The Impact of Social Media Advertising on Stimulating Purchasing Intent from the Audience's Perspective (Facebook and YouTube as a Case Study)

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Abstract

The researcher seeks in his study entitled (Advertising via social networking sites and their role in stimulating purchasing desire from the public's point of view (Facebook - YouTube as a model)) to determine the most important objectives to measure the extent to which social networking sites contribute to stimulating purchasing desire from the public's point of view and to identify the most important sites that the public follows via social networking sites to reach the goals that the research seeks to achieve by using the researcher's survey method and a random sample of the public exposed to those sites. To know the role of digital platforms, which are an integral part of citizens' daily lives, and a powerful tool for advertising and extrapolating information, especially in the field of promoting goods and services Because they have effective means to reach a wide and rapid audience, as they provide diverse opportunities for shopping through those social sites more effectively than traditional media, and this allows followers to interact with advertising content through comments, posts and reviews, which increases their connection to sales and promotion topics. In this context, these pages interact with their audience through various advertisements and different methods. In addition, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram allow viewers to share their opinions about the quality of the advertised materials and exchange views with others, which enhances their role in shaping a mental image. In this regard, the research reached a range of results, the most important of which are: The research proved the contribution of electronic advertisements via social networking sites to attracting users towards the goods and products displayed via Facebook and YouTube, which fulfills their purchasing desire. Most users of social networking sites also keep up with everything new in the advertisements displayed via these sites.

Keywords: Social Media, Advertising, Audience's, Facebook, YouTube.

Introduction

Advertising is considered an important and influential tool in various commercial activities. It serves as a means of communication that relies on influencing individuals or groups through the use of promotional and marketing tools to establish a connection between consumers and products. Advertising represents the method used by the seller to affect the buyer by applying a set of non-personal communication techniques to convey ideas and promote products and services. Thus, it serves as one of the most prominent means for delivering ideas and information about products or introducing people to various matters.

The form of advertisements has changed and evolved significantly over time, adapting to people's needs in different times and places. The mode of communication and the medium through which advertising messages are broadcast also vary depending on location, people, and preferences. As a result, advertising has witnessed rapid development with the emergence of many specialized advertising companies that have contributed to transforming the concept of advertising and introducing revolutionary changes. Modern advertising methods have been able to reach all targeted audiences and stimulate these audiences to enhance their purchasing power towards advertised products, catering to almost all areas of interest.

This research is divided into three chapters, following the scientific methodology for conducting research. The first chapter covers the methodological framework of the study, including the research methodology in detail. The second chapter presents the theoretical framework by defining the concept of advertising and its characteristics, concluding with the persuasive techniques in advertising, which play a crucial role in the preparation of advertisements and influencing consumers. The third chapter provides an analysis of the questionnaire distributed to a random sample of students from the University of Thi-Qar.

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Chapter One

Research Methodology

First: Research Problem

This research aims to monitor the impact of the audience's exposure to advertisements posted on social media platforms on their decision to purchase through these platforms. No advertising effort in society arises from a vacuum; rather, various forces control this process to ensure the advertisement garners attention and acceptance. The research also seeks to uncover a set of factors that influence this process. Consequently, the problem of the research becomes evident through the growing trend of companies producing and marketing goods and services to use social media as a tool to influence the purchasing desires of the public.

In light of the above, the research problem revolves around the following key questions:

- Monitoring the exposure of social media users to advertisements and its role in stimulating purchasing behavior through these platforms.
- Unveiling the level of attention and recall social media users have for these advertisements. The research also aims to examine the level of trust users place in social media advertisements and its relation to their purchasing behavior.
- What is the most significant age group that, when targeted, creates a mental image of the goods being promoted?

Second: Research Objectives

- To identify the effect of social media as a commercial advertising channel on purchasing behavior.
- To understand the impact of social media advertisements on purchasing decisions and to identify
 the most influential advertisements in the purchasing process.
- To explore the nature of advertisements preferred by the study participants on social media platforms.
- To determine the role of electronic advertisement features in influencing consumer behavior.

