher decided to change the moderation style to one that was high, meaning more involved and breaking down the broader open-ended questions into more straight-forward questions. Questions were then directed to specific participants and the questions were revised for the focus groups and interviews in Japan (Appendix D).

3.9.ii Triangulation

The analysis section will discuss how the data from the interviews and focus groups were compared and contrasted with the data from the industry reports. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) state that if “data from two or more methods seem to converge on a common explanation, the biases of the individual methods are thought to ‘cancel out’ and validation of the claim is enhanced” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 240). Based on this assertion, triangulation aids in the trustworthiness of the study. By using these three methods of data collection the researcher can be more confident about findings and conclusions made.

3.9.iii Research Notes and Memos

Research notes were taken throughout the data collection. These notes were extremely important because as Bouma (2000) points out, “the loss of detail in data collection may make subsequent data analysis impossible” (p. 140). By taking notes while making observations when conducting the focus groups and interviews, the

researcher was able to resort back to this information at a later date while performing the analysis. The researcher was then unconcerned about forgetting any information which may have had an impact on the credibility of the research.

As was previously discussed, memos were also made continuously throughout the coding and analysis process. Memos in this research refer to “those that contain the products of analysis or directions for the analyst” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 117). Memos made in the early phases of coding served as excellent reminders to highlight significant details and additional facets to be further considered.

Chapter 4: Findings and Interpretations

For the purpose of this analysis, the interview and focus group data were grouped together in order to aid in the flow of the explanation of results. There are two main reasons that influenced the researcher to collapse these two data sources together. The first rationale is that both the interview and the focus group participants were asked the same set of questions by the researcher, as was explained in the methodology chapter. The second argument for this collapse of data is in how the participants of the focus groups and interviews responded to the questions. As will be mentioned in the last chapter, there were unforeseen cultural differences in how the Japanese participants interacted within the focus groups. The participants did not make conversation with each other while answering the questions or elaborate on another participant's comment. Instead they took turns in answering questions and only spoke if a question was directed at them specifically. Therefore, the ordered participant interaction resulted in responses very similar to the interview responses. Refer to Appendix E to see the participants listed by number only and the focus group or interview to which they contributed.

There were 62 themes uncovered in the interview and focus group data, also referred to as the personal communication data, during the open coding process. These themes were grouped under three main categories which will be introduced in the following section. Each category was then divided into two or three subcategories. The categories are ordered from the most general, with the themes that were most commonly referenced, to the most specific with themes that were less common. Although some themes were less commonly referenced, they often emerged from more in-depth

responses from the participants. Appendix F lists all themes under each category and the number of instances they were found in the data.

The documents for analysis were all selected and reviewed for the first time before the interviews and focus groups were conducted. As was mentioned in the methodology chapter, the items looked at in the analysis were: formats of mobile advertising discussed, the success or failure of the techniques discussed and mobile phone advertising expenditures and key numbers. As was also mentioned in the methodology chapter, these areas for analysis were chosen with the hopes that some common themes would be revealed between these documents and the data collected from the focus groups and interviews. The documents were first analysed prior to when the interviews and focus groups were conducted. After the personal communication data was analysed, these reports were then analysed a second time to draw out similar themes and to make note of discrepancies between the material reported and that of the participants' responses.

4.1 General Findings

The first category, which the themes found in the open coding process were placed under, is that of *associations*. This category was termed *associations* because it deals with all initial feelings and perceptions which the participants associated, or related, with the overall practice of mobile phone advertising. This category was broken up into three sub-categories named *positive*, *negative* and *neutral*, and themes were placed according to the feeling with which it was associated.

The second category is *reasons influencing perceptions*. This category builds upon the first category in looking at the underlying reasons behind the initial associations

made in the first category. This category was broken down into two subcategories, *usage habits* and *perceived reasons for and against mobile advertising*. *Usage habits* looks at all participant interactions with a mobile phone that may influence their associations with the mobile advertising practice. *Perceived reasons for and against mobile advertising* looks at other reasons behind why the participants held their initial associations with the practice.

The final category was *advertising interest*, which looks at specific aspects of the advertising practice. The first subcategory is *advertising formats* which breaks down the practice of advertising and looks more specifically at different techniques to uncover why some are preferred over others. The second subcategory is *perceived successes and failures of using a mobile campaign*. This subcategory reveals how the participants look at the mobile advertising practice from a business point of view, rather than looking at personal preferences, as was examined earlier.

Category I: Associations

Looking closer at the first category, *associations*, the researcher begins to uncover instinctive and reactive thoughts which were brought up when the topic of mobile advertising was discussed. Many participants, before diving deep into inner reasoning, had general emotions and observations about the advertising practice. Many of the themes grouped under this category used emotive language.

The first subcategory looked at the associations which were positive, in other words, reasons why participants like mobile advertising. Themes such as convenience, effective, and creative were used, as well as some people specifically stating that they had positive feelings. One participant discussed the convenience of the mobile ads by saying,

“if you don’t need it then you don’t have to read them, but if you need it then there is a lot of information there, so it’s convenient” (Participant 7, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009). Expanding on the creativity of ads, another individual clarified why he does not mind advertising by saying, “I like most advertisements. Most are, for example, cute or sporty so generally that advertising is okay” (Participant 14, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009). As previewed here, there were some participants who initially picked out the optimistic aspects of receiving advertising when revealing their first thoughts on the practice.

The second subcategory looked at associations that were negative, in other words, reasons why people disliked the mobile advertising practice. Themes such as annoyance and advertising overload were common areas of pessimistic thought. The most striking negative recurring term used by the participants was *annoying*. When asked about initial thoughts towards mobile phone ads, out of the fourteen participants, six used the term *annoying* to describe their feelings. One participant summed up the reason for her annoyance by stating:

I find them annoying (...) Because they give you so much and you don’t really want that extreme information. I just want to use my phone to e-mail people and occasionally look on the Internet. You don’t really want something that is not your concern. (Participant 13, Personal Communication, January 20, 2009)

As the majority of mobile ads that the consumers discussed receiving were of a push format, they felt they could never really escape the ads.

One participant made an interesting point about annoyance versus effectiveness saying “if I were an advertiser I think I might choose pop up messages or discounts (...) Its kind of violating but I think it is effective (...) Because we cannot reject it, we have to see it” (Participant 10, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009). The most intriguing

realization that came from the discussion of *annoyance* was that when asked to think from the perspective of the advertiser, of the six who used the term *annoying*, four would still choose to use mobile advertisements if they were the advertiser. In total out of the fourteen participants, nine said they would definitely choose to use mobile advertisements if they were the advertiser. The other five were not as convinced. In other words, most participants find the incoming ads annoying; however, they acknowledge that they are effective for reaching the consumers.

Looking at other negative associations, one person outlined a general view of the industry by saying “I think the expression of mobile advertising is very poor” (Participant 10, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009). Another participant explained his frustration with advertising overload by saying “I don’t need these kinds of advertisements always” (Participant 4, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009). The commonality of these themes was the pessimistic attitude that some participants held towards this advertising practice. Reasons behind this pessimistic thought will be looked at in greater depth in the next category of themes.

