

# From Perception to Influence: The Impact of Online Advertisements on Advertisers

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim of the Study:** In this era of technology, digital media dominates every aspect of life, with mobile phones being essential to everyday chores. Technology use extends beyond workplaces, influencing buying behaviors. Companies leverage social media to attract consumers.

**Methodology:** The study employed a qualitative methodology, using structured interviews with advertising agencies in Pakistan. A purposive sampling technique was used.

**Findings:** Results aligned with existing literature, showing that social media provides valuable analytics and real-time campaign performance insights. This data helps agencies refine strategies and make informed decisions for optimal results.

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that viral marketing is a key goal, and social media can be used to create campaigns that can rapidly increase brand visibility and engagement. The continuous evolution of technology ensures that digital media will remain a pivotal tool for advertisers in the future.

**Keywords:** Online Advertisement, Digital Media, Advertising Agencies.

## Introduction

In today's technology-driven era, digital media has permeated every aspect of our lives. Mobile phones have become an indispensable item for most individuals. The use of technology extends beyond the workplace and has become prevalent in all domains, particularly in influencing buying behaviors. Because of the increased usage of social media, companies are using this same means of communication to attract advertising agencies. The most used means of gaining advertising agencies' attention is via designing online advertisements in a way that could influence advertising agencies' attention (Barnes, 2006; Chen et al., 2019; Labrecque et al., 2021).

Online advertisers are most of the time appreciated by advertising agencies because of their huge resemblance with the consumer's needs. It was indicated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, online advertisements gained a high reputation because of meeting advertising agencies' needs and thus helping provide want to buy (Yao & Shang, 2021). The existing literature highlighted the fact that those advertisements that were quite frequent on every social media platform show the popularity of a particular

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brand (Dreze & Hussherr, 2003; Niu et al., 2021), its awareness (Keller, 2010), and increase in its purchase (Lewis & Reiley, 2014).

Online advertising agencies utilize advertising agencies' most used applications to gain an idea regarding certain thought patterns to design certain techniques to attract more and more customers (Aiolfi et al., 2021; Wijenayake et al., 2019). Getting traffic is also a crucial and important part of online advertising behavior as the traffic is gained using the most common strategies designed based on the most visited site (Goldfarb, 2014). Advertisement is a marketing strategy that is employed to promote certain messages regarding products. Certain sponsors are involved in advertising or other words, promoting a service to advertising agencies. Perception refers to the process of organizing, identifying, and interpreting sensory information to create a representation and comprehension of the presented information or the surrounding environment. Online advertising is a kind of marketing through which the products are introduced to advertising agencies to gain traffic on social media to promote productivity. These strategies help gain more advertising agencies.

This study aims to investigate the role of advertisements in shaping advertisers' perceptions and the challenges faced by them when they come across those advertisements. It should also be brought into consideration what advertisers in Pakistan employ recent trends to design online advertisements to attract advertising agencies. Online advertisements have become one of the popular means of attracting advertising agencies. The study also examines how different theoretical bases would help build the association of perception with advertisement adaptation.

### ***Problem Statement***

This research aims to explore the future of online advertisement in Pakistan. The importance of conducting the study is to highlight the differences in the advertisers' perception regarding online advertisements and the challenges faced by those advertisers. The ways to address those challenges are also addressed. The current study also highlights the future of online advertisement in Pakistan.

### ***Study Objectives***

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To explore the role of online advertisements in shaping advertisers' perceptions.
2. To concentrate on the current online trends in designing online advertisements.
3. To explore the future of online advertisements in Pakistan.

### ***Research Questions***

**RQ1** - How does the experience of online advertisements shape an advertiser's perception?

**RQ2** - What are the current online trends for designing online advertisements?

**RQ3** - What is the future of online advertisements in Pakistan?

### ***Significance of the Study***

Online business marketing estimates that the largest spending in every country's economy is on online advertising. This study explores how online ads influence advertisers' perceptions. While much research has focused on the types and content of online ads, this study delves into advertisers' perceptions and the challenges they face. It highlights the role of influential figures in ads and aims to add new insights into human perception of social advertisements. This research is significant for understanding the influence of online ads, the challenges for advertisers, and the future of online advertising.

## **Literature Review**

The Internet has brought about a revolutionary change in the advertising landscape, offering a wide range of online advertising forms that leverage digital media platforms such as search portals, social media, e-commerce platforms, online games, mobile apps, online videos, and banners to effectively convey marketing messages to potential advertisers (Yang et al., 2017). Online advertising has emerged as a dominant sector within the advertising industry, experiencing remarkable growth and impact. According to a report by Statista (2021), online advertising revenue in the United States witnessed a significant 12.2 percent increase in 2020 compared to the previous year, reaching \$139.8 billion from \$124.6 billion. Projections indicate that the online advertising market is poised to reach an astonishing \$982.82 billion by 2025 (Mordor Intelligence, 2021). This rapid growth underscores the immense potential and importance of online advertising in shaping the future of marketing and communications.

