

Factors Influencing Attitudes Toward Instagram Advertising Among Young Adults: Insights for Marketers"

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Abstract - This study aims to identify the key factors influencing attitudes toward advertising on Instagram in young adults. With the platform's rapid growth as a primary medium for social networking sites, understanding user attitudes toward Instagram ads is essential for marketers seeking to optimize their campaigns. Data was collected conveniently through surveys from Instagram users aged 18-30 years (young adults). The findings suggest that factors like as Overall attitude towards advertising, Consumerism, positive economic effect, Trust, and user demographics that shape individual attitudes form the attitudes of consumers, while overexposure and intrusive formats may lead to negative perceptions. The study concludes by offering actionable insights for brands to enhance user engagement and optimize ad strategies on Instagram. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digital advertising and consumer behavior in social media environments.

I. Introduction

Advertising attitude refers to the consumer's readiness to react either favorably or unfavorably to the stimuli presented in the commercial after viewing it (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989). Similar to brand attitude, advertising attitude is made up of three parts: cognitive, behavioral, and emotional. The behavioral component conveys the consumers' intention to act either favorably or unfavorably toward the advertised product or service, whereas the mental component represents their opinions and thoughts about it. There is enough evidence to support that ad avoidance takes place because of attitude towards advertisements in general and not arising from attitude towards specific ad content (Cronin and Menelly, 1992), which is why the study wants to analyze overall attitude towards advertising. A positive attitude towards advertisements decreases avoidance (Rojas-Mendez and Davies, 2005). This is true even though advertising budgets and revenues have been rising. Most analysts contend that for managers and advertisers to successfully integrate social networking into their marketing plan, they also need to have a thorough awareness of customer expectations and behavior. Existing social networking research has remained exploratory despite daily increases in consumer use and advertiser spending. This study demonstrates a few novel approaches to social media platforms for successful marketing (Strubbe, Eshelman, Gutta, Milanski, & Pelletier, 2004a). Both academics and advertisers are primarily interested in evaluating the efficacy of advertising, as they have been investigating several aspects that could affect advertising effectiveness. Studies have indicated that one significant factor influencing how people react to advertisements is attitude. The way people perceive and respond to their external surroundings is referred to as their attitude. The regularity of the internet advertisements is among the most important elements. By targeting the same audience and reaching potential customers more readily, marketers gain from interaction (Strubbe, Eshelman, Gutta, Milanski, & Pelletier, 2004b). Through a range of marketing initiatives, marketers can cultivate client loyalty and keep an eye on target markets and customer preferences. The process and methodology of social networking have evolved with the advent of online social networking. Gao and Koufaris (2006). Given that the Internet is the least reliable advertising medium, advertisers must learn how to overcome their message of mistrust, prevent risk, and save money. The most credible media are newspapers, which are followed by radio, television, and magazines. If consumers don't trust internet advertising and don't feel comfortable viewing advertisements online (Gilal, Zhang, Gilal, Gilal, & Gilal, 2017). They are likely to only make purchases from businesses they trust and would be reluctant to divulge sensitive information like credit card numbers. The quick steps customers take to satisfy their needs and desires are referred to as interactivity.

One of the advertising features being disseminated online is interactivity (Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp, & Agnihotri, 2011). Users' mental health, including whether they have a positive or negative self-perception, is greatly influenced by social networks. The theory of social identity holds that people identify themselves with groups associated with their social contacts through the internet, which is currently the world's largest source of information. The ideals, social norms, and group communication style are all influenced by the social group (Senders, Govers, & Neuts, 2013). Customers' and workers' attitudes and perceptions are influenced by advertisements on social media and other online platforms. The organization's capacity for advertising determined how the product was promoted and sold, and these actions are based on the attitudes and perceptions of the company's customers and employees. Additionally, a business can only thrive if it has an efficient advertising mechanism, such as an internet advertisement on a system that always depends on the attitudes and perceptions of the company's employees and clients. Furthermore, the firm's sales, which are reliant on efficient advertising and other channels for sale promotion, determine the organization's success. Customers' attitudes and perceptions have an impact on these channels as well as advertisements. Therefore, the organization's performance depends on its sales marketing efforts as well as the attitudes and perceptions of its customers. Another method of

product promotion in the market is social networking. It is a well-known worldwide source of advertising these days. According to Barbara S. Lawrence (2006), a reference group can also be defined as a group of individuals or an organization that the person appreciates, enjoys, or wishes to join. Any and all groups that influence people's attitudes and actions, including membership groups, other celebrities they look up to, or comparable groups, can also be referred to as reference groups. (Parrott, Subramanian, and Ramanathan, 2017).. Users of social networking sites like Instagram are more likely to see advertising favorably when their reference group is stronger. Studies have examined the potential privacy concerns related to social media platforms. Users establish their online personas by sharing personal details on these sites. This trend of online social networking like Instagram has encouraged younger demographics to disclose highly personal information on such platforms (Lohtia, Bello, Yamada, & Gilliland, 2005). Instagram's protection of user data faces various challenges, including the possibility of reconstructing users' social security numbers using commonly available profile information, such as birth dates. Social media sites challenge traditional notions of privacy ethics. Many consumers feel uneasy about the concept of social networking businesses and question their credibility and security measures (Nunan, Sibai, Schivinski, & Christodoulides, 2018).