Third: Research Significance

The significance of this research lies in its focus on the study of consumer purchasing behavior and the importance of electronic advertising. It examines how advertisements stimulate consumers and the strategies they employ to influence purchasing decisions. The importance of the research also stems from the methods used by internet advertisements and their impact on purchasing behavior. Additionally, it addresses the significance of electronic advertisements, their appeal, acceptance, and influence on consumers, encouraging them to purchase products online. The developments in internet advertising are significant, especially in understanding how age groups are affected and driven to make purchasing decisions through advertisement presentations that form an appropriate mental image for these groups. Moreover, it explores how advertisements persuade and influence consumers through the goods and services offered and how they are presented in a manner suited to the mindset of audiences attracted to electronic advertisements.

Fourth: Research Methodology

The research adopts the survey method, constructing the theoretical framework of the project and reviewing relevant literature. This method is widely used and beneficial for studies like this, which rely on gathering the necessary data and information, followed by categorizing, analyzing, and interpreting them in line with the research objectives. Therefore, the researcher used a questionnaire as a tool to collect opinions from the sample about the impact of social media advertisements and their role in stimulating purchasing behavior, particularly focusing on the students' perspectives and their stance towards these advertisements.

Fifth: Research Tools

The research tools consisted of a questionnaire directed at students from the College of Media at the University of Thi-Qar. This questionnaire aimed to gather insights about the influence of social media advertisements on purchasing behavior from the audience's perspective.

Sixth: Research Sample

The research sample included 100 university students who responded to the questionnaire about the impact of social media advertisements and their role in encouraging purchasing behavior. The sample consisted of 60 male and 40 female students.

Seventh: Research Boundaries

Temporal Boundaries: The research was conducted from March to July 2024.

Subject Boundaries: The study focused on the effect of social media advertisements and their role in influencing purchasing behavior from the audience's perspective.

Spatial Boundaries: The research was confined to the College of Media at the University of Thi-Qar.

Eighth: Reasons for Choosing the Topic

The topic falls within our field of study and specialization, while also acknowledging that advertising, in general, has other dimensions depending on the field and type of study.

Advertising campaigns have expanded from television and billboards to radio and, more recently, to the internet, which has made it a phenomenon worthy of research.

Ninth: Previous Studies

Dalia Abdullah's Study (2014)

This study aimed to identify the factors that influence the Egyptian public's avoidance of Facebook advertisements. It was applied to a deliberate sample of 496 Facebook users from Cairo and Giza. The study was based on a model proposed by Cho and Cheon in 2004. Among the key findings:

Positive attitudes towards Facebook advertisements increase the likelihood of purchasing the advertised product.

Salwa Al-Awadli's Study (2012)

Salwa Al-Awadli's study sought to explore how marketers use social media and the extent to which they rely on it to support relationships between companies and the public. The study used a survey and case study method, applying it to six companies (Ford, Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Mobinil, Etisalat, and Vodafone). Key findings included:

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Companies use their Facebook pages to communicate with their target audience by leveraging interactivity, allowing individuals to post comments and inquiries, to which the company responds.

Some companies conducted electronic surveys to understand customer attitudes and opinions regarding advertisements.

These companies use Facebook to create a positive brand image and build a connection between consumers and the company's services. The results also revealed a positive relationship between the marketer's age and the time spent using social networks.

Marwa Mohi's Study (2013)

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between commercial advertisements on Facebook and the consumer behavior of university students. Through an analytical study of a sample of 134 Facebook advertisements and a field study involving a sample of 400 university students using the survey method, the study found:

Respondents' admiration for the advertisement and their belief in it, as well as the need for the product and its unavailability in nearby markets, were the most significant motivators for purchasing advertised products on Facebook.

Facebook advertisements greatly influence the purchasing decisions of the study's sample. Conversely, the lack of attention to advertisements, followed by the products' irrelevance to the respondents' interests, and a lack of trust in Facebook advertisements were the primary reasons for not purchasing products.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework

First: The Concept of Electronic Advertising

Advertising as a promotional activity on the internet has maintained its traditional concept, but at the same time, it has acquired a set of new communication features and technologies. These advancements have allowed it to penetrate the open global network, resulting in remarkable developments in its usage. Internet advertisements are now designed with a fresh perspective, moving away from traditional planning to allow the emergence of rich and concentrated content exchanged through interactive communication.

