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The Impact of Consumer Beliefs on Consumers' Attitude: A Social Media Advertising Perspective

ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of consumer beliefs on the consumers' attitude towards social media advertising. The rationale behind this research is to learn how different consumers' beliefs influence the consumers' attitudes towards social media advertising and the virtual audience in the development of their behaviors towards the online content available. In this study, the consumer belief is reflected by: infotainment, intrusiveness and integrity. Data is collected through an online survey developed in Google Docs. The target population comprises of 350 college and university level students. Data are analyzed through multiple regression technique using the SPSS tool. Results show that infotainment and integrity have a significant positive impact on consumer attitudes while intrusiveness has no significant impact on the consumer's attitudes. The results are discussed and implications for the management practice and policy-makers are made.

Keywords: *Social Media Advertising, Consumer Beliefs, Attitudes, Infotainment, Intrusiveness, Integrity.*

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Introduction

The recent expansions in the field of internet-based technologies have generated a far-reaching impact on the psycho-demographic & socio-economic nature of businesses, the content generated and the engagement of participants on the internet. The new jargon named 'Social Media' has received an overwhelming acceptance since the day of its inception. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define it as a group of internet based applications that have emerged from the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, serving as a medium for the formation and interchange of User Generated Content (UGC).

A leading social media platform is Facebook with more than a billion monthly active users (Statista, 2016). YouTube estimates a billion monthly active users with over a 4 billion videos watched a day (Hub Spot & Social Bakers, 2016). Twitter has a customer base of 320 million monthly active users with around 500 million Tweets sent per day. WhatsApp and Instagram have an active user-base of 900 million and 400 million respectively (Social Bakers, 2016). Instagram's active consumer base has crossed both Twitter and Pinterest, recording more than 80 million photos and 3.5 billion posts per day. Moreover, LinkedIn (100 million), Snap Chat (200 million) and Google+ (400 million) active users are also well recognized social media platforms (Mawhinney, 2017). Google, the search engine giant approximately earns US\$ 20 Billion a year from advertising. This is much greater than the prime time revenues of the renowned channel networks of NBC, CBS, ABC and FOX combined (Social Bakers, 2016). It is expected that the digital ad spending would effortlessly

surpass the TV ad spending by 2017 due to an ever increasing consumer base on a daily basis (eMarketer, 2016).

Despite the massive and incredibly increasing customer base of these businesses, some critical questions remain unexplored. For example, it is less known as to what determines the attitude of the online users towards social media. Social media has become perhaps the most popular mode of communication in the past few years, especially among the youth. Research work on social networking advertising (SNA) not only needs to be conceptually evaluated but empirically tested. Knoll (2015), for example, identifies seven emerging research areas for social media advertising research, and from amongst the seven themes, the top two are: Use of advertising in social media and, the consumers' attitudes towards and exposure to advertising. Studies on social media and online advertising in general show that the dimension, consumers' attitude towards social media advertising (CATSMA), is an essential determinant of the social media effectiveness (Chu, Kamal, & Kim, 2013; Ducoffe, 1996; Ducoffe & Curlo, 2000; Pollay & Mittal, 1993). Consumers with positive attitudes towards advertising show a favorable response to the advertisements, while those with negative attitudes show an unfavorable response (Pollay & Mittal, 1993; Wang & Sun, 2010a, 2010b; Wolin, Korgaonkar, & Lund, 2002). Based on this notion, we examine the role of consumers' beliefs based on their attitudes towards advertising and through a social media lens extend the existing debate on consumers' beliefs and attitudes.

In the subsequent sections, we provide an overview of the literature on consumer's attitudes and their belief constructs. This is followed by conceptual development, where we link the concepts, develop hypotheses and finally

present a theoretical model for empirical testing. We then present the methodology section followed by the results section. Finally, discussion & implications, limitations & future directions and conclusions from the study are presented.