II. Literature Review

Pollay and Mittal (1993) worked on making a comprehensive model of attitudes toward advertisements in general. the study included three personal utility factors (product information, social image information and hedonic amusement) and four socioeconomic factors (good for economy, fostering materialism, corrupting values, and falsify/no sense). The study proposed a 7-factor model, which was tested on two different samples of college students and housewives to detect its variance (62% and 56%, respectively).

Bamoriya and Singh (2011) talk about the aspects of ad attitude towards advertising, i.e., information seeking, entertainment, and social expression. This research investigates the influence of information-seeking behavior on attitude towards advertising using the Pollay & Mittal Model. Research further investigates the relationship between demographic variables with information seeking. Relationship between Social Media Marketing and Young Customers" is a recent study by Ali et al. (2025) that explores how social media marketing (SMM) affects the attitudes and actions of Generation Z consumers. The study pinpoints important SMM elements that have a big influence on young consumers' engagement and buying intentions, including entertainment, informativeness, customisation, and interactivity. Results indicate that SMM tactics successfully promote favorable sentiments and encourage buying habits among young people when they are in line with these parameters.

The internet stands as a leading source of information, offering users swift access to accurate data from reliable sources. This information resource has permeated all aspects of life, particularly in research endeavors. Furthermore, the information available online has the potential to alter users' perspectives on relevant facts and figures. With the growing popularity of online social platforms like Instagram, marketers are finding unprecedented opportunities to boost revenue and enhance their marketing strategies. Generally, social networks serve as free resources available to the entire community or specific groups (Herzig, Feigenblat, Shmueli-Scheuer, Konopnicki, & Rafaeli 2016). Researchers examining attitudes towards contemporary advertising methods have progressed by identifying behaviors deemed acceptable or undesirable. The influence of advertising has been a topic of considerable discussion. Throughout the 20th century, advertisements evolved through various phases, culminating in significant changes during the 1960s (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012). Numerous studies have emphasized that Instagram is one of key advertising platform for companies, significantly impacting customer perceptions and employee attitudes. Additionally, previous research has consistently demonstrated that customer attitudes and perceptions reflect the intentions of employers as portrayed in advertisements, particularly on social media networks. The adoption of emerging technology and digital advertising has transformed how marketers reach their target audiences (Rappaport, 2007). Consumers now have the ability to eliminate unwanted content and advertising messages, which means that advertisements must be crafted in a way that either attracts or repels consumers based on their identifiable features.. The internet has significantly altered the way advertisements are managed and distributed to customers (Erhart, Matula, & Skiba, 2011). Given the low cost of advertising on online social networks, marketers are likely to compete for available advertising space (Burns and Lutz 2006). Marketing professionals must select effective advertising strategies to achieve optimal results. Web banner ads remain a prevalent form of online advertising due to their control and rule mechanisms. Despite the proliferation of new content types and advertising formats on the internet, many advertisements still appear as banners. Social media advertising possesses unique characteristics that distinguish it from general internet advertising (Wu, Lin, Chen, & Wang, 2011). Much of the existing research has focused on customer perceptions and employee attitudes to predict the impact of advertising on organizations, particularly in the context of social networking. Attitude refers to the extent of an individual's influence for or against a particular action or occurrence (Cho, Phillips, Hageman, & Patten, 2009). Research examining users' attitudes toward online advertising has revealed a generally negative perception, especially concerning the quality of advertisements. The marketing field has extensively documented attitudes toward advertising, including investigations into beliefs and attitudes in international contexts. Many experts suggest that managers and advertisers lack sufficient understanding of consumer expectations and behaviors to effectively integrate social networking into their marketing strategies. Despite the daily increase in consumer usage and advertiser spending, current research on social networking remains exploratory.. Attitudes toward Internet advertising are varied, contrasting with the generally negative perception of traditional advertising methods. Online advertisements offer enhanced interactivity and can be tailored to individual customer needs more effectively than conventional media ads (Malthouse, Haenlein, Skiera, Wege, & Zhang, 2013). Media plays a crucial role in shaping and influencing consumer attitudes towards products or