### ***Online Advertising***

Advertising is a communication medium designed to captivate audiences, stand out with unique features, and convincingly persuade them to act in ways desired by the advertiser. Its purpose is to inform and influence potential advertising agencies in their purchasing decisions. Advertising encompasses non-personal presentations and promotions of ideas, products, or services, typically funded by sponsors and it is emphasized that advertising, as a persuasion method, goes beyond providing product benefits and instead aims to create an enticing and transformative experience that motivates individuals to engage or make a purchase.

In recent times, traditional advertising mediums like television, radio, newspapers, and magazines have faced tough competition from online advertising, which has gained significant prominence. Internet advertising is now commonly seen on business websites that target specific activities. The positioning and design of these online advertisements are crucial in creating a positive impression, but it is equally important to avoid irritating internet users (Aksa & Kartini, 2015).

### ***Technology & Perception on Usefulness (PU)***

Perceived usefulness, as proposed by Davis et al. (1989), refers to an individual's perception of the usefulness of technology and advertisements. It represents the belief that online advertisements can serve a practical purpose. In the context of mobile applications, it entails adopting specific behaviors influenced by the online advertisements a consumer encounters during phone usage (Huang & Liao, 2015). It is found that perceived usefulness influences the intention to try virtual clothing through the influence of advertisements. Davis et al. (1989) found that advertising agencies who feel more comfortable with certain advertisements are more likely to incorporate them into their lives (Oyman et al., 2022).

### ***Technology & Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)***

Perceived ease of use refers to an individual's perception of using online advertisements with ease and comfort (Davis et al., 1989). It reflects the usability and user-friendliness of certain behaviors influenced by online advertisements when making purchasing decisions. Beck and Yoo (2018) noted two major aspects of perceived ease of use in the literature. The study by Oyman et al. (2022) found that perceived ease of use significantly impacts buyers' views and behaviors toward online advertisements. It is a state in which individuals perceive the use of a specific aid as effortless and without cost (Davis, 1989). Shroff et al. (2011) demonstrated a strong connection between attitude and perceived ease of use. Researchers argue that perceived ease of use can help advertising agencies experience the hedonic value associated with products seen in online advertisements (Davis, 1989).

### ***Technology & Behavioral Intention to Use (Trust)***

Trust, defined as the willingness to rely on someone or something, plays a crucial role in online advertising (Oyman et al., 2022). If trust is broken by the organizer or manager, customers may choose to leave. Some describe trust as the belief in a person's promise and the ability to uphold agreements, which

influences a person's perception. Various scholars have described trust using terms such as "sharing ideals," "uncertainty," and engagement with positive outcomes. Although these descriptions focus on different aspects, the concept of agreement, as defined by is essential in relationship marketing strategies, where advertisers' perceptions are positively influenced by online advertisements.

### ***Technology & Attitude towards Use***

Attitude towards use refers to an individual's thoughts or beliefs about using online applications for shopping and online advertisements. According to the analytical findings of Agarwal and Prasad (1998), it encompasses a customer's attitude toward new advertisements, as attitudes can significantly influence shopping behavior (Bhatti et al., 2018). Several researchers in the field of communication technology have explored this behavior, emphasizing the impact of buyer attitudes on individual or advertiser perceptions.

### **Future of Online Advertisement in Pakistan**

#### ***Social Media Marketing Strategies***

Research has provided substantial evidence supporting the effectiveness of social media marketing (SMM) in various aspects. Studies by Sarkar & Khare (2018) have shown that SMM influences shopping decisions, while Schiyinski & Dabrowski (2013) demonstrate its role in building brands. Additionally, Tashtoush (2021) highlights how SMM facilitates interactivity and influences purchase intentions, as supported by research conducted by Wilson (2019) and Permatasari & Laydi (2018). For example, in the context of Jordan, social media has emerged as a significant determinant of customers' buying behavior by delivering relevant information and messages related to purchase decisions (Tashtoush, 2021). Moreover, Permatasari & Laydi (2018) emphasize the substantial impact of entertainment, economic value, social value, and credibility on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

#### ***Internet as an Influencer***

Previous research has predominantly focused on studying the impact of sponsored content created and shared by micro-celebrities themselves, particularly in the realm of influencer marketing (De Veirman et al., 2017; Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017; Djafarova and Trofimenko, 2019; Sokolova and Kefi, 2019). However, there appears to be a significant gap in the literature, with only one study conducted in The Netherlands (Johnson et al., 2019) exploring the effect of sponsored content posted by brands, specifically native advertising. As a result, there is a need for further research to gain a comprehensive understanding of how micro-celebrities in social media native ads influence consumer attitudes and behavior.