Literature Review

Consumer Attitudes:

A belief is a descriptive thought that a person holds about something. An attitude is a person's enduring favorable or unfavorable emotional feeling, evaluation and action tendencies (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Reviewing it, the beliefs that are generated about social media advertising highlight its attributes like social media advertising is informative. Adding on to it, attitudes towards social media advertising are evaluations that reflect its perceived benefits (e.g. In general, I consider social media advertising to be a good thing). This viewpoint has also been effectively applied by Chi (2011); Jung, Shim, and Jin (2015) Wang and Sun (2010a) for online and social media advertising.

Over the period of time, as consumer awareness rose up, Shavitt, Lowrey, and Haefner (1998) reported that public attitudes towards advertising turned out to be highly favorable. The successive works of Mehta (2000); Pyun and James (2011) Jin and Lutz (2013) seconded the favorable consumer attitudes towards different forms and mediums of advertising. The study of social media advertising is still in the iterative stage (Taylor, Lewin, & Strutton, 2011) and there is a dire need of a sound pragmatic investigation into consumer attitudes towards social media advertising (Knoll, 2015; Nevarez & Torres, 2015).

Consumer Beliefs

They are a measure of a consumer's cognitions and attributes about a specific entity or a brand (Solomon, 2014). The attitudes emerge from beliefs and they exist at different cognitive levels. In this manner, a consumer's belief about advertising is an antecedent of his attitude towards advertising (Brackett & Carr, 2001; Ducoffe, 1996; Ducoffe & Curlo, 2000; Pollay & Mittal, 1993). The research study investigates three consumer beliefs i.e. Infotainment, Intrusiveness & Integrity showing an impact on consumer attitudes towards social media advertising. It extends the model proposed by Pollay and Mittal (1993) and tests it within the social media advertising context. So, applying Pollay & Mittal's (1993) framework, we investigate the relationship between consumer beliefs and their underlying attitudes. These three constructs have been considered as the most significant and robust dimensions in evaluating consumer's motives, values and attitudes (Eighmey & McCord, 1998; Liu, Sinkovics, Pezderka, & Haghirian, 2012; Luo & Xueming, 2002; Okazaki, 2004).

Infotainment: Product Information describes the role of advertising as an information reflector and a significant indicator in portraying market efficiencies (Wang & Sun, 2010a). In simple terms, product information is a personal belief factor which shapes consumer opinions about the instructive, educational and informative character of advertising (Pollay & Mittal, 1993; Wang & Sun, 2010a). The higher degree of product information depicted through advertising in general also results in enriched and effective decision making (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1992; Pyun & James, 2011). Additionally, most of the other researchers also

validated advertising as a valuable source of product information and found it as a major predictor of forming attitudes towards advertising (Korgaonkar, Karson, & Akaah, 1997; Pollay & Mittal, 1993; Schlosser, Shavitt, & Kanfer, 1999). It was also considered as a significant consumer value, motive and a belief construct when evaluating consumer attitudes towards online and social media advertising (Dao, Le, Cheng, & Chen, 2014; Jung et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2011; Wolin et al., 2002).

The second portion of Infotainment referred to as Entertainment states advertising becoming a source of pleasure or joy upon exposure. Also referred to as hedonism, there is no doubt that advertisements can touch our emotions, look quite appealing, portray funny events, fosters likeability and be amusing and nostalgic by nature (Greyser & Bauer, 1966; Pollay & Mittal, 1993; Pyun & James, 2011). Entertainment has been studied as a belief construct in evaluating consumer attitudes towards advertising in general (Greyser & Bauer, 1966; Shavitt et al., 1998), television advertising (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1992; Mittal, 1994), sports advertising (Pyun & James, 2011) and online advertising (Wang & Sun, 2010a; Wolin et al., 2002). Moreover, it has also been tested as a significant belief, motive and a value construct when examining consumer attitudes towards social networking advertising (Dao et al., 2014; Jung et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2011). Based on the extant literature evaluated, it is hypothesized that:

H1: *There is a significant positive relationship between infotainment and consumers' attitude towards social media advertising (CATSMA)*

Invasiveness:

This belief dimension was referred to as annoyance/ irritation (Bauer & Greyser, 1968). They classically defined annoying ads as “...ads that irritate you. They may be annoying because of what they say or how they say it. They may annoy you because they are around so much, or because of when and where they appear. They may be other reasons for ads to be annoying – the main thing is that they bother or irritate you”(Bauer & Greyser, 1968, p. 182).