The third subcategory looks at neutral associations. The themes uncovered here tended to belong to participants who did not hold positive or negative feelings towards the mobile advertising practice prior to the discussion. Participant actions such as ignoring ads or not noticing ads were prevalent in these themes. For instance, in the case of one participant, she was not even aware that she was receiving mobile ads when discussing her feelings at the beginning of the interview. She acknowledged, “I don’t know, I don’t really use it, so I don’t really look, but I just don’t see it.” She later says “so if they want to advertise to my phone its okay, but I don’t think I see it” (Participant 6,

Personal Communication, January 21, 2009). However, this same person, upon further discussion, remembered ads she had seen. Another participant expressed her lack of interest by saying “I don’t remember (...) I ignore them” (Participant 14, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009). Other participants had not previously considered the process of receiving the ads. For example, one girl said, “actually, I never thought about the advertisements on the phone very much before” (Participant 7, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009). As is demonstrated here, some participants did not hold strong feelings towards the mobile advertising practice as they either had limited experience or they chose to passively ignore them.

Category II: Reasons Influencing Perceptions

In looking at the details of the second main category, the researcher came across underlying reasons behind the feelings that were discussed in the first category. The first subcategory of themes, “usage habits”, looks at explanations about why participants originally felt negatively, positively or neutrally towards the advertising practice based on how they interact with their mobile phones. Themes in this subcategory include attachment, mobility, and the popularity of the device.

The characteristic of attachment revealed that the mobile phone was like an extension of the human body. This sense of attachment became prevalent in the participants’ responses. One individual declared, “I think the Japanese cell phone can do anything (...) People tend to get more involved in cell phone advertising. People might not be able to live without a cell phone” (Participant 4, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009). Within the same focus group another member added to his point saying “like he said, people can’t live without a cell phone. People just have it. Sometimes they even

have two cell phones” (Participant 2, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009).

Another participant mentioned attachment and mobility in her comment, saying “people have their mobile phone all the time, so the key word I would say is the kind of portableness that the *ketai* has” (Participant 10, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009). Many participants tried to demonstrate the popularity of the device by making estimates about the high number of Japanese citizens who owned mobile phones. One participant estimated that in Japan “maybe 98 or 99% of people have cell phones.” She discussed the impact of this usage habit by explaining that “people don’t watch TV at home because they are driving, or they like going out, but they always have a cell phone with them. That’s why the companies decide to advertise on the cell phone” (Participant 5, Personal Communication, January 18, 2009). This second half of her explanation is what links the subcategory of “usage habits” with the next subcategory. Usage habits tended to lead participants to rationalize why they had positive and negative feelings about mobile advertising, as will be explained in the next paragraph.

The subcategory “perceived reasons for and against mobile advertising” looked at personal experiences and explanations as to why they held the associations which were examined in the first category. This subcategory includes themes such as discounts and security. These themes were usually found in statements that participants made about their past interactions with mobile ads. For instance, one individual discussed why she had a positive attitude towards the mobile ads by clarifying that “as a customer, I want a discount” (Participant 2, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009). A discount was one of the most discussed themes by the participants. Out of the fourteen participants, nine mentioned that they wanted and liked receiving some sort of discount or coupon.

As the majority of the participants were students who were both mobile phone users and heavy PC users, they interact with their mobile phones differently. They perform many interactions on the PC that others may carry out on the mobile phone, such as using the Internet for shopping or gaming. However, they were able to provide an example of past campaigns that were able to successfully target this student market. The thriving campaign discussed in the industry reports and by four participants, was the McDonalds e-wallet campaign. The participants did not label this format as an e-wallet coupon; they tended to use basic terminology referring to them as coupons on their mobile screen. This ad format sends the ads by e-mail to the consumers' e-mail account. The consumer then simply has to pull up the coupon on their mobile screen at the restaurant or store and show the cashier for the discount. The easy use of this system was described by one participant who explained:

I register on the McDonalds website and the company sends me e-mails. That way, when I get the McDonalds e-mail there is a coupon. So, when I purchase some products from McDonalds I show the display on my page (mobile screen), and I can use the coupon. (Participant 4, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009)

This system caters to the PC user by using e-mail, which consumers can access on their PC or mobile phone, to make original contact.

An area of concern that participants brought forth, yet was not mentioned in the industry reports reviewed, was a fear of being scammed by a fraudulent mobile advertising campaign or being falsely led into a campaign by a company in the adult (pink) industry. One participant, when talking about an advertisement which links to a mobile website said, "I am worried about if I have to pay to open up the link." The same participant later said that "even if they don't charge, they say you need to pay. It's like

fraud. Some companies have a bad website” (Participant 2, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009). Another participant discussed his fear of opening up a mobile advertisement in the text message format saying, “I never click that. It is usually from the pink industry, the kind of adult page advertisement” (Participant 9, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009). As is demonstrated in these quotes, these fears are actually interrupting the advertising messages’ reach.

The fear of scams or of being linked to an adult industry site was brought up by seven of the fourteen participants. There were no leading questions asked in this area by the researcher; however, it was enough of a concern to be brought up by these participants. These fears are making some people hesitant about participating in mobile advertising. These uncertainties are vital for the advertisers to be aware of. Researching ways to create a campaign where fear is not induced would aid in the consumers’ perception towards the campaign.

Although some participants had fears about being led into a fraudulent advertising campaign, the majority had no fears about their privacy. When the participants were asked a specific question about privacy issues, interestingly enough there was a lack of concern. Out of the fourteen participants only four acknowledged having concerns. Two of the four who had concerns had previously gone to school in North America. Although this factor is not looked at in depth in this study, it provides insight for any further studies that may be performed in North America. The other two who expressed concerns were worried that their personal information, which they willingly provided to advertisers or companies of their choice, would be sold to other companies. For example, one participant stated, “if I register with McDonalds maybe another company also has my

name, maybe bigger companies purchase or sell the list of customers” (Participant 4, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009). However, most participants were fairly open to sharing their personal information. For instance, this participant said “I don’t give my name often. But other things like my age or student status or where my hometown is or something like that is okay for me” (Participant 10, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009). Therefore, according to this participant, the personal name is thought to be private, but information for demographic segmentation purposes is not considered as private.

Category III: Advertising Interest

In the third category, “advertising interest”, many of the themes revolved around considering why an advertiser would be interested in using the mobile phone as a platform. In the focus groups and interviews there were times when the participants were asked to put themselves in the shoes of the advertiser and think from their perspective. Many of the themes in this category were revealed in this exercise.

Themes in the first subcategory, “ad format”, include all the formats that the participants listed, such as Internet (PC) ads and TV ads. When asked which medium the participants preferred to receive advertisements from, five chose television, four chose Internet and one chose magazine. The other four participants did not express their preference. Those participants who chose television advertising as a preferred format mostly expressed feelings of enjoyment towards the television commercials’ creativity. For instance, one participant said, “You are going to have to be creative and make something appealing enough for people to actually pay attention to. Because like me, I just delete all of them with out even looking” (Participant 13, Personal Communication,

January 20, 2009). According to these five participants, the most creative ads were in the format of a television commercial. The lasting impression that a creative commercial has the ability to form was mentioned by one participant saying, “when we turn on the TV we see lots of advertisements, TV commercials and we remember the music ‘la la Pepsi something, cola something’. It is easier to remember and to stay in my head” (Participant 5, Personal Communication, January 18, 2009). This idea of creating unforgettable ads with memorable jingles or visuals does not have to be restricted to television commercials. All the points that the participants brought forth about their preference of TV ads were concentrated around this level of creativity.

Those participants who preferred Internet or PC advertising had related reasoning behind their choices. For example, one person said that “in the case of the PC there was a lot of creative content (...) but in the case of the ketai, most advertisements were small buttons or word text so I think they have to develop more ad content” (Participant 11, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009). It has already become apparent to some participants that there has been a lack of creativity and excitement in many of the mobile ads. Some of the text only messages to date have not been enough to captivate the mobile phone users’ attention.