In the linguistic sense, advertising means making something known, promoting or publicly announcing something through one of the known methods of publicity common in various societies, there have been many definitions of the term "electronic advertising" formulated by those interested in and researching various fields of science. Some consider advertising to be the most important element of the promotional mix, particularly when it exploits marketing communication networks such as the internet, compared to other marketing communication tools. In the world of the internet, power has shifted from the sender to the receiver, who now decides whether or not to open the advertising message. This shift is due to the interactivity and diversity that make online advertising one of the most attractive and prevalent communication tools. Despite being different from traditional advertising, the essence and goal remain the same: to influence the audience and attempt to persuade them to make a specific decision or take a particular action.

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Characteristics of Advertising

Below, we outline the key characteristics of electronic advertising, which contribute to its effectiveness and speed in reaching the target audience. These characteristics help this type of advertisement gain prominence and influence:

Interactivity: This feature allows individuals to interact with and engage with different advertising websites to obtain more information. Clicking on the advertisement takes the individual on a journey exploring the product's features. Users can even test the product—if the advertisement is for software, for instance, individuals can request a download, test it, and purchase it immediately if satisfied.

Flexibility and Speed in Reaching the Audience

Internet advertisements are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This gives advertising companies exceptional control over monitoring, updating, and modifying their advertising campaigns daily, or even canceling them based on audience response. Moreover, consumers (users) can access product information and statistics anytime they wish, allowing them to compare similar products with complete convenience and speed.

Third: Functions of Advertising

Providing Information

Electronic advertising plays a crucial role in providing information. As production increases, leading to a surplus in supply over demand, and the variety of available goods expands, consumers face difficulties in choosing between products. However, technological advancements have enabled companies to offer a vast array of products and services, which consumers may find challenging to differentiate on their own.

Satisfaction:

Electronic advertising plays an essential role in marketing goods and services, particularly when products are similar in terms of characteristics. In such cases, electronic advertising provides a certain level of consumer satisfaction and gives the product or service a competitive advantage in the market.

Speed of Influence

As part of the electronic promotional mix, electronic advertising can be quickly and easily adjusted to address certain crises or problems, such as supply shortages. While it may take time to alter a product's size or reduce its price, electronic advertising remains a swift and effective tool for driving sales and influencing consumer preferences and trends.

Cost Efficiency

Electronic advertising is relatively low-cost. Various studies have indicated that electronic advertising expenses can constitute up to 25% of total marketing costs. This highlights the importance of effective planning for electronic advertising programs.

Crisis Management

Electronic advertising plays a significant role in addressing crises by educating consumers on how to use a product or service and where to find it.

In this way, the functions of electronic advertising are diverse, as are the persuasive elements that highlight the benefits and advantages individuals gain from engaging with it. Some of the most attractive and compelling phrases used in electronic advertisements include "You can become famous" or "You can

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acquire knowledge with a single click." These statements lend electronic advertising its persuasive and influential quality over individuals

Fourth: Persuasive Appeals in Advertising

The advertising message, in terms of its content, relies on what are known as incentives, desires, motivations, or persuasive appeals. Advertisers target consumers by appealing to their logic, emotions, or both. Specific types of persuasive appeals are used as follows:

The Need for Food and Drink:

This appeal is commonly used to promote food and beverage products and services.

Love of Economy and Gaining Value

Also known as the "price and value appeal," this focuses on providing the buyer with a return that exceeds the price paid. This can be achieved through discounts, attractive prices, contests, prizes, and giveaways.

Desire for Imitation

Often, consumers imitate celebrities, leading to advertisements that feature famous individuals using a product. For example, when a celebrity is shown drinking a specific beverage, it encourages consumers to associate the product with the celebrity when they consume the same item.