Moreover, while various theoretical frameworks like the match-up hypothesis (Kamins and Gupta, 1994) and schema theory (Anderson, 1984) have been extensively utilized to investigate the impact of traditional celebrity endorsers and product image congruence on advertising effectiveness, these theories have not been adequately examined in the context of social media micro-celebrities. Therefore, there is a valuable opportunity to explore and apply these theoretical perspectives to better comprehend the dynamics of micro-celebrity advertising on social media platforms.

#### ***Humor and Advertisements***

Advertising agencies are constantly exposed to a plethora of advertising messages in their daily lives (Kim et al., 2001). This exposure can significantly reduce the effectiveness of advertising efforts (Hutter, Katharina & Hoffmann, 2011). To optimize efficiency, businesses can employ humor in their advertisements (Vranica, 2009; Fugate, 1998; Weinberger and Gulas, 1992). The use of humor in advertising has been extensively studied and well-documented. According to research, incorporating humor in advertisements leads to improved attitudes toward both the advertisements and the brands being promoted (Eisend, 2009). Moreover, humorous ads tend to capture attention more effectively (Eisend, 2009; Krishnan and Chakravarti, 2003) and are better remembered by the audience (Chattopadhyay and Basu, 1990).

One notable advantage of humorous advertising is its potential for fostering word-of-mouth promotion and increasing reach, as viewers are more likely to share or discuss these ads (Warren and Berger, 2019). By infusing humor into their advertising strategies, businesses can enhance engagement, generate positive brand associations, and create a lasting impact on their target audience.

### ***Ease of Communication***

Researchers are of the view that media also impacts the way advertising agencies are attracted by online advertisements. There is a strong association between the medium and the advertisement content, such as the advertisement provokes a person to learn new things. Pass it ahead or share it with others (Ho et al., 2022). Hollebeek et al., (2022) highlighted the idea that the medium of interaction or media experience is the second important strategy utilized by advertising agencies. Also, the medium used by advertisers includes Facebook and Instagram. The activity of the advertising agencies is recorded and in the same way, the advertisements are shown (Ho et al., 2022; Waqas et al., 2021).

### ***Consumer's Reliability***

Targeted advertising is a preferred choice for advertisers due to its precision and efficiency in marketing. Online targeted advertising, in particular, has gained significant popularity among advertising agencies, mainly due to its alignment with their needs and the growing importance of "home economy" and "zero-contact services" during the COVID-19 pandemic, as mentioned in a study by Yao and Shang (2021). Numerous research studies have highlighted the positive effects of targeted online advertising. According to Drèze and Hussherr (2003) and Niu et al. (2021), it can effectively enhance brand awareness, leading to increased recognition among the target audience. Additionally, targeted advertising has been shown to influence purchasing intentions positively, as supported by Lewis and Reiley (2014). Overall, targeted online advertising has emerged as a powerful tool to boost brand visibility, recognition, and consumer behavior, making it a favored approach for modern advertising strategies.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The foundations of the theoretical framework for this research are built on the Media System Dependency (MSD) approach, which claims that media usage elevates its dependency thereby changing people's lives. This is why there is a strong link between MSD and internet marketing, mainly as the digital network affects users. It is also worth noting that today, advertising agencies tend to depend on written communication rather than face-to-face communication (Ali, 2018), and this is through a shift in the following trends that seems to encourage online advertising.,

Ad agencies are targeted by businesses with the use of media to incorporate advertisements hence earning massive profits. The establishment of digital networks improves the sales and marketing functions across the globe. There is a direct link between increased Internet usage and subsequent interaction with online advertisements that support clients' positive buying behavior (M. Ali & Yousaf, 2021). The analytical mechanism derived from the interview results involves the identification of major themes and sub-themes to present an organized structure of data findings and analysis.

### **Methodology**

The methodological design of the current study was qualitative in which an open-ended technique (interview-based technique) was used to obtain the data. A structured interview was designed with certain questions keeping in view the sub-themes and the themes of the study. The answers were recorded along with the designed questionnaire and the demographic variables on the topic 'impact of online advertisements on advertiser's perceptions.

This study focuses on an in-depth discourse analysis of the advertiser's perception of online advertisements. The research depends on the challenges and the current trends of online advertisement practices in Pakistan. Because of purposeful sampling, the subjects of the study were ensured to be qualified and provide density and context information to questions. Discourse analysis was therefore used

to examine the role of advertisers' perceptions in online advertisements. Discourse analysis is used to gain insight into communication patterns, revealing implicit meanings and ideologies. It helps understand power dynamics, explore social contexts, and identify discursive strategies.

