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The Impact of Facebook Advertising on Engagement Behavior: A Conceptual Paper

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ABSTRACT

In today's digital age, Facebook has become an integral part of our daily lives, with millions of users worldwide spending a significant amount of time on Facebook. With the rise of Facebook usage, advertising has also become increasingly prevalent on this platform. This study aims to expand the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to investigate the effect of Facebook ads on engagement behavior. Although the (TPB) is considered a robust method for studying actual behavior, it has been criticized for its limited explanatory power and failure to account for rational and emotional processes that influence human behavior. The conceptual model proposed in this study will contribute to understanding how Facebook ads influence engagement behavior in deferent contexts.

Keywords: Facebook advertising, engagement behavior, subjective norms, behavioral intention, and perceived behavioral control.

أثر الإعلانات على فيسبوك على سلوك المشاركة: ورقة مفاهيمية

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ملخص البحث:

في العصر الرقمي الحالي، أصبح فيسبوك جزءاً لا يتجزأ من حياتنا اليومية، حيث يقضي ملايين المستخدمين حول العالم قدراً كبيراً من الوقت على فيسبوك. مع تزايد استخدام فيسبوك، أصبح الإعلان أيضاً منتشرًا بشكل متزايد على هذه المنصة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تطوير نظرية السلوك المخطط (TPB) لدراسة تأثير إعلانات فيسبوك على سلوك المشاركة. على الرغم من أن (TPB) تُعتبر طريقة قوية لدراسة السلوك الفعلي، إلا أنه تعرضت لانتقادات كبيرة بسبب قوته التفسيرية المحدودة وفشلها في تفسير العمليات العقلانية والعاطفية التي تؤثر على السلوك البشري. سيساهم النموذج المفاهيمي المقترح في هذه الدراسة على فهم كيفية تأثير إعلانات فيسبوك على سلوك المشاركة في سياقات مختلفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: إعلانات فيسبوك، سلوك المشاركة، المعايير الذاتية، النية السلوكية، التحكم السلوكي المتصور.

1. Introduction

In today's digital age, Facebook has become an integral part of our daily lives, with millions of users worldwide spending a significant amount of time on Facebook. With the rise of Facebook usage, advertising has also become increasingly prevalent on this platform. However, there is limited research on how Facebook ads affect user engagement with these ads (Eng, Sun, & Myrick, 2023;

Ma, Yin, Hipel, Li, & He, 2023; Wallace & Buil, 2023; Zadeh, Farhang, Zolfagharian, & Hofacker, 2023).

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by developing a conceptual model that examines the impact of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, emotion, and behavioral intention on different types of engagement behavior, such as likes, comments, and shares. By understanding how these engagement behaviors are influenced by consumer attitudes and behaviors, marketers can optimize their Facebook ad campaigns for better results (Ajzen, 2020; Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020; Erul, Woosnam, & McIntosh, 2020; Zadeh et al., 2023; Wallace & Buil, 2023).

The literature indicates that current theoretical models of consumer behavior, such as the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985; Malik, Mahmood, & Islam, 2023; Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020; Ma et al., 2023) and IT adoption, such as the technology acceptance mode (TAM) (Davis, 1989) and the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) (Komiak and Benbasat, 2006) primarily focus on reasoning responses, such as beliefs and attitudes, while neglecting the role of emotions (Ajzen, 2011; Ajzen, 2020; Shen, Lee, Cheung, & Chen, 2010; Wallace & Buil, 2023). However, studies have shown that both rational and affective components are important in predicting consumer behavior (Elwalda, Lü, & Ali, 2016; Habibi, Riady, Samed Al-Adwan, & Awni Albelbisi, 2023; Komiak & Benbasat, 2006). A successful communication strategy combines cognitive and affective judgments for positive outcomes (Fang et al., 2014; Guerreiro, Rita, & Trigueiros, 2015; Sharifi, 2014).

Against this background, this study aims to develop a model that incorporates both rational and emotional judgments to examine the effects of Facebook ads on engagement behavior. Research has shown that emotions can heavily influence our decision-making process (Erul et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2023; Wallace & Buil, 2023).