Desire for Possession and Ownership

This is one of the most important appeals, representing a fundamental instinct in humans.

Desire for Comfort and Minimal Effort

Advertisers use phrases and terms that emphasize consumer comfort and the minimal effort required, ensuring the product offers convenience.

Desire for Distinction and Showing Off:

This appeal focuses on the quality of the product itself and the prestige it will bring to the consumer who uses it.

Need for Health and Beauty:

This appeal is used to promote health-related and cosmetic products and services.

Fear Appeal and Need for Security:

Advertisements focus on the negative consequences of not using the product or service being promoted, tapping into the consumer's need for safety.

Parental Emotion (Motherhood and Fatherhood):

This psychological factor plays a significant role in creating persuasive messages for products and services related to children.

The Need to Attract Attention and Gain Admiration:

This appeal persuades consumers by suggesting that using the advertised product will make them the center of attention and earn the admiration of others, especially the opposite sex.

Third Chapter

Analysis of the Questionnaire

Analysis of Survey Results:

First: Personal Data

Table (1). Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	60	60%
Female	40	40%
Total	100	100%

A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to a random sample consisting of 60 male and 40 female students from the College of Media, University of Thi-Qar. Table (1) shows that the percentage of males was 60%, while females constituted 40%. This indicates a relatively balanced interest between genders in social media advertisements and their influence on purchasing behavior.

Table (2). Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	76	76%
Married	24	24%
Divorced	-	-
Total	100	100%

Table (2) shows that the majority of the sample was single, representing 76%, while 24% were married, with no individuals in the divorced category.

Table (3). Age Group

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18 - 25	97	97%
26 – 35	3	3%
36 – 45	-	0%
46 and above	-	0%
Total	100	100%

According to Table (3), the age group between 18 and 25 years was the highest, making up 97% of the surveyed sample. The 26 to 35-year age group represented 3%, while there were no respondents from the 36 to 45 and 46+ age groups.

Table (4). Department Distribution

Gender	Radio & TV	Journalism	Digital Media	Total
Male	26 (26%)	18 (18%)	16 (16%)	60
Female	18 (18%)	14 (14%)	8 (8%)	40
Total	44 (44%)	32 (32%)	24 (24%)	100

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Table (4) indicates that the majority of the surveyed sample were from the Radio and TV Department (44%), followed by Journalism (32%), and Digital Media (24%). This suggests that the Radio and TV Department has more students compared to the other departments.

Table (5). Residential Distribution

Residence	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	89	89%
Rural	11	11%
Total	100	100%

Data from Table (5) show that 89% of the surveyed sample resides in urban areas, while only 11% come from rural areas. This indicates that most of the students are city dwellers.

Second: Scientific Questions

The questionnaire distributed to the random sample of students from the three departments of the College of Media included fourteen scientific questions.

Table (6). Do You Encounter Advertisements on Social Media?

Gender	Yes	No	Sometimes	Total
Male	48 (48%)	7 (7%)	5 (5%)	60
Female	28 (28%)	6 (6%)	6 (6%)	40
Total	76 (76%)	13 (13%)	11 (11%)	100

Table (6) shows that 76% of the surveyed sample are exposed to advertisements on social media, with males being more exposed (48%) compared to females (28%). This indicates that the target sample, being media students, is significantly exposed to social media advertisements.

Table No. (7). Do You Prefer to Purchase Products Advertised on the Internet?

Gender	Yes	No	Total
Males	38 (38%)	22 (22%)	60
Females	32 (32%)	8 (8%)	40
Total	70 (70%)	30 (30%)	100

Table (7) shows that 70% of the respondents expressed a preference for purchasing products advertised on the internet, while 30% did not show such a preference. Notably, the percentage of males who prefer online purchases (38%) exceeds that of females (32%). This suggests an increasing level of trust among the public in online advertisements, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table No. (8). Which Platforms Do You Prefer for Viewing Advertisements?