## **Analysis and Findings**

Concerning RQ1, the analysis indicated that the key concerns include the focused population as well as the kind of content and platforms used. Some of the reported respondent strategies include reaching out to the youth population through Instagram and Snapchat, understanding the intended audience, and the appropriate use of graphics. They target the population that uses various products and services, utilizes AI in sharing materials, and cooperates with bloggers and movie stars. Using appealing messages, ad personalization techniques, appealing color combinations, and endorsing social media marketing stars, they strive to change perceptions and campaign outcomes. In every case, perceptions are changed by ads, especially online ones, which are aimed at certain segments and use color appeals and graphics.

New patterns in the design of Internet ads are customer-oriented information, word of mouth, and celebrity endorsements. Again, the respondents' focal points are creativity, fans via hashtags, quality content, and constant updates. Companies collect viral ad information on the sites, interact with opponents, and refer to the internet search to create plans. In general, trends are based on the concepts of personality, inspiration, and numbers through viral and influencer marketing on Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter.

The prospects of Internet advertising for Pakistan are optimistic because of the constantly rising popularity of the Internet and technology. Majority expressed that there has been a massive and continuous growth and that players such as youth and platforms such as PayPal and Amazon fuel the Growth. Online Advertising is today quite popular after COVID-19 and is majorly driven by technology and Artificial Intelligence. Thus, digital media is considered a cheap form of communicating with the public and promoting products or services, which can span across the globe as well as provide efficient feedback mechanisms. Enablement of more and more people using mobile and social media, the profit and sales aspect of digital media all suggest a promising future. In conclusion, the systematically planned traditional sectors such as education are projected to be headed and revolutionized by digital platforms due to technological development.

Thus, the efficacy of digital media is a function of the target market. It can be observed that it is more effective with teenagers as compared to older age groups and the choice of the medium is contingent upon the profile of the audience. As pertains to the cardinality of the audience, this is an area of significant importance when looking at the primacy of digital media where it is hard to think of one hegemonic model of appropriateness that fits all the age groups of the audience. It is used because it is popular for most audiences but each fit is appreciated to be unique or according to the audience's traits.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

RQ1, on how the experience of online advertisements influences an advertiser's perception, the participants noted that online advertising agencies' working nature primarily focuses on their client's campaign success, hence they have a positive or rather optimistic perception of advertisements. They use conventional marketing outlets like the social networks comprising Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat with individual social marketing departments.

For the RQ2, Respondents of this study included the following trends; Personalized profile customization, creativity, engaging content by incorporating cameras, word-of-mouth promotion, carrying out analysis, getting fans engaged actively, and providing results

For RQ3, the future of online advertisements in Pakistan appears bright though, this research focuses on business-to-business marketing. Marketing across online media is proving to be ahead of conventional marketing media such as radio and print. With the help of advanced technology, marketing today has seen

a massive impact, and people across the globe are exposed to various advertisements via Internet marketing and especially the use of mobile phones. Marketing costs have been determined to be increasing, nonetheless, internet advertising is cheaper through techniques like pay-per-click. Nevertheless, some advertisements have been reported by consumers in rather negative terms.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, some of the challenges that advertising agencies are experiencing in Pakistan are the underdevelopment of e-commerce, content that should match the society's stance, volatility of the economy, and high taxes. To sum up, it is essential to tackle the mentioned challenges in the country with proper policies and initiatives to reach the potential of online advertising completely. By providing a favorable ecosystem for e-commerce, ensuring customers' trust, and having reasonable taxes for sales enterprises, the agency can successfully develop and support the Pakistan advertising market growth. The last decade has brought changes in the patterns of difficulty that extend the extent of such changes by the COVID-19 pandemic. This period has more focus on digital media in Pakistan and even enhanced the bond of individuals with these media. In this case, brands' approach to the pandemic through online shopping outlets is a classic example of the opportunities that have now come. On the one hand, the pandemic has extended the popularity of such freelancing areas as graphic design; on the other hand, it has raised awareness of a social problem connected with the negative effect of excessive media use on mental health. Therefore, one can identify some positive outcomes of COVID-19 in the sphere of digital media marketing but, at the same time, recognize that the overall set of effects is diverse and, in some ways, negative.

## **Recommendations**

Firstly, further research studies should aim at enlarging the sample size with a view of enhancing the extent of the generalization of the findings. This could mean reaching out to participants from various sources, backgrounds, or even from different demographics. A larger and more diverse sample would give a more balanced perception of the phenomenon under study. The second suggestion is to cease convenience sampling and opt for more scientific approaches like, for instance, random or stratified sampling. It will assist in reducing prejudice and enhancing the generalizability of the study by aiming at having an example that will depict the characteristics of the target population.

Third, it is recommended to do longitudinal research to describe changes and trends over some time. This would be useful in a study because this approach would enable researchers to capture the dynamism of the phenomenon and how the variables under study change over time.

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