Looking at different mobile advertising formats, the e-wallet coupon, as previously discussed, was a favourite. One participant explained why he felt the coupons sent by e-mail to his phone were the most effective ad format. He responded,

I think that the advertisement for McDonalds is so effective because they send our e-mail with, not only the coupon, but it also has the new products this week and this month and what products are coming out. So with this e-mail, the coupon gets the customers’ attention, but also it has the advertisement about new products. So the coupon is effective. (Participant 4, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009)

Nikkei Advertising & Marketing conducted a survey study of Japanese citizens and found that the most popular format of mobile advertising by those surveyed was a “Picture (or Banner) ad (72.5%)” (“More than 40%”, 2008, p. 5). The banner ad, however, was only preferred by one research participant in this study. When looking at mobile Internet formats, the pop up ad was preferred by three participants. Many other formats of mobile advertising, such as mobile television ads and running text were also discussed by participants. However, the most revealing information came when the participants discussed why they preferred one format over the other, as participants did in the examples above. This aspect will also be expanded upon in the next subcategory.

Themes in the second subcategory, “perceived successes and failures of using a mobile campaign” include items such as cost effectiveness, segmentation of users, and technological ability and usability. One participant summed up why he would choose to advertise on a mobile phone by simply stating, “It’s easy and costs less” (Participant 4, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009). Other participants had more in-depth reasons such as, “I think that the advantage of mobile advertisement is segmentation of users” (Participant 11, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009). This participant, who had previously worked in the mobile phone industry, discussed how it is easy it is to trace mobile phone owners’ usage patterns and segment the mobile phone population according to usage patterns. *Mobile Marketing Magazine* summed up the benefits of the mobile advertising practice by reporting that “advertising sent via the mobile phone reaches the recipient directly, wherever they are, at any time and location, offering effective targeting, as well as interactivity and consumer engagement” (“Screen Digest Report”, 2008, para. 5). This idea is similar to the participant’s reasoning as to why

mobile advertising is effective due to the consumers' attachment to the mobile phone. A *Nikkei Advertising & Marketing* article captured the advantage of this practice by stating that "mobile advertising is good at quickly grasping effectiveness, narrowing down targets and bringing word-of-mouth effect" ("More than 40%", 2008, p.1). The industry reports tended to generally focus on the positive aspects of mobile advertising use, while the participants mentioned both the positive and the negatives.

A distinct reoccurring topic of technological ability and usability that was discussed by many participants, which also came up in the industry reports, was the use of QR (Quick Response) codes. The perceived success and failure of this advertising format was thoroughly analysed by participants and the industry. Some interesting contrasts were made when comparing participants' opinions and those reported in the industry reports. Most of the industry reports reviewed had praised the QR code technology. *Mobile Marketing Magazine* focused on the positive and quick uptake of the use of QR codes in the Japanese industry. One report by *Mobile Marketing Magazine* discussed the QR code format saying "QR Codes have been a common sight in Japan for over five years" ("The Sun Shines on QR Codes", 2008, para. 4). They also reported that their "acceptance is leading to advancements in the codes themselves, the expansion of their data capacity and the readers used to capture that data" (para. 3). Another report by *Mobile Marketing Magazine* stated that, "by embedding a QR code reader into mobile phones, they made the technology available to the masses. In fact, QR codes are so universally used in some Asian markets that in many cases, the QR code is the only call to action in a marketing piece" ("Q-busting", 2008, para. 5). In the same article, *Mobile Marketing Magazine* discusses the simplicity of the use of a QR code stating that "all the

user needs to do, provided they have QR codes reader on their cameraphone, is to use the phone's camera to take a photo of the code" (para. 2). They continue by stating that "QR codes should improve response rates by creating direct interactivity between audience and the call to action" (para. 4). Another article from *Mobile Marketing Magazine* looks at the possible negative side of QR codes:

Its cost effectiveness shouldn't be overlooked either. Free to generate and free to read. However, consumer traffic volume remains completely ineffectual if the directed website is not mobile ready, (...) Get it right and you've got an effective mobile marketing tool, get it wrong and you've frustrated your consumers and restricted accessibility. ("The Sun Shines on QR Codes", 2008, para. 5)

This frustration seemed to be more relevant in the eyes of the participants.

Contradictory to the perceived success of the technological ability of the QR codes that the industry reports focused on, one participant looked at the perceived reason for possible failure by explaining their aggravation with the QR technology:

It's good but it's not easy to scan QR codes because if the distance between the ketai and the QR code is too close then it is bad. I think people try to sometimes read it quickly. I think it is not so popular in Japan. It is expensive technology but slow. (...) Its frustrating I feel. (Participant 10, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009)

If the QR code technology is not improved, then it may push consumers away from its use. This technology, as noted in the industry reports, has a lot of potential. However, if it is going to take consumers a few tries to scan it properly, the effort may not be worth their time. Understanding that the technological side of this application still has room for improvement is important for advertisers to recognize before putting a great deal of their financial resources into a QR campaign.

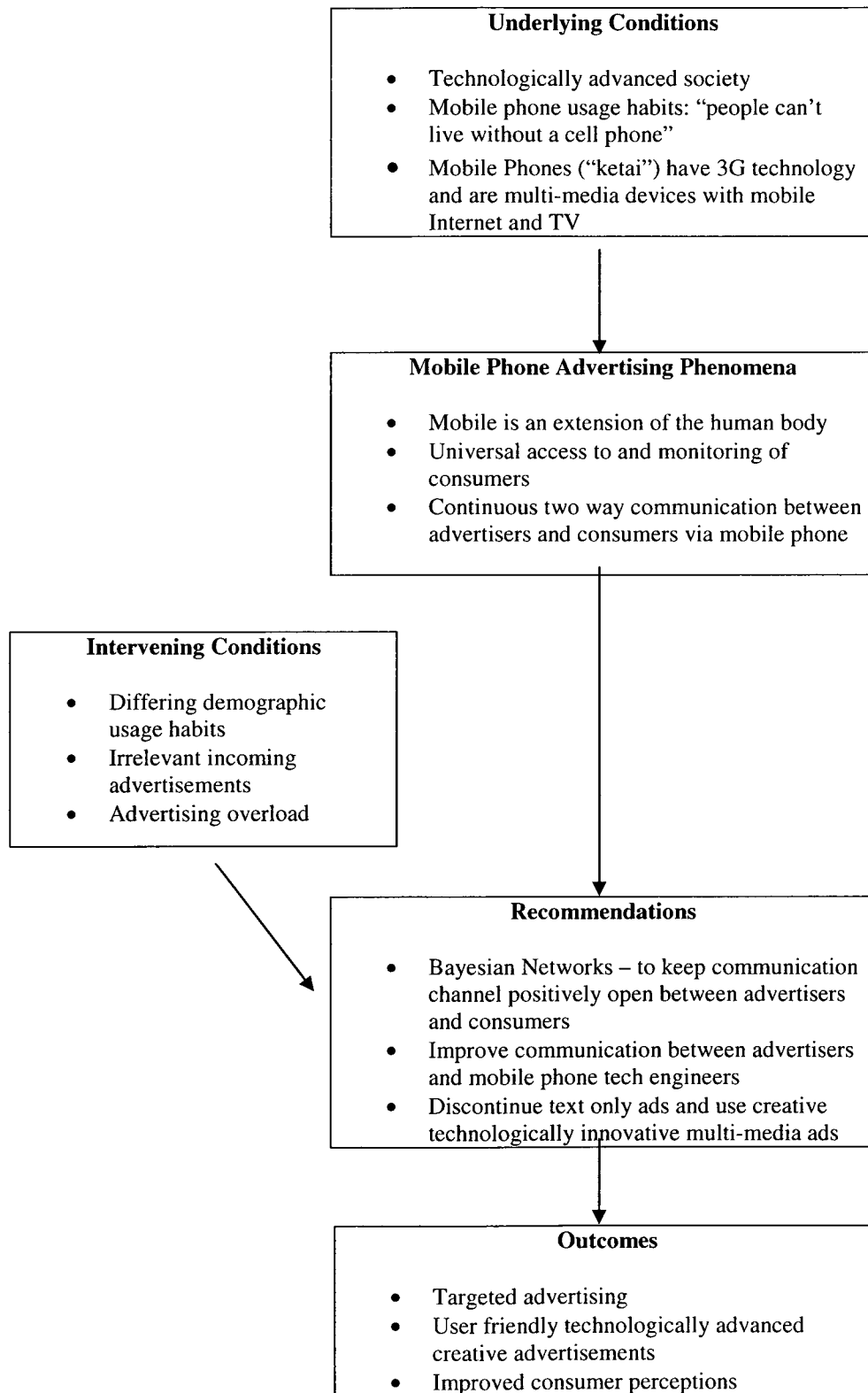
The themes in this subcategory varied, but they all materialized from advanced thoughts of the participants. The themes were grouped together due to the main ideas of