Gender	Facebook	YouTube	Total
Males	48 (48%)	12 (12%)	60
Females	22 (22%)	18 (18%)	40
Total	70 (70%)	30 (30%)	100

The results from Table (8) indicate that 70% of the respondents prefer viewing advertisements on Facebook, with a higher percentage of males (48%) compared to females (22%) using the platform. Meanwhile, only 30% of the respondents prefer YouTube for advertisements.

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Table No. (9). What Language Do You Prefer in Advertisements?

Gender	Standard Arabic	Foreign Language	Local Dialect	Total
Males	30 (30%)	3 (3%)	27 (27%)	60
Females	15 (15%)	3 (3%)	22 (22%)	40
Total	45 (45%)	6 (6%)	49 (49%)	100

According to Table (9), preferences between Standard Arabic and local dialects are quite close, though the latter holds a slight edge with 49%. Standard Arabic accounts for 45% of preferences, while only 6% prefer advertisements in a foreign language.

Table No. (10). Do Advertisements on Social Media Platforms (Facebook and Youtube) Encourage You to Purchase Advertised Products?

Gender	Yes	No	Sometimes	Total
Males	35 (35%)	11 (11%)	14 (14%)	60
Females	24 (24%)	3 (3%)	13 (13%)	40
Total	59 (59%)	14 (14%)	27 (27%)	100

Table (10) reveals that 59% of respondents are encouraged by advertisements on Facebook and YouTube to purchase advertised products, with males being more influenced (35%) than females (24%). A significant portion of the respondents (27%) indicated that they are only occasionally influenced by such advertisements.

Table No. (11): Do Advertisements on Facebook and Youtube Drive You to Consume Products Excessively?

Gender	No	Yes	Sometimes	Total
Males	28 (28%)	14 (14%)	18 (18%)	60
Females	12 (12%)	15 (15%)	13 (13%)	40
Total	40 (40%)	29 (29%)	31 (31%)	100

The results from Table (11) show that 40% of the respondents do not believe that advertisements drive them to excessive consumption, while 31% are occasionally influenced in this way, and 29% are driven to over-consumption by advertisements on Facebook and YouTube.

Table No. (12): Do Advertisements on Facebook and Youtube Encourage You to Desire Things You Don't Need?

Gender	Always	Sometimes	Occasionally	Total
Males	8 (8%)	42 (24%)	10 (10%)	60
Females	10 (10%)	25 (25%)	5 (5%)	40
Total	18 (18%)	67 (67%)	15 (15%)	100

According to Table (12), 67% of respondents say advertisements occasionally encourage them to desire things they don't need, while 18% are always influenced in this manner, and 15% are only sometimes affected.

Table No. (13). Do Facebook and Youtube Advertisements Sometimes Include Content That Offends Cultural or Religious Values?

Gender	No	Yes	Sometimes	Total	
Males	16 (16%)	18 (18%)	26 (26%)	60	
Females	12 (12%)	13 (13%)	15 (15%)	40	
Total	28 (28%)	31 (31%)	41 (41%)	100	

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Table (13) suggests that 41% of respondents feel that advertisements sometimes include content that offends cultural or religious values, while 31% affirm this happens often, and 28% believe it does not occur.

Table No. (14): Do You Think Facebook and Youtube Advertisements Contribute to Your Sense of Luxury and Enjoyment?

Gender	No	Yes	Sometimes	Total	
Males	18 (18%)	18 (18%)	24 (24%)	60	
Females	12 (12%)	21 (21%)	7 (7%)	40	
Total	30 (30%)	39 (39%)	31 (31%)	100	

Table (14) indicates that 39% of respondents agree that advertisements on Facebook and YouTube contribute to their sense of luxury and enjoyment, while 31% feel this happens occasionally, and 30% do not experience this effect at all.

Table No. (15): Do Facebook and Youtube Advertisements Help You Choose and Compare Between Products and Services?

Gender	Yes	No	Sometimes	Total
Males	40 (40%)	8 (8%)	12 (12%)	60
Females	20 (20%)	7 (7%)	13 (13%)	40
Total	60 (60%)	15 (15%)	25 (25%)	100

From Table (15), 60% of respondents believe that advertisements on Facebook and YouTube help them in choosing and comparing between products and services, with males (40%) more influenced than females (20%). A smaller percentage (25%) feel that advertisements only occasionally assist in this regard.