A series of empirical research studies have been conducted to test the impact of invasiveness as a belief construct influencing consumer attitudes towards advertising in general. The findings have clearly reflected that the existence of invasiveness has been one of the significant predictors of negative attitudes towards advertising (Aaker & Bruzzone, 1981, 1985; Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1992; Ducoffe, 1996; James & Kover, 1992; Mittal, 1994). Further Pyun and James (2011) has considered irritation as an important belief dimension with a negative impact on consumer attitudes towards sports advertising. In the concrete research studies conducted by Jung et al. (2015) and Taylor et al. (2011) on social networking advertising (SNA), an add was considered invasive when it interfered with their goal oriented behavior and resulted in negative attitudes and perceptions. Under the light of the academic literature discussed above, the proposed study hypothesizes that:

H2: *There is a significant negative relationship between invasiveness and consumer’s attitude towards social media advertising (CATSMA)*

Integrity:

Advertising in general can also be perceived to be intentionally misleading, confusing, trivial or lacking adequate information. This belief dimension has been derived as *Falsity/No Sense* (Pollay & Mittal, 1993; Pyun & James, 2011) and *Credibility* (Wang & Sun, 2010a) in the renowned research literature. The notion that advertising can turn out to be deceptive and skeptical has been studied in relation to the attitudes that develop towards various media tools and in general too (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1992; Greyser & Bauer, 1966; Larkin, 1977; Pollay & Mittal, 1993; Schlosser et al., 1999; Shavitt et al., 1998). On the other hand, Pollay and Mittal (1993) also found a highly significant and negative relationship between Falsity/No Sense and attitude towards advertising in general ($b = -0.15$ for collegians and $b = -0.36$ for householders).

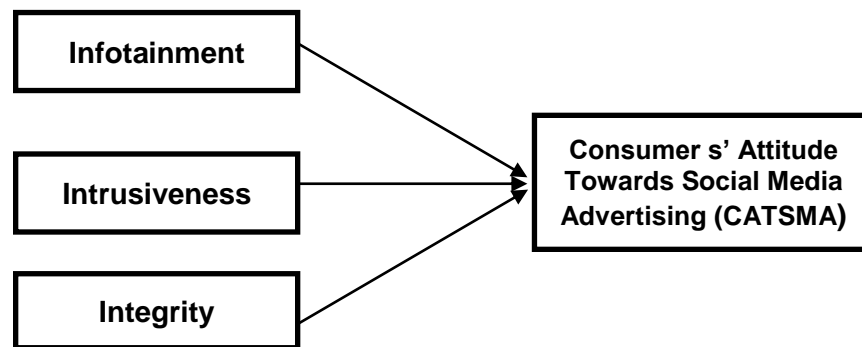
Later in the research study conducted by Wang and Sun (2010a), Credibility was observed as the second most important predictor in defining consumer attitudes towards online advertising. Generally, when people regard online advertising as trustworthy, they tend to develop more positive attitudes towards it. This result is again consistent with Wolin et al. (2002), that Falsity/No Sense has a negative impact on attitude towards online advertising. The element of relevance and credibility in an advertisement is considered vital when consumers have to make decisions on the basis of uncertain information (Okazaki, Katsukura, & Nishiyama, 2007). Based on the literature evaluated, the study hypothesis that:

H3: *There is a significant positive relationship between credibility and consumers' attitude towards social media advertising (CATSMA).*

Theoretical Framework

There are three independent variables and one dependent variable acknowledged in this current research. The study intends to test the effect of each of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The three independent variables include infotainment, intrusiveness and integrity. The dependent variable is consumers' attitude towards social media advertising (CATSMA).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Methodology

Participants: The research study focuses on the 'Young Adults' (aged:18-29) and the 'Mid Age Segment' (aged: 30-44) of Pakistan. Pakistan engulfs a unique socio-cultural composition with two-third of its population residing below the age of 30 (Euromonitor, 2016).College and University students were deemed to be an appropriate sample for the study with students of Masters and Doctoral studies having mature ages. These young consumers depict greater energy, effort and motivation towards social media (Brosdahl &

Carpenter, 2011). They are also considered amidst the first generations to have truly tasted the digital environment and the role of information technology has encircled their personal and working lives (Wesner & Miller, 2008). Earlier studies on social media have also taken university/college students as their sampling frame when evaluating consumer behavior (Dao et al., 2014; Jung, Shim, Jin, & Khang, 2016; Nevarez & Torres, 2015).

