Factors That Lead to the Attention of Advertisements Displayed on Social Media

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ABSTRACT

Background: There is an increased use of social media platform in today's marketing activities. This platform has become popular. Objective: Due to that, the main purpose of this study was to determine the factors that contribute to consumers' attention regarding advertisements presented on websites, particularly in the social media environment. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, a qualitative research method based on a document review was conducted. Results: The findings presented several factors that contribute to the attention of consumers towards displayed advertisements. The factors were namely: the orientation of advertisements on a webpage, the congruency effects between advertisements content and editorial content in a site and the design of advertisements. Conclusion: The findings of this research can serve as a guide to all stakeholders (designers, marketers and clients) involved in the development of advertisements in the social media platform.

INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a method of communication used by marketers to promote their products by forming consumer awareness towards product existence; and, at the same time, increase the effect of product performance (Barroso & Llobet, 2012). Accordingly, advertisements have become a major tool in disseminating product information to target consumers. Zigmond & Stipp (2010) stated that the main goal of advertisements was to primarily motivate consumers to take the next step based on the product information given. In this matter, advertisements are one of the most motivating factors that encourage consumers in purchasing promoted products. Consequently, the role of advertisements cannot be ruled out, as it has become a major contribution in stimulating marketing activities; an agent that assists in the attainment of desired goals.

However, issues regarding the avoidance of advertisements are becoming dominant factors that interfere in the achievement of desired marketing goals. For the record, the avoidance of advertisements refer to consumers' resistance and restriction of displayed advertisements (Duff & Faber, 2011). This occurrence prevents information from being distributed to consumers. Therefore, consumers will not be aware of certain products, and as a result, they will not be motivated to buy the marketed products. In addition, Schwaiger, Cannon & Numberger (2010) reported that online advertisements, which also refers to internet advertisements, were easy to avoid compared to printed advertisements. This phenomenon has a negative impact on online advertising, even though its use is increasingly popular among marketers today.

Apart from that, the clutter of advertisements further contributed to a negative impact on advertising. This situation refers to the amount of advertisements received by consumers at a certain time (Baek & Morimoto, 2012). In regards to the media in today’s marketing activities, it has enabled marketers to post their advertisements easily; this in turn, filled the media with so many advertisements. As a result, a situation was somehow created whereby consumers have either lost attention or are ignoring the advertisements displayed due to the high number of ads in an area (Duff & Faber, 2011).

Therefore, designers should consider attention factors to be their guidance when designing attractive advertisements. Generally, attracting attention is the first step in marketing activities; this was explained in the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model (Nor Khalidah & Yusniza, 2009). It is an important matter to design advertisements capable of attracting the eyes of consumers. Campbell, Pitt, Parent & Berthon (2011) also reported that advertisements that attract consumers’ attention were considered successful and effective. This clearly indicates that attractiveness has a significant impact on the effectiveness of advertisements. As a result,
this study examined the significant factors that should be considered by designers when designing advertisements in order to have high attention levels.

1. Methodology:
   This study sought to determine the factors that have a direct impact on consumers’ attention to advertisements displayed on the social media platform. Document review was the method used to attain the objectives of this study. The results gave an explicit understanding on how to cater to consumers’ attention to advertisements on websites; specifically on social media sites. Moreover, the outcomes of this study also functioned as an input for designers to design effective advertisements for the social media platform. A qualitative research method was conducted by reviewing past research documents to fulfil the objectives of this study. All the documents of previous studies in regards to internet advertising, advertising on social network and eye tracking research were analysed.

2. Results:
   a. Position of Advertisements:
      The position of an advertisement within a site produced a huge impact on consumers’ awareness. Placing an advertisement in the right position gave a positive effect on consumers’ attentiveness. Based on the findings of previous studies, ads that were placed in an F-shaped view area were more observed by consumers (Barreto, 2013). This proved that consumers have a tendency to ignore ads when they are placed outside certain zones. Additional findings regarding the placement of text advertisements in a site was contributed by Owens, Chaparro, & Palmer (2011), who stated that text advertisements which were placed within the content of a website were given more attention than advertisements placed at the top and side area of a website. This finding demonstrated that position, or location, of advertisements had a significant effect on consumers’ attention. As a result, designers should build a better understanding regarding the placement of ads within a site in order to attract the attention of consumers towards displayed advertisements.