Table No. (16): If Multiple Products Are Available, Do You Prefer Purchasing the Products Advertised on These Platforms?

Gender	er Yes No		Sometimes	Total	
Males	24 (24%)	15 (15%)	21 (21%)	60	
Females	22 (22%)	6 (6%)	12 (12%)	40	
Total	46 (46%)	21 (21%)	33 (33%)	100	

Table (16) shows that 46% of respondents are inclined to purchase products advertised on social media platforms when multiple options are available. Additionally, 33% may occasionally consider doing so, while 21% have no such inclination.

Table No. (17). What is Your Opinion About Compulsory Advertisements That Appear on the Internet?

Gender	Good	Acceptable	Bad	Other	Total
Males	8 (8%)	23 (23%)	29 (29%)	-	60
Females	4 (4%)	26 (26%)	10 (10%)	-	40
Total	12 (12%)	49 (49%)	39 (39%)	-	100

From Table (17), it can be concluded that compulsory advertisements appearing on social media platforms are perceived as acceptable by 49% of the respondents. A significant portion (39%) considered them bad, while 12% rated them as good. No respondents provided an "other" opinion.

Table No. (18): What is Your Preferred Method for Viewing Advertisements?

Gender	Audio	Clip	with	Image	Representing	Edited	Video	Other	Total
		Image		Pr	oduct	C	lip		
Males	19 (19%	(n)		15 (15%)		26 (26%)		-	60
Females	21 (21%	(n)		10 (10%)		9 (9%)		-	40
Total	40 (40%	(n)		25 (25%)		35 (35%)		-	100

Table (18) shows that the preferred method for viewing advertisements is through an audio clip with an image, which accounted for 40% of the responses. Edited video clips were the second most preferred method, with 35%, followed by image-based advertisements representing the product at 25%.

Table No. (19): Do You Have the Desire to Visit the Advertisement to See What Is New, Or Do You Usually View Advertisements Incidentally?

Gender	Yes	No	Sometimes	Total
Males	29 (29%)	17 (17%)	14 (14%)	60
Females	18 (18%)	9 (9%)	13 (13%)	40
Total	47 (47%)	26 (26%)	27 (27%)	100

Table (19) shows that 47% of respondents express a desire to visit advertisements to explore new content, while 27% view advertisements occasionally, and 26% never actively seek out advertisements.

Research Conclusions

The results of the research indicate the following:

Exposure to Advertisements by Age and Gender: Individuals across all age groups in the sample are exposed to advertisements via social media platforms, though the degree of exposure varies depending on both age and gender.

Engagement with New Advertisements: Most social media users keep up with the latest advertisements displayed on these platforms.

Prevalence of Internet and Social Media Use: The highest percentages of both genders are frequent internet and social media users, often engaging with these platforms for extended periods. This suggests the ease of using these sites and their ability to attract users to the advertisements they feature.

Effectiveness of Digital Advertising: The research confirms that digital advertisements on social media, specifically Facebook and YouTube, effectively attract users towards the products and services being advertised, fulfilling their purchasing desires.

Preferred Advertisement Formats: The research shows that most individuals exposed to digital advertisements on social media prefer the format of an audio-visual clip that clearly represents the product or service. This method allows viewers to identify the product and its features more effectively.

Recommendations

Continuous Innovation and Creativity: It is essential to continuously seek innovation and creativity in the presentation of advertisements, considering all aspects of advertising strategies.

Focus on Content and Credibility: Advertisers should maintain constant focus on the content of their ads and ensure that they are highly credible, building trust with the audience.

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Encourage Social Media Users to Verify Information: Social media users should be encouraged to verify the information presented in advertisements regarding the products and services being promoted.

Provide Accurate Information: Companies should provide accurate and transparent information about their products and services in the content they post, which will increase user trust.

Adoption of Social Media in Business: Companies should adopt social media as an essential tool in their operations and focus their efforts on improving the effectiveness of their presence on these platforms.

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