Sampling Technique: The study has applied Convenience Sampling in selecting its target subjects/audience. Under the umbrella of this sampling technique, Kardes (1996) and Lucas (2003) have argued that taking college students would not result in biased results if the theory tested is based on human psychology (Polly and Mittal's model is based on consumer beliefs and attitudes). Earlier, Berkowitz and Donnerstein (1982) also propagated that it would also add to the generalizability of the outcomes for the non-student populations. Moreover, convenience sampling has been considered as a highly popular sampling technique when evaluating consumer responses towards social media advertising (Lee & Hong, 2016; Muk, Chung, & Kim, 2014; Zhang & Mao, 2016).

Questionnaire Design: A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaires were distributed electronically (emailed) in the major colleges & universities of the capital city, named Bahria College, Bahria University, Comsats Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) and OPF College. Google Docs was used as a tool for

the online survey. A total of 340 students took part and 288 usable responses were employed in the data analysis after eliminating the incomplete responses.

Measures: The scale for the first construct (infotainment) was adopted from the work of Ducoffe (1996)&Liu et al. (2012). The scale for the second construct (intrusiveness) was adopted from the research works of Liu et al. (2012)&Taylor et al. (2011).The third construct (Integrity) was measured through the scales adopted fromDao et al. (2014), Mackenzie and Lutz (1989)&Taylor et al. (2011). The fourth construct i.e. consumers' attitude towards social media advertising (CATSMA) was measured from the scales adopted from (Nevarez & Torres, 2015) &Taylor et al. (2011). All the constructs were measured on a 5-Point Likert scale ranging from (1= 'Strongly Disagree' and 5= 'Strongly Agree'). The 5-Point Likert scale has been extensively applied by Wang and Sun (2010a), Taylor et al. (2011) and Chu, Kamal, & Kim (2013)in evaluating consumer responses towards online and social media advertising.

Data Analysis: The proposed study would incorporate Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) v. 23 to perform thorough reliability tests for the associated items of measurement. To evaluate the hypothesized relationships amidst the constructs, Pearson correlation analysis has been carried out accompanied by a multi-collinearity test. Finally, a Regression analysis has also been undertaken for confirming the extent of effects of infotainment, intrusiveness and

integrity on consumer attitudes towards social media advertising (CATSMA).

Results

Respondent's profiling: The table below shows the number of male respondents were 138 out of 288 which makes it 47.9% of the total sample size. The number of female respondents was 150 out of 288, which makes it 52.1% of the overall sample size.

Table 1: Gender Wise Distribution of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	138	47.9	47.9	47.9
	Female	150	52.1	52.1	100.0
	Total	288	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Age Wise Distribution of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24	100	34.7	34.7	34.7
	25-34	87	30.2	30.2	64.9
	35-44	53	18.4	18.4	83.3
	45-54	48	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	288	100.0	100.0	

In Table 2, breakdown of the respondent's age has been provided. Representation of the respondents age from 18-24 is 34.7%, from 25-34 is 30.2%, from 35-44 is 18.4% and from 45-54 is 16.7%. The table clearly depicts that majority of the

questionnaires filled represents our target sampling frame i.e. from 18-44 years of age (83.3%).

Table 3: Education Wise Distribution

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
School/College	94	32.6	32.6	32.6
Undergraduate	91	31.6	31.6	64.2
Postgraduate	103	35.8	35.8	100.0
Total	288	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows the breakdown of the respondent's education. The school/college students represent 32.6% of the sample size, undergraduate students represent 31.6% and post-graduate students represent 35.8% of the sample size.