services, according to marketers. Advertisers primarily focus on influencing attitudes, along with opinions, information, beliefs, and behavior. To create effective advertisements, three fundamental principles of attitude formation should be considered. Firstly, individuals develop attitudes as they strive to fulfill their needs. Secondly, the information available about a product or service shapes a person's attitude towards it. Lastly, an individual's disposition can be influenced by their social groups, personality traits, and other unique characteristics (Tomkins, 1990). Customers' perceptions of advertisements have a direct impact on how credible an advertisement message is. The significance of internet advertisements was found to be significantly correlated with ad reliability. Even though the internet was thought to be a more reliable source of news than television, newspapers were still seen as the most reliable media. Social network users' information needs may be satisfied by the value of advertising information, and satisfying these requirements would influence users' attitudes toward advertisements. Her online activity is credited with generating our interest (Stafford and Fabre, 2005).

Since web and online social network advertisements are made to enable people to look for information, information interactivity is crucial. Both customers and advertisers are benefiting from the Internet's interaction.

Research Gap

While existing literature acknowledges the importance of tailoring social media marketing strategies to align with Generation Z's preferences, there is a lack of in-depth understanding of how these strategies—particularly in the form of engaging, informative, and personalized advertisements—affect Generation Z's attitude toward advertisements. Despite the growing presence of brands on digital platforms, limited research has explored the extent to which such customized content influences positive or negative ad attitudes and their subsequent impact on brand loyalty among Gen Z consumers.

III. Research Methodology

Sample

The study's universe comprises two of the biggest states in northern India. Purposefully, two states, Punjab and Haryana, are picked for this study. The states were further divided after dividing the geographical area into 7 cities based on the literacy rate. The data was collected from the respondents residing in Punjab (Districts selected - Mohali, Hoshiarpur, and Jalandhar), Haryana (Districts selected -Faridabad, Gurgaon, and Hisar), and Chandigarh (UT). The districts were selected based on their literacy rate published in the Census 2021.

Profile of Respondents

India has over 1.3 billion people with a median age of 28.2 in 2020. The digitization revolution has propagated a trend of young adults aged 18 and 29 to use at least one platform of social media (Dollarhide, M., 2021). Ads on social media platforms are among the many stimuli that young adults who use them extensively are naturally exposed to (Youn and Shin, 2019).

Table 1. Demographic profile of Participants

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	240	48%
	Female	260	52%
Age	18-25	220	55.69%
	>25	280	44.3%
Education	Student	310	62%
	Other	190	38%
	Total	500	100.0%

Data Collection

The survey method was determined to be suitable as the goal of the current study is to examine opinions about a certain activity. A well-structured questionnaire with predetermined scores was created to gather data. Questions about the SNSs' (Social Networking Sites) overall usage patterns made up the first section. Statements to examine the different dependent and independent variables made up the second segment. Rojas-Mendez, Davies, and Madran (2009) and Pollay and Mittal (1998) provided the metrics for attitudes of young adults towards Instagram. Respondents with Instagram accounts were included in the poll. The questionnaires were structured and closed-ended. The respondents were given a questionnaire with predetermined scales for each independent and dependent variable. A Likert scale with seven points was employed to mount the scales. Utilization of social media was assessed based on respondents estimated daily time spent on the platform of at least half an hour every day was considered under the scope of the study.

Analysis

We collected the data through an online survey-based procedure. The self-report questionnaire took between 30 and 40 minutes to complete. Using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). An initial version of the questionnaire was pretested with a convenience sample of 20 to refine the measurement instruments. Based on suggestions from experienced academicians, researchers, and pretest respondents, the wording of a few items was reframed to bring more clarity and was adjusted to make them easier to understand. EFA (exploratory factor analysis) was applied to sample of 500 respondents. The analyses assessed if the scales achieved satisfactory levels of reliability and if factor loadings were significantly related to their corresponding constructs. For internal reliability, Cronbach's α coefficients were calculated for all items of each construct. Results indicated that all the scales were reliable as all the values were above .7. Exploratory Factor Analysis in SPSS 21 was applied to the Ad Attitude scale. One of the statements 'Overall, I like Facebook /Twitter/Instagram advertising' did not load on any of the factors, hence was removed. The KMO value came out to be .856 (Table 3) which is above the accepted level of .7. The 16 statements loaded on 4 factors with value more than .5 (Hair et al,2009) and significant variance.