looking at ad formats and thinking from a business perspective in respect to what they perceive works and what does not in terms of reaching their target markets in a campaign.

4.2 Advanced Analysis and Interpretation

By breaking down the personal communication data in the coding process into categories which looked at the most general perceptions to the most specific, the researcher was able to uncover the different layers of the thought process of the participants in order to gain insight into different levels of perceptions towards the mobile phone advertising practice. For instance, the first category “associations” gave a broad view of general perspectives. These general perspectives were then looked at in the second category to see what underlying motives created these perceptions. Finally, critical thought from the participants about why they preferred specific advertising formats and what they perceived may cause the success or failure of advertising campaigns revealed insight for recommendations intended for improving consumer perceptions toward the mobile advertising practice. The researcher was able to draw connections with the industry reports at all levels and find areas where the industry and consumer had similar perceptions or where there were discrepancies between the two. The findings from this process were then further analysed and interpreted by the researcher to offer insights about how consumer perceptions can be improved towards the practice of mobile advertising, this includes suggestions for further research. The advanced analysis will explain the researcher’s interpretations and reveal information which influenced the researcher’s recommendations. Figure 1 presents a grounded theory model for improving perceptions of mobile phone advertising guided by Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) framework.

FIGURE 1: Grounded Theory Model for Improving Consumer Perceptions of Mobile Phone Advertising



Underlying Conditions

Four prominent underlying conditions, or circumstances of the Japanese society, emerged from the data which influenced these research findings. These circumstances were; Japan's technologically advanced society, mobile phone usage habits and access to advanced mobile phones which have 3G technologies with mobile Internet and TV, and finally the advertisers' desire to reach consumers by mobile phone.

The initial research on NTT DoCoMo and the industry reports indicated how technologically advanced the Japanese society is. An article by *Mobile Marketing Magazine* reported that:

It's not difficult to understand why this technology has taken off in Japan, the home of technological innovation. Indeed, it's tempting, if stereotyping to say that gimmicks and new technology appeal wholeheartedly to the Japanese user. ("Q-busting", 2008, para. 5)

As Japanese citizens are advanced in their interactions with technology, many aspects of Japanese life are digitalized. It was a seemingly natural progression that all aspects of every day life in Japan, both personal and business, would look towards using the latest technologies available on mobile phones.

The usage habits investigated in the second category of themes, *reasons influencing perceptions*, showed how the technology available in Japan allows for consumers to have more advanced interactions with their mobile phone. An example previously used expressed a participant's view of the attachment of the Japanese society to the mobile phone; "In Japan, maybe 98 or 99% of people have a cell phone. Some people don't watch TV at home because they are driving, or they like going out, but they always have a cell phone with them" (Participant 5, Personal Communication, January

18, 2009). An underlying reality is that the majority of Japanese citizens are always connected and always reachable.

As was brought forth in the introduction, Japan was also to first to introduce 3G technology. The majority of mobile phone users in this technologically advanced society currently have the 3G technology. These consumers own a mobile phone which is essentially a portable multi-media device. They can watch television on it, surf mobile Internet, check their e-mails on the go, or simply use it to talk and text. This was demonstrated in third category of themes, *advertising interest*, where numerous advertising formats were discussed which used all aspects of the mobile phone as a multi-media device. For example the banner ads discussed use the mobile Internet, the e-wallet coupon uses access to e-mail and the QR codes require the use of the code scanner which is commonly built into the phones.

Another underlying condition, which makes this research applicable, is the desire for advertisers to be able to reach consumers on the mobile phone. If all aspects of life in Japan were moving towards the use of a mobile phone, it is logical that advertisers would also follow suit. Ahonen et al. (2004) state that “the mobile portal can offer remarkable targeting, location-based triggering, and time-sensitive dimensions to ads that other advertising media simply cannot provide” (p. 134). As this portable new media device offers a more advanced communication channel to reach target audiences, advertisers understandably want to use the mobile phone to send advertising messages.

Mobile Phone Advertising Phenomena

Due to the underlying conditions presented, the phenomena of mobile phone advertising in Japanese society are evident. The phenomena at hand displays how the

mobile phone is becoming an extension of the human being, which then allows for universal monitoring of citizens and makes continuous two-way communication available between citizens and advertisers.

A major recurring theme in both the industry reports analysed and the participants' responses was the potential success of mobile phone advertising due to the reality that the mobile phone is becoming an extension of the human body, especially in technologically advanced Japan. Many Japanese citizens have become so attached to their mobile phones that it has become an additional body part, always with them wherever they go. In a previous study of mobile phone usage in Japan, Rheingold interviewed Japanese citizens. One summed up this attachment by saying, "Today's taboo, (...) is to forget your *ketai* or let your battery die" (2002, p. 5). Furthermore, numerous participants expressed how most Japanese people never leave their mobile phones behind. For example, one participant stated "people might not be able to live without a cell phone" (Participant 4, Personal Communication, January 18, 2009). In other words, people are continuously one with their *ketai*.

The idea of universal monitoring is evident since the consumer is continually performing numerous tasks with their mobile phone. Their preferences, usage habits and communication patterns can be traced by mobile stats and mobile Internet web trends. As was previously discussed in the subcategory *perceived reasons for and against mobile advertising*, privacy was not a concern for the majority of participants. Most were even willing to provide additional personal information to that which is already traceable.

However, although the participants showed their limited concern with privacy, they seemed to have a problem with continuous incoming messages. When looking from

the advertisers' perspective, the inability for the consumer to completely avoid the mobile ads was considered by one person, saying "its kind of violating but I think it is effective (...) Because we cannot reject it, we have to see it" (Participant 10, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009). Although the participant is agreeing to the effectiveness of the reach the mobile phone brings the advertiser, they find it violating to have continuous messaging sent to them. Therefore, she is implying that consumers are not content with the mobile phone allowing for continuous two-way communication with advertisers.

As was discussed in the *negative association* category of themes, *annoying* was commonly used to express participants' feelings towards these incoming messages. However, in the positive associations, participants thought that the mobile ads could be convenient if they were geared towards their personal interests. They also like how the advertisements tended to send coupons and enabled them access to information about products. In other words participants are agreeable to retaining a channel of communication with advertisers and the business world. They want the ability to find more information about products and have access to discounts. However, they do not want the channel of communication to be continuously two-way. They want access to the pertinent items, such as information about products which are of a personal interest, but they do not want to be bothered with irrelevant information all the time.