   b. Congruency Effect:
      In relation to this issue, the congruency effect also had a certain influence on consumers’ attention to displayed advertisements. According to Janssens, De Pelsmacker, & Geuens (2012), full attention was given to advertisements which were congruent with webpage contents compared to advertisements that were incongruent to the contents. This asserted that the congruency effect increased the amount of views of displayed advertisements. Consumers tend to become more attentive and responsive to advertisements that were consistent to the content of the webpage. In addition, Hervet, Guerard, Tremblay & Chtourou (2011) argued that consumers’ attention towards ads was also influenced by the organisation of the advertisement's display, and also the advertisement's congruency between editorial content of a webpage. The study found that initial advertisements that appeared on the page received the attention of consumers only when it was congruent with the site's editorial content. This illustrated that apart from the congruency between advertisements and editorial content, the order of the ads also had an impact on consumers’ attention. Thus, the congruency effect cannot be ruled out since it contributes a certain significant effect to attracting consumers’ attention. Designers, and all teams involved in advertising management, should play their roles to plan and manage the content of advertisements to suit the editorial content of a webpage in order to optimise the congruency effect.

   c. Design Features:
      Apart from the factors discussed above, design features were another factor that required scrutiny. Features such as size, text, colour, etc. are constantly used in the development of advertisements. According to Rauschnabel, Praxmarer & Ivens (2012), design features such as the size of posting and the media elements (e.g., pictures) increased the liking of the brand posted in the social media. Liking the posted brand was a result of consumers’ awareness to the displayed advertisement. For consumers to develop an interest and attachment to a displayed advertisement, they must first notice the existence of the advertisement in the social media. Apart from this, texts (or words) were also considered important features in an advertisement design. Texts are normally used to deliver messages regarding the product to consumers. Based on the study conducted by (Ferreira et al., 2011), the use of words are helpful when attracting consumers’ attention to displayed advertisements. In this context, negative emotional words were found to attract more attention from consumers regarding advertisements. Additionally, pictures or images were reported to have an impact in attracting consumers’ eye (Jerome, Shan, & Khong, 2010). The use of this feature was said to be the most effective in capturing consumers’ attention to the promotional messages displayed. However, there were certain drawbacks when integrating words and images in the design of advertisements. Jerome et al., (2010) reported that when too many texts were used in an advertisement, it led to the heedlessness of the advertisement. Furthermore, high details of images increased the document’s size which, in turn, increased the downloading time (Pieters, Wedel & Batra, 2010).
3. Discussion:

The figure below displayed the results from the study conducted.

![Diagram of Attention Factors]

**Fig. 1: Attention Factors.**

Based on the analysed results, it was concluded that there were few factors that contributed to consumers’ observance to displayed advertisements. Factors such as the positioning of advertisements, the congruency effect and design features have led consumers to notice advertisements. Firstly, the position of advertisements referred to the placement of an advertisement on a webpage area. There are certain areas within a website that often become the point of focus; placing ads in such particular locations may enhance consumers’ attention to the posted advertisements. Recent studies have found that advertisements which were placed on the right side of a webpage will be noticed more than advertisements placed on the left side of a webpage (Barreto, 2013). Secondly, factors regarding the congruency effect also played a significant role on consumers’ consideration towards advertisements. Past studies found that consumers’ eyes were directed to advertisements that were congruent with the editorial content of a site (Janssens et al., 2012). Lastly, this study further examined the factors regarding design features, which had a significant impact on consumers’ observance. Features such as size, pictures, text, etc., are capable of directing consumers to view the displayed advertisements (Rauschnabel et al., 2012). However, other design features should be evaluated in order to conform to today’s social media. From this study, it was understood that certain factors tend to influence consumers to notice advertisements more than others. Consumers were attentive to advertisements that complied with the factors previously discussed; this will be a beneficial source of information for designers to apply in order to design advertisements that can attract more eyes and generate increased attention.

4. Conclusion:

This study investigated the possible factors that contribute to the increase of consumers viewing displayed advertisements. Since attention was the first matter that required scrutiny when designing an effective and successful advertisement, designers need to be aware of all the related factors that can increase consumers’ attention towards ads. Such factors would be the positioning of advertisements, the congruency effect and the design features. These fundamental factors may be used as a guide for designers to create advertisements that can catch the eye of consumers. The matter is of utmost importance, since attention is the first activity that will direct consumers’ eyes to the important information of marketed products. This will indirectly aid in the resolving of problems related to online advertising; and at the same time, stimulate marketing activities.

REFERENCES