Table 3. KMO value of Ad Attitude Scale

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.856
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Chi-Square	951.558
	Df	120
	p-value	.0001**

Table 4. EFA results and Validity Test of Ad Attitude Scale

	Factor Loading				Communalities	Cronbach's Alpha
	Positive economic effect	Materialism	Ads are informative	Ads are trustworthy		
QB12	.889				.851	.900
QB11	.861				.849	
QB13	.829				.769	
QB10	.743				.648	
QB7		.862			.833	.879
QB8		.825			.807	
QB9		.787			.722	
QB6		.751			.615	
QB1			.853		.768	.879
QB4			.816		.790	
QB2			.816		.775	
QB5			.671		.653	
QB15				.849	.861	.912
QB14				.811	.706	
QB16				.762	.848	
QB17				.762	.817	
Eigenvalues	3.218	3.065	3.035	2.994		
% of Variance	20.110	19.159	18.970	18.712		
Cumulative %	20.110	39.269	58.240	76.951		

IV. Discussions and Conclusions

The outcomes of this study demonstrates that elements, including interactivity, influence social networking attitudes toward advertising and put to use. Social networking views about advertising are unaffected by other factors including respect for privacy, culture of reference, and credibility. Customers are less likely to trust advertisements on social media. It suggests that, despite its recentness, the low trust of advertisements hasn't altered all that much across media. Attitudes on social network advertising are unaffected by credibility. The findings also indicate that there is no discernible relationship between comparison groups and online social networking advertising attitudes, nor is there a substantial correlation between privacy concerns and online social networking advertising attitudes. Similar to this paper and a number of other inquiries, this has also offered a conceptual framework with certain restrictions. Second, advertisements for social networking can take many different forms, but this study just looks at ads for social networking in general. Therefore, further research is required in the future to identify culture as an influential factor, including more research on views about social networking advertising and attitudes toward various types of social networking ads. The mediation and the moderation impact on the framework were disregarded in this study, and it was recommended that future research include these elements in their investigations.

Managerial Implications

Advertisers should closely monitor the content architecture of their ads as part of a messaging strategy because ad contents substantially impact consumers' decisions to quit viewing a commercial at any point during its duration through mediating mechanisms. Advertisers should convey a high entertainment value using the two primary dimensions of ad content to keep viewers interested. Positive gains in entertainment value over time also help achieve this goal. The quantity and quality of information provided adversely impact customer retention. As a result, it is important to carefully regulate how much information is provided in advertising as well as how quickly. Furthermore, it would be unwise for advertisers to raise the overall entertainment value of TV commercials for consumers to process during the highly informative parts of the commercial, or vice versa, to increase the entertainment value to counteract the detrimental effects of brief high information content on viewers' propensity to stop watching. There is a potentially serious "boomerang" effect on the likelihood that people will stop watching ads when there are concurrently high levels and velocities of entertainment and information value. This work makes several theoretical contributions to the literature. First, from the standpoint of advertising relevance, the current study describes the factors that influence attitudes regarding advertising on social media. In line with previous research, attitude plays a crucial part in determining how consumers feel about social media advertising (Arora & Agarwal, 2019; Martins et al., 2019). Credibility persuaded customers that the information was accurate, leading to a favorable purchase choice. Entertainment is the factor that most accurately predicts a perceived value for millennial parents. Accordingly, Raney et al. (2003) discovered that social media advertisements that incorporate entertaining components receive higher ratings from viewers and receive more visits. Consumer interest may rise in response to their information needs, which would boost the value of advertising (Martins et al., 2019). This outcome could be explained by the fact that, because the product is intangible, buyers in service industries like transportation mostly rely on the data gathered throughout the purchasing process. The study advances our knowledge of how attitudes regarding social media are formed. The advertising value perspective was applied in this process, and the study's findings indicated that consumers viewed advertising as a reliable, entertaining, and helpful source of information. Additionally, this survey offers a thorough evaluation of customer views.

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Annexure

1	Overall, I consider Facebook /Twitter/Instagram advertising a good thing							
2	Facebook /Twitter/Instagram ads are a reliable source of information							
3	Overall, I like Facebook /Twitter/Instagram advertising							
4	I consider Facebook/ Twitter/ Instagram advertising very essential							
5	Advertising on Facebook /Twitter/Instagram tells me which products have the feature that I am looking for							
6	Advertising is making us a materialistic society, overly interested in buying and owning things							
7	Advertising makes people live in world of fantasy							
8	Advertising makes people buy unaffordable products just to show off							
9	Advertising makes people buy things they don't have to							
10	Advertising helps raise our standard of living							
11	Advertising tells me what people with lifestyles similar to mine are buying and using							
12	Advertising results in better products for the public							
13	Advertising leads to lower prices and best deals							

14	Advertisements on Facebook /Twitter/Instagram are reliable							
15	Advertisements on Facebook /Twitter/Instagram are honest.							
16	I am willing to rely on the information given by advertisements on Facebook /Twitter/Instagram for the product I wish to buy							
17	I am willing to purchase products based on advertisements on Facebook /Twitter/Instagram							