Intervening Conditions

In addition to the phenomena, some key intervening factors emerged from the data which influenced the recommendations for improving perceptions towards the mobile phone advertising practice. These conditions were: how usage habits differ

amongst different user demographics, the problems with advertising overload, and the annoyance of irrelevant incoming ads.

The participants gave insight into usage habits of different demographics of mobile phone users in the second category of themes, *reasons influencing perceptions*. People of different social and economic status, as well as people from different age groups, use the mobile phone differently. As was mentioned in the general findings, even though the mobile phone has become an attachment for many Japanese citizens, there is still a large segment of the population who are just as attached to their PCs, such as university students. These students still own and carry mobile phones; however, their use is more restricted to talking and texting rather than mobile Internet and mobile television use. A student participant explains this difference in use:

I think many people use PCs, and some use PCs and the *ketai*, but some people only use the *ketai*. And in the case of such people, they get all information from their *ketai* so they have many opportunities to see many kinds of advertisements. But in her case, she gets many messages through the PC and she uses her *ketai* only for specific situations, so she doesn't have many opportunities to see advertisements. (Participant 11, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009).

If the advertisers conduct further research to understand how different demographics of people interact with their mobile phones, then they may be more likely to produce a more effective campaign. As the above example demonstrates, advertising to a university student by mobile phone may not be the best choice if the campaign is based exclusively on mobile interaction.

Looking to another segment of the population, the researcher learned some very intriguing information about “heavy *ketai* users”, meaning those who use their mobile phone for the majority of new media and communication interactions. Heavy *ketai* users are not necessarily the most affluent people. One participant explained:

I think there is a problem of social class and economy and gender and age and especially area. This is a big thing. If they are educated with PCs then the use of a ketai is very limited. But lots of people in Japan, many young or poor people don't have a PC so they are going to connect with society with the ketai. So in the case of them, I think the meaning of advertising (on the ketai) is far more.

(Participant 8, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009)

This participant continued to explain that Japanese citizens who are being assisted by the social system are given mobile phones from the government so that they have access to Internet to search for employment and have an e-mail address and phone number for potential employers to contact them. This case demonstrates a rather extreme example of the use of the mobile phone as a connection to reality. However, the actuality is that even if a citizen is not on social assistance, many people on restricted budgets cannot afford to have both a PC and a mobile phone. Since the mobile phone allows them access to the Internet as well as acts as their main communication device, many people only purchase the mobile phone. The above example shows a demographic of users who may be overlooked without further research in this area. In addition, understanding factors, such as low income, is vital for ensuring properly targeted products and services are advertised to their responding demographic.

As was previously discussed, universal monitoring did not seem to bother the majority of the participants. Access to these usage habits can tell an advertiser a lot about a person. Choices made by the consumer, such as the mobile company they chose to sign up with, the mobile sites they often view and the mobile television programs that they watch, reveal personal insight about individual consumers to the advertiser. For example, the one participant who had previously worked for a mobile phone company in Japan stated:

I think that the advantage of mobile advertisement is segmentation of users (...) because many people who use ketai, their favourite site is very, very different. Some people who like games go to games sites and only games sites. Young people go to the same sites. Their interest is distinct so the company can put information according to the segmentation. (Participant 11, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009)

This basic information on usage habits is fairly easily obtained by market researchers in today's digital environment.

Once the habits and preferences are analysed, the advertisers can take their research one step further and send targeted requests to opt-in to different campaigns in order to gain further personal information about the consumers in their database. This is exactly the practice discussed in the segment on the Bayesian Network examined in the literature review. The market research team provides incentives, such as the student-loved discounts, in order to have them opt-in to campaigns. When opting-in, further personal information can be obtained, such as gender, age, even likes and dislikes.

Looking back to the literature by Ahonen et al. (2004), they state that:

The advantage, of course, is that in 3G the advertiser can avoid wasted contacts as the user is closely identified. The advertiser can be sure to reach the right target segment with the advertisement that is displayed. The more accurately the advertisement can be addressed, the more likely it is to be accepted and even wanted. (p. 135)

As the Bayesian Networks allow the advertiser know more about the consumer, the ads can become more specific and be tailored according to their preferences.

As was earlier mentioned, many of the participants found the irrelevant incoming advertisements annoying. However, to reiterate from the literature, Xu, Liao, and Li found in their research on Bayesian Networks that "78% said they would be happy to receive mobile advertising that was tailored to their interests" (p. 712). Personal interest was also a topic that some participants brought up. One participant described her like for

magazine ads solely due to the fact that she chose the magazine. She knew that the ads in the magazine were for products in her area of interest. She says, “It is things that I want. With newspapers, TVs and phones, the information and ads is from their side approaching me, but magazines is something I do” (Participant 7, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009). Therefore, it could be argued that it would be beneficial for mobile phone advertisers to take the time and money to perform extended market research in order to make their ads more customized to the consumer and avoid irrelevant incoming messages.

In today’s Japanese society every citizen is exposed to hundreds, if not thousands of advertisements daily. With increasing exposure to advertisements which continuously come from new sources, many of the participants expressed feelings of advertising overload. One participant stated that it is “just too much everywhere (...) and there are too many companies” (Participant 13, Personal Communication, January 20, 2009). However, as was brought up by the participants, if the advertiser was able to produce a unique, innovative, or creative advertisement it would help the ad to stand out from the others. Advertising overload is not something that one individual company can conquer. Therefore, the advertisers must find a way to make their ad shine through the masses. Since the majority of the comments of preference towards a particular ad format had to do with creativity and ads that made an impact in their memory, this information can be used as a recommendation to mobile phone advertisers. Even though many forms of mobile advertising may be cost effective, it could be beneficial to put extra resources into innovation and the creative team to produce eye-catching ads, rather than sending out another lacklustre text only message which becomes lost in the ad masses.

When creating these technologically advanced and creative ads, the story of the QR code problems must also be remembered. Creativity and technological interest sparked curiosity in the participants; however, when the advertising was too advanced for the technology available to the targeted consumers, they became frustrated.

Recommendations

Based on the phenomena and the intervening conditions that the participants brought forth, three practical recommendations were developed for the Japanese advertising industry. These recommendations are: (1) for advertisers to make use of Bayesian Networks to create highly targeted ads in order to keep the communication channel open between advertisers and consumers, yet not be annoying consumers by sending irrelevant messages; (2) to improve communication between advertisers and engineers of mobile phone technologies; and (3) to discontinue lacklustre text only ads and make use of the technology available to create innovative multi-media ads.

The first recommendation is based on the channel of communication between advertisers and consumers. As was revealed in the second category of the analysis under *perceived reasons for and against mobile advertising*, the participants did not have great privacy concerns, and liked receiving discounts and product information if it was pertinent. It was acceptable to retain a channel of communication between the advertisers and the consumers when benefiting the consumer. It was the continuous incoming messaging, especially when not revolved around their personal interests, which they expressed their annoyance with. Therefore, it would be recommended to put further research into building systems such as the Bayesian Network, as discussed in the literature and the previous analysis section. By building databases of consumer

information and preferences the advertisers can work towards sending customized advertisements to their target markets. Understanding the bigger picture as to how different participants interact with their mobile phones will also create opportunity to adjust a campaign to their usage habits. Understanding that usage habits are just as important as consumer preferences was what made the McDonalds e-wallet coupon campaign successful in targeting students initially through the Internet.