Reliability Analysis: The Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal reliability and consistency between multiple scale measurements in a construct. According to literature, DeVellis (2016) propagated that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient should be higher than 0.7 to be reliable and acceptable. On the other hand, Malhotra (2008) suggested that the cut of criteria for rejection of a construct should be 0.6 or lower. Table 4 below shows the alpha values of our constructs' reliability.

Table 4: Cronbach's Reliability Summary

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Infotainment	0.882	11
Intrusiveness	0.765	6
Integrity	0.778	5
CATSMA	0.823	5

Table 4 shows that the alpha values of the four major constructs; Infotainment (0.882), Intrusiveness (0.765), Integrity (0.778) and Consumer Attitudes (0.823) are above the minimum criteria of 0.7. Hence, it is concluded with confidence that internal consistency is present between the measurements of our variables.

Correlation Analysis: In general terms, correlation describes the measure of relationship between the two variables with a range of +1 to -1. A value of -1 stands for perfect negative correlation, +1 stands for perfect positive correlation while 0 stands for no relationship between the variables (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Evans (1996) discussed that a weak correlation is present when the correlation coefficient between the independent and dependent variable ranges between 0.01 to 0.39. Moreover, a strong correlation is present when the coefficient value resides between 0.60 to 0.99 while a moderate correlation is present between the value of 0.40 to 0.59.

Table 5: Pearson's Correlation Summary

		Infotainment	Intrusiveness	Integrity	CATSMA
Infotainment	Pearson Correlation	1	-.281**	.367**	.637**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
Intrusiveness	Pearson Correlation	-.281**	1	-.219**	-.225**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
Integrity	Pearson Correlation	.367**	-.219**	1	.569**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
CATSMA	Pearson Correlation	.637**	-.225**	.569**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

b. List wise N=287

Referring to Table 5, Infotainment (r= 0.637) has a strong positive correlation and Integrity (r=0.569) has a moderate

correlation with consumer attitudes. On the other hand, Intrusiveness ($r = -0.225$) has a negative correlation with the dependent variable of the study. To address the problem of multi-collinearity, the r -values between the two independent factors should not be greater than 0.80 (Garson, 2012). This is totally non-existent in the study's context as shown by the Table 5. To further validate it, a multi-collinearity test has also been applied shown by Table 6 below.

Table 6: Collinearity Diagnostics

Model		Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
1	Infotainment	.823	1.215
	Intrusiveness	.905	1.105
	Integrity	.851	1.176

Dependent Variable: CATSMA

Referring to Table 6, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) reflects the value of the inflation in the standard errors associated with a specific beta weight that is due to the presence of multi-collinearity. The value of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) should ideally be less than 3 and the Tolerance should be closer to the value of one i.e. greater than 0.1 (Hair Jr, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2010; Kennedy, 2003; Pan & Jackson, 2008). Our results thus show that there is no presence of multi-collinearity between the independent variables of the research study.

Regression Analysis: It is applied to evaluate the relationship between one dependent variable and one or

more independent variables. It actually measures the change in the dependent variable which in this case is 'CATSMA', caused by a change in the independent variables comprising of infotainment, intrusiveness and integrity.

Table 7: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.732 ^a	.535	.530	.55767

a. Predictors: (Constant), Integrity, Intrusiveness, Infotainment

The table 7 depicts the values of R, R square and adjusted R square. The value of R shows that how well the predictors compute the final outcome. The R value is 0.732 showing that 73% of the variation in the dependent variable has been caused by the independent variable. The value of R square (a more accurate prediction of multiple linear regression) shows that 53.5% of the variation in the dependent variable has been due to the presence of the study's three predictor variables. The value of R square is adjusted to attain how much of the target sample justifies the whole population. The adjusted R square value shows that 53% of the variation in CATSMA is due to the presence of infotainment, intrusiveness and integrity.

Table 8: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	101.405	3	33.802	108.689	.000 ^b
	Residual	88.011	283	.311		
	Total	189.416	286			

a. Dependent Variable: CATSMA

b. Predictors: (Constant), Integrity, Intrusiveness, Infotainment

The F statistic in Table 8 shows the overall significance of our model and depicts that the regression equation fits the data well. In the research study undertaken, the value of the F statistic is 33.802 while the p value is less than 0.05, which reflects that the results are highly significant(Field, 2013). This means that the independent variables have truly represented the dependent variable and the regression equation is statistically significant. Moreover, a one-way ANOVA analysis was also undertaken to confirm if there are any statistical significant differences in attitudes towards social media advertising between different age groups. Both parametric and non-parametric tests were applied along the four dimensions of the age groups and no significant differences were found. This clearly indicates that advertising over the social media has a significant impact on all age groups.