The next recommendation is based on the channel of communication between advertisers and the mobile phone technology specialists such as the engineers and mobile service providers. This was brought about by the discrepancies with the QR code technology. If the consumer is attempting to interact with an advertisement that uses technology with a glitch or the technology itself is too advanced for the consumer, the consumer may become frustrated. Therefore, it would be recommended that the advertising team become more learned in the technology that they are wishing to use prior to creating a campaign. This may require more open communication between software engineers and advertisers. Advertisers will benefit from attending more than a technology brief introducing mobile applications. If the advertiser better understands the technology and regularly uses it themselves they will be better able to manipulate the mobile applications to create campaigns that are user friendly for the common member of their target market.

The third recommendation is based on the actions suggested in the second recommendation. This recommendation comes from the participant insight into creative and attention-grabbing ads. The problem of advertising overload was introduced by the participants as a reason for poor perception towards the ads. However, it was clear from

the personal communication data that the majority of participants welcomed creative ads that were user friendly, yet technologically advanced. Text-only ads seemed to influence perceptions negatively, while multi-media, entertaining or attention-grabbing ads influenced their perceptions in a positive manner. Therefore, it would be recommended that advertisers decrease their use of text-only or technologically basic ads on the mobile phone as the participants perceive them as annoying or adding to the advertising overload. However, as the second recommendation suggested, being too technologically advanced, or making poor use of the technology available, can be frustrating. Consequently further research into the technology by the advertiser is needed in order to assure that the ads are not only creative and technologically advanced, but also user friendly.

Outcomes

The advanced understanding gained about consumer perceptions towards mobile advertising led to the above recommendations to work towards improving these perceptions. The following outcomes are intended by making these recommendations: the production of highly targeted advertising campaigns, and user friendly and technologically advanced creative advertisements; which then should ultimately lead to improved consumer perceptions.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The researcher's passion for new media communication technology along with an interest in advertising, originally spiked her curiosity into mobile phone advertising. It is this curiosity which then inspired her to research this fairly recent phenomenon. The information provided in the introductory chapter showcased why the researcher was motivated to look specifically at the Japanese market and why a qualitative audience research approach was taken. The literature reviewed in the second chapter further acquainted the researcher with the field of new media advertising and research on the specific practice of mobile phone advertising. With the understanding gained from the literature and the guidance of the grounded theory approach by Strauss and Corbin (1998), the researcher was able to build her methodological approach detailed in chapter three.

Following the steps built in the methodological approach, the researcher collected and analysed primary data in order to produce the findings thoroughly discussed in the fourth chapter. It was found that in Japan's technologically advanced society, advertisers desired to reach consumers on their 3G mobile phones. However, use of these devices differed among demographic segmentations and consumers held unfavourable views towards the overload of irrelevant and dull incoming ads. As a result, three recommendations were made for the Japanese mobile phone advertising industry. As previously stated, the first recommendation is for advertisers to make use of Bayesian Networks to create highly targeted ads. The second recommendation is to improve the channel of communication between advertisers and the engineers who design the mobile phone technologies. Lastly, it is recommended that advertisers discontinue the use of

lacklustre text only ads and create innovative multi-media ads which are also user-friendly for the common member of the target market. Throughout the research process, factors which limited the diligence of the research were acknowledged by the researcher. These limitations will be further discussed in the following section.

5.1 Limitations

To begin, one of the most obvious limitations was that English was a second language for all of the participants. All of the participants' English comprehension also varied, leading to some more in-depth conversations compared to others. Although most participants were well versed in English, there were some misinterpretations of questions. The researcher did not always feel comfortable correcting participants, as she did not want come across as rude or make them feel self conscious of their English. This fear was often expressed prior to starting the interviews. Also, the participants would have been able to provide more details in their responses if they were using the language they were most comfortable with. If the monetary resources were available, the first recommendation the researcher would make would be to hire either an interpreter or a Japanese research assistant to conduct the focus groups and interviews in Japanese. Regardless of mother tongue, a research assistant or someone other than the researcher conducting the personal communication would have been an asset in order to eliminate researcher bias.

As was previously mentioned in the methodology chapter, there were also some cultural differences that the researcher was unaware of and did not take into account prior to the initial preparation for the focus groups. One major difference in cultures, which the researcher believes to have influenced the focus groups, was the non-argumentative and

extremely polite and ordered fashion in which Japanese citizens communicate. Individual interviews would have been the best way to conduct the personal communication as the participants were able to reveal longer and sometimes more in-depth responses. The interview process would also eliminate the awkward silences that occurred as the participants looked at each other waiting for another to respond. This silence seemed to occur because they did not want to talk over or disagree with each other.

This leads to another aspect of the interview and focus group set up. The researcher's lack of time in Japan meant having to work around the participants' schedules. Before realizing what impact this limited time would have, the researcher originally thought it would be reasonable to expect three to four focus groups of four to seven people. However, meetings and vacation time affected initial participant recruitment. In order to be in contact with more participants, as previously mentioned, individual interviews were conducted. The researcher learned that while working with human subjects, giving a greater grace period for conducting such personal communications is necessary.

After concluding the study, the researcher realized that the age gap between 18 and 35, although it showed a lot of diversity in answers, was too broad. The younger interviewees showed a lot more experience with mobile advertising and had a very different outlook than those approximately 25-35. This age range was, however, convenient, as it made it possible for more participants to take part in the research. If similar research is conducted in the future, it would be recommended to reduce the age gap, or look at the two groups separately, as it was evident that members of different age groups interact with their mobile phones and the mobile advertisements differently.

Due to the contacts the researcher was able to make, the majority of the participants were recruited through Tokyo University. This was an obvious limitation from the beginning due to the fact that the majority of participants were not only students, but lived in Tokyo, a more affluent area of Japan. Originally it was presumed by the researcher that since more university students and Tokyo citizens were participating, who would presumably be middle to middle-upper class citizens, they would be more likely to not only own a mobile phone, but have more money to spend on gadgets and connection time etc. However, it turns out that this limitation was contradictory to the original thought. It was learned from the personal communications that the higher educated and more affluent citizens use their phones less as they spend much more time on PCs. This was made evident by the participant who stated, "If they are educated with PCs then the use of a *ketai* is very limited. But lots of people in Japan, many young or poor people don't have a PC so they are going to connect with society with the *ketai*" (Participant 8, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009). Consequently, those who would be more exposed to mobile ads due to their prolonged mobile phone usage would be those who could not afford a PC or the youth. In further research it would be recommended that participants be recruited from varying locations within Japan and have varying economic status.

Another limitation brought forth in the personal communication was in the wants and needs of the student. As twelve of the fourteen participants were university students, it appeared that their wants and needs were different from those of non-students. This limitation became apparent in the response to what the participant would like in return from the advertisers in order to persuade them to opt-in to a mobile campaign. The

majority of participants' responses that revolved around receiving discounts or coupons were from students. Being thrifty with their spending was an obvious concern of the student participants, where non-students may not have been so conscious of this. Whether or not being a student influenced the participants' responses may have been more evident if there was a more comparable number of student and non-student participants.

5.2 Future Research Recommendations

As this research took a qualitative look at consumer perceptions in order to gain initial understanding, the information learned from this study can be used as a foundation for a follow-up quantitative study. The results of this study are based on limited number of Japanese citizens. In order to be statistically representative of the Japanese population, it would be beneficial for a larger quantitative study to be performed. By using the results based on the select few in this study, survey questions can be formulated. For example, participants introduced advertising methods which they preferred. A survey question that asks for participants' format preferences can be formed from the examples suggested by participants in this study.

Although this study looked at recommendations to make towards advertisers to improve their mobile advertising practices, these improvements were based on improving the consumers' perceptions towards the advertisements. The consumers' perceptions about what makes an advertising campaign successful were investigated; however, this was only done to gain understanding of their overall perceptions towards the advertising practice. The aspect of whether or not these improved perceptions would actually influence the success rates of the mobile advertisements was not researched in this study. Some literature reviewed showcased how the consumers' perceptions of the advertising

affected the effectiveness of the advertising technique, such as the study by Merisavo et al. (2007). Further investigation into this area would be beneficial in order to reveal the role of consumer perceptions in the effectiveness of mobile phone advertising campaigns.

The above recommendations of having advertisers make use of Bayesian Networks, improving communication between advertisers and mobile phone engineers, and discontinuing lacklustre text only ads are all based on findings from the Japanese mobile phone user and they are proposed for the Japanese mobile advertising industry. The Japanese mobile society is currently much more advanced than that of North America. The technological, economic and social components of Japanese society may differ from that of the North American society; however, some lessons learned from this research may be applicable for future research in the North American mobile phone advertising industry.

Growth in mobile society is important for North American researchers to acknowledge. As was brought up in the discrepancies discussed about the QR code technology, until the technology itself is improved and the society is knowledgeable about it, advertising with that technology may not flourish. One participant in Japan even discussed the need for improvement in the Japanese mobile industry saying:

I think I would want the mobile to be better. I think mobile society is dramatically changing with the Internet on the *ketai*. For example, in this university they are creating another new virtual age away from the Google network, kind of like a next generation network. They are preparing us. Advertising will be changed by this next generation network. The *ketai* will be different in the future. (Participant 10, Personal Communication, January 22, 2009)

If Japanese citizens are still looking forward to improvement in the technology before the advertising can improve, this is something the North American industry needs to be extremely aware of. Although there have been numerous technologically advanced

mobile advertising techniques brought forth, the advertisements should only be as advanced as the commonly used technology of the target market. Many of the techniques used in Japan rely on 3G technology, as defined in the introduction. For example, the 3G technology allows for the running text and the QR code scanner. As these techniques rely on 3G, these techniques should not necessarily be considered in North America until 3G is the commonly used network level for the target market the ads are aimed at. However, the recommendation of having advertisers more learned in the mobile technology is just as applicable here.

As continuous universal monitoring occurs with mobile phone technology, privacy concerns were questioned in this research. Although this did not show to be problematic in Japanese society, it is an area of concern to consider in the North American industry. As the only two participants who expressed privacy concerns studied in North America, it leads the researcher to believe that it is possible that the North American culture may have influenced their concerns. The study by Gow (2005) in the literature review, which revealed privacy issues, was also based on the North American industry. Therefore, the researcher would recommend that privacy concerns be thoroughly investigated in research on mobile phone advertising in North America.

As this study focused on the consumer's perceptions, the recommendations made are a product of the point of view of the consumer. As was stated in the introduction Morrison, Haley, Bartel Sheehan and Taylor (2002) said that:

We're convinced that great advertising comes only from an understanding of consumers' wants and needs. And, in order to understand those wants and needs, the consumer needs to be consulted and integrated at virtually every step of the research process. (p. 1)

This allowed the consumers perceptions to be compared with industry information in order to make recommendations that not only work towards satisfying consumer wants and needs, but are practical for members of the advertising industry. Limitations were encountered throughout the research, which the researcher acknowledges may have influenced the study. However, the researcher took the steps necessary to work with the resources available to her to make adjustments based on the limitations found, as well as make future recommendations regarding limitations which could not be fully addressed within the constraints of this study.

As the literature emphasized, the research in the area of mobile phone advertising is limited, due to its recent introduction in the field of advertising. This timely study contributes to the literature by providing grounded insight into the audience research component of this phenomenon. Particular facets of understanding gained from this study can then be explored in greater detail in additional advanced studies. The findings from this study also offer practical guidance about areas of this practice which require action in order to enhance the consumers' perceptions towards the overall practice of mobile phone advertising.

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APPENDIX A**Consent Form****An Exploration of Mobile Advertising in Japan**

Researcher: Hayley Greene, Masters student
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Purpose: The purpose of this research is to investigate leading edge mobile advertising techniques used in Japan and the consumers' reactions to them. I am inviting people in Tokyo, Japan, aged 18 to 35 to participate in a focus group or interview. The focus groups or interview will last no longer than 60 to 90 minutes.

Procedure: Those agreeing to participate can expect the following to occur. After all Informed Consent Forms have been completed I will turn on the tape recorder and begin questioning with a basic introduction question for each participant to answer. Next I will ask the first open ended research question and open the response for participants to discuss. Follow up questions or prompts will only be used if conversation stalls. Approximately 30 to 40 minutes into the discussion a second open ended research question will be asked and open for discussion.

Risks: The researcher has assured the participant that there are no known risks involved in participating in this study.

Benefits: Participation in the study will aid the researcher in her investigation into the mobile phone industry. It will help to bring forth ideas as to how consumers perceive mobile phone advertisements and suggestions for the mobile phone advertising industry and its operators.

Conservation of data: The data collected by using a tape recorder and notes by the researcher will be kept in a secure manner, locked in the supervisor's office. The data will be kept for five years and only the researcher and supervisor will have access to it in this time. At the end of five years the tapes will be destroyed.

Confidentiality: Upon conclusion of the study, the data produced from this study will be stored in a secure location, locked in the supervisor's office at 558 King Edward, Ottawa, ON, and only members of the research team will have access to it. The audiotapes of the focus groups will not contain any personal identifiers that could be linked to the participant. The tapes will be transcribed by the principal researcher and then be destroyed. By initialling in the space below, you are agreeing that you are aware that the focus group you are participating in will be tape recorded.

_____ Participant's initials

Voluntary Participation: It is your choice to take part in the study. There will be no penalty if you chose to not participate or to stop participation at any time during the research project. You can chose how involved you would like to be in the discussion and you do not have to give your opinion about any aspect of the research you do not feel comfortable with doing so.

Acceptance: I, (participant's name printed) _____
Agree to participate in the research study listed above conducted by Hayley Greene of the Department of Communication, which is under the supervision of Dr. Pierre Bélanger.

If there are any questions about the study the participant may contact the researcher or her supervisor. There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Signature of participant:

Date: _____

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5, Canada; Tel.: (1) 613 562-5841; Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

APPENDIX B

Letter of Recruitment

Hello,

My name is Hayley Greene and I am a Master's student at the University of Ottawa, Canada in the Communication Department. I am currently looking for people to participate in my research project which explores Japanese mobile phone advertising. I am specifically looking for Japanese citizens, based in the Tokyo area, who are comfortable in English, as the study will take place in English.

As a participant you will be asked to volunteer for one focus group or interview lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The discussions will be based on your perceptions of mobile phone advertising. The purpose is to gain understanding about Japanese mobile phone users' attitudes towards and participation in mobile phone advertising. In order to participate, you will be required to sign a consent form that will indicate all measures taken in order to protect your confidentiality and anonymity.

The University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board, based in Ottawa, Canada, has approved my research and I am now looking to recruit volunteers for the focus groups or interviews. The focus groups and interviews will take place in the second and third week of January 2009.