Table 9: Coefficient Application

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized T Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	-.024	.271		.928
1 Infotainment	.583	.053	.494	.000
Intrusiveness	-.001	.046	-.001	.975
Integrity	.400	.045	.387	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CATSMA

Table 9 shows that the independent constructs of Infotainment ($p=0.000$, $t=11.071$, $b= 0.583$) and Integrity ($p= 0.000$, $t= 8.807$, $b=0.400$) possess a significant influence on consumer attitudes as their p values and t values are below 0.05 and above 2.00 respectively(Field, 2013). The beta values also show that their relationship with the dependent variable is positive. On the other hand, integrity ($p=0.975$, $t=-0.31$, $b=-0.01$) shows a statistically insignificant relationship with consumer attitudes towards social media advertising. Its p value is greater than 0.05 and its t value is less than the threshold of 2.00.

Discussion & Implications

Social media is an area of growing interest for the academics, uses and policy makers. Our results show that advertising through social media has a significant impact on the consumers’ beliefs and their attitudes. Our findings are consistent with the earlier studies (for example Dao et al., 2014; Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Schultz & Peltier, 2013) regarding social media advertising.

Our results provide further support to former studies. For example, the internal consistency of the items was similar with the study of Liu et al. (2012) on the role of consumer beliefs on attitudes towards mobile advertising. The relationships of infotainment, integrity, and invasiveness with regards to CATMSA show consistency with Dao et al. (2014), Muk et al. (2014) and Taylor et al. (2011). Regarding significance of the hypothesized relationships, both infotainment and integrity had a significant positive impact on CATMSA showing similar results as Chu et al. (2013). However, with intrusiveness, the non-significant impact on consumer attitudes contrasts the findings of Taylor et al. (2011). This adds to the contribution of our study within the Pakistani context. It shows that the element of invasiveness/irritation does not interfere with the goal oriented behaviors of the young & mid age Pakistani consumers and does not result in negative attitudes towards social media advertising.

In the light of practical insights of the research study, it would benefit the multinationals which have plans to advertise and sell their products through the social media in Pakistan. It would also assist the policy makers and advertising managers to understand the emerging needs, dynamic desires and volatile expectations of the young consumers which reside within traditional and plural cultures. Moreover, the businesses would also be able to approach their target segment through personalized communications on the social media which will not only be cost effective but more sustainable.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

As like all other researches, this study is not free from limitation. As the sample drawn is based on convenience, there are always issues pertaining to the generalizations one

is making from the sample to the population under study. Moreover, consumer behavior over the social media is still in an iterative phase, a cross-sectional design is not enough to capture the true change or evolution. For attaining greater precision, a longitudinal study may provide better results into emerging consumer responses and their perceptions online. Futuristic studies also need to incorporate context based variables, such as aesthetics & functionality of virtual communities and user based variables, such as need for creativity & self-efficacy to attain useful insights about a virtual user. Additional moderating variables could also be added like age and gender to attain demographic comparisons within the sampling frame.

Conclusion

This paper examined the role of consumers' beliefs and attitudes by extending the model of Pollay and Mittal (1993) within the context of social media advertising. Specifically, it evaluated the role of infotainment, intrusiveness and integrity on consumers' attitude towards social media advertising. The results showed that both infotainment and integrity had a significant influence on consumers' attitude while intrusiveness depicted statistically insignificant results. The research contributions thus reflected that the young and middle age segment of Pakistan seeks greater information, better entertainment and enhanced credibility on the social networking sites. Moreover, intrusiveness is not a significant predictor of their attitudes and does not inhibit their goal oriented behaviors. This research paper provides strategic guidelines to the policy makers and marketing managers over how they can build engaging promotional content through social media.

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