If you are interested in participating, or have any questions about the research please contact me via e-mail at hgree070@uottawa.ca. You may also contact my research supervisor Dr. Rocci Luppici, a Professor at the University of Ottawa, at rluppici@uottawa.ca. Please note that if you do choose to participate, you do have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Also, please feel free to pass this information along to anyone else who fits the criteria of the participants that I am recruiting.

Sincerely,

Hayley Greene

APPENDIX C

Original Focus Group Question Guide

Intro- Icebreaking Question: For each participant: In one minute, briefly describe your experience with mobile advertising. For example: Do you receive mobile ads on your phone and if so how often do you receive them, how many do you usually receive per day/week, what kind of products or services do they tend to be for, are the ads usually in print, video, and/or audio?

Group Question 1 (approximately 10 to 20 minutes): What are your perceptions of, or attitudes about, the practice of mobile phone advertising?

- Prompt 1 – Do you have negative or positive attitudes toward the practice?
- Follow up 1 –Do you opt in to optional mobile ads, if so why?
- Follow up 2- What were your initial thoughts on mobile phone advertising?
- Follow up 3 - Do you ever seek out the advertisements?
- Follow up 4 – Do you ever use the coupons from mobile ads that your friends have received or opt into an ad because your friend has received it?

Group Question 2 (approximately 10 to 20 minutes): What specific aspects of mobile advertisements do you like or dislike?

- Follow up 1 – What aspect of the mobile advertisements do you find productive or counterproductive for the advertiser and why?

Group Question 3 (app 10-20 mins): If you were an advertiser would you choose to advertise on the mobile phone? Why or Why not?

- What format of mobile advertising would you choose and why

Group Question 4 (app 10-20 mins) : What would it take in return, if anything, for you to want to opt in to mobile ads?

End Question: Does anyone have anything else about mobile advertising they would like to add at this time?

*Please note prompts and follow up questions will be used on a needs only basis

APPENDIX D

Question Guide for Focus Groups and Interviews

Intro- Icebreaking Question: For each participant: In one minute, briefly describe your experience with mobile advertising. For example: Do you receive mobile ads on your phone and if so how often do you receive them, how many do you usually receive per day/week, what kind of products or services do they tend to be for, are the ads usually in print, video, and/or audio?

Question 1: What are your perceptions of, or attitudes about, the practice of mobile phone advertising?

- Prompt 1 – Do you have negative or positive attitudes toward the practice?

Question 2: Which specific aspects of mobile phone advertising do you like or dislike ?

- Follow up- Why?
- Follow up- Which aspects of this practice do you find productive or counter productive for a consumer?

Question 3: Do you ever opt-in to receiving mobile ad?

- Prompt 1 – If a company, looking to make a client database stated that you give them your mobile number or e-mail address and in return they would send you ads, but also information or incentives/coupons, would you or do you sign up?
- Follow up- What would it take in return, if anything, in order for you to want to sign up or opt- in?
 - Prompt 1 – Coupons or discount or information
 - Follow up – What are your thoughts on offering something in return?
- Follow up- Do you ever seek out ads or opt-in to receiving ads that a friend has received just because you like the information or incentive that they had received?

Question 4: Out of all existing advertising methods which do you find the most effective?

- Follow up- Why?

Question 5: If you were an advertiser, would you choose to advertise on the mobile phone?

- Follow up- Why or why not?
- Follow up- What aspects of this practice do you find productive or counter productive for the advertiser?
- Which format of mobile advertising would you choose to use?
 - Prompt - For example, QR codes, pop up ads, text messages

Question 6: Do you have any privacy concerns about receiving ads on your mobile?

Question 7: Have you ever received a location based ad, meaning one that comes to your phone based on your geographical location.

- Prompt 1 – For example, if you are walking past a certain store and a promotion for that store pops up in text on your phone
- Follow up- What do you think about this idea?

Question 8: Do you ever use the bar code scanner, QR code device, on your phone to receive information or advertisements?

End Question: Does anyone have anything else about mobile advertising they would like to add at this time?

*Please note prompts and follow up questions will be used on a needs only basis

APPENDIX E**Participant List****Interview #1 January 18th 2009**

Participant # 5 (F) Age 35

Interview # 2 January 21st 2009

Participant # 6 (F) Age 32

Interview # 3 January 20th 2009

Participant # 13 (F) Age 30

Interview # 4 January 22nd 2009

Participant # 14 (M) Age 21

Focus Group # 1 January 21st 2009

Participant # 1 (F) Age 21

Participant # 2 (F) Age 21

Participant # 3 (M) Age 21

Participant # 4 (M) Age 21

Focus Group #2 January 22nd 2009

Participant # 10 (F) Age 25

Participant # 11 (M) Age 35

Focus Group # 3 January 22nd 2009

Participant # 7 (F) Age 24

Participant # 8 (M) Age 31

Focus Group # 4 January 22nd 2009

Participant # 9 (M) Age 22

Participant # 12 (F) Age 26

APPENDIX F

Personal Communication Codes

Category 1: Associations (26 themes- 124 instances)

Positive (9 themes - 51)	Negative (13 themes – 59 instances)	Neutral (4 themes - 14 instances)
Positive 11*	Negative 14*	Ignore 8*
Convenient 9	Advertising overload 10	Delete 3
Creative 7	Inappropriate content 8	Neutral 2
Choice 7	Annoying 8	Don't notice 1
Effective 6	Unavoidable 6	
Good timing 3	Unwanted 4	
Interesting 3	Confusing 2	
Attention Grabbing 3	Expectations let down 2	
Interactive 1	Frustrating 1	
	Low quality 1	
	Inconvenient 1	
	Interrupting 1	
	Irritate 1	

Category 2: Reasons Influencing Perceptions (19 themes – 104 instances)

Usage Habits (8 themes – 28 instances)	Reasons For and Against Mobile Advertisements (11 themes – 76 instances)
Attachment 13*	Discounts 25*
Regular use 6	Fear of scam 11
Popularity of device 4	Reward 7
Mobility 1	Privacy 7
Multiple mobiles 1	Product relevance 6
Mobile television 1	Usability 5
Mobile news 1	Personal interest 3
Mobile Internet 1	Information 5
	Irrelevant 3
	Mobile size 3
	Potential 1

Category 3: Advertising Interests (17 themes – 85 instances)

Ad Formats (10 themes – 48 instances)	Perceived Successes and Failures of Using a Mobile Ad Campaign (7 themes – 37 instances)
Cross-media 8*	Technological ability and usability 12*
Television ads 7	Demographics 11
QR codes 6	Segmentation of users 6
Internet (PC) ads 5	Reach 5
E-mail ads 5	Cost effectiveness 5
SMS ads 5	Continuous exposure 1
Pop up ads 4	Customization 2
Running text 4	
Multi media 3	
Magazine ads 1	

* # of instances

APPENDIX G**Universite d'Ottawa University of Ottawa**

Service de subventions <ie recherche et deontologie Research Grants and Ethics Services

**SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD****CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL**

This is to certify that the University of Ottawa Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board has examined the application for ethical approval of the research project entitled An Exploration of the Mobile Phone Advertising in Japan and its Impact; on the Advertising Industry (# 09-08-31) submitted by Pr. Pierre C. Belanger of the Department of Communication at the University of Ottawa and his Master's student Miss Hayley Greene. The Board found that this research project met appropriate ethical standards as outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement and in the Procedures of the University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Boards, and accordingly gave it a Category 1a (approval). This certification is valid one year from the date indicated below.

Germain Zongo
Assistant Director, Ethics (Interim) For Dr.
Peter Beyer, Chair of the Social Sciences and
Humanities REB

December 10, 2008

Date

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