By incorporating emotions into the theory of planned behavior, we can better understand how they impact an individual's intentions

and ultimately their behavior. While the theory of planned behavior focuses on rational decision-making, emotions can often override these intentions (Ajzen, 2020; Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020). By considering emotions, we can better understand why individuals may not always act in accordance with their stated intentions (Erul et al., 2020; Ma et al., 2023).

The subsequent sections of the paper will show literature review, hypothesis development, conceptual framework, and conclusion.

2. Literature review

2.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The conceptual model for this study is an extension of *The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)*. According to the TPB (Ajzen, 1985), the proximal determinant of a behavior is a behavioral intention, which is determined by attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control, as shown in Figure 1. Attitude refers to a person's overall evaluations of performing the behavior (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020). A subjective norm refers to one's perceptions that most individuals who are important to him/her consider he or she should or should not perform the behavior. Perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform a behavior and the presence of factors that may facilitate or hinder the behavior (Ajzen, 1985).

In recent years, a number of researchers have used the Theory of Planned Behavior to examine social media platforms (Eng et al., 2023; Habibi et al., 2023; Ma et al., 2023; Wallace & Buil, 2023; Zadeh et al., 2023).

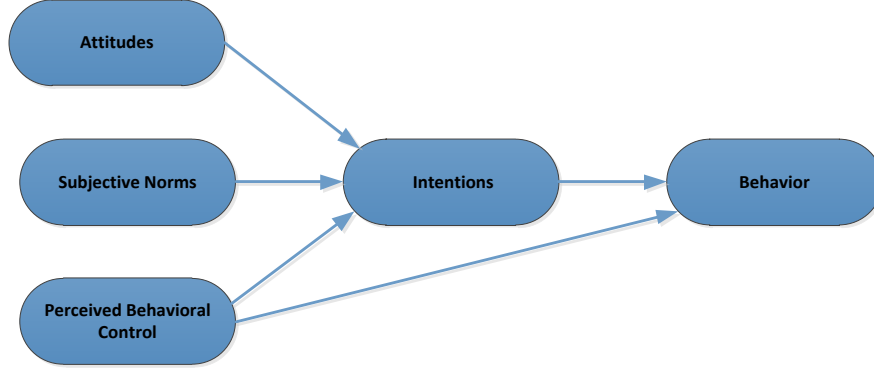


Figure 1: The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

While the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) has been a popular method for studying behavior, it has been criticized for its limited explanatory power and failure to account for cognitive and affective processes that influence human behavior. In this regard, Ajzen (2011, p. 1115) suggested that the (TPB) is “too ‘rational,’ not taking sufficient account of cognitive and affective processes, that are known to bias human judgments and behavior”. Ajzen (2011, p. 1116) continues: “Perhaps the most frequently mentioned biasing factors ostensibly neglected in the TPB are affect and emotions”.

Recently, Ajzen (2020), Ma et al, (2023), Malik et al. (2023), Shen et al. (2010) and Wallace & Buil (2023) have highlighted the neglect of emotions in the TPB, while Komiak and Benbasat (2006) and Habibi et al. (2023) argue that current IT acceptance models do not pay enough attention to emotions. In response to these criticisms, the conceptual framework proposed in this study (see **Figure 2**) is proposed as a more comprehensive model for investigating the impact of Facebook advertising on engagement behavior.

The proposed model integrates attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and emotion to better understand how behavioral intention and engagement behavior with Facebook ads are shaped (Zadeh et al., 2023). The model suggests that emotion has a direct effect on attitude, behavioral intention, and engagement behavior with Facebook ads. Moreover, emotion is proposed to

influence attitude and behavioral intention, which in turn influences engagement behavior with Facebook ads.

Erul et al. (2020) have recently suggested that emotions can serve as powerful motivators for behavior. By incorporating emotions into the theory of planned behavior (TPB), we can better understand how they may enhance or detract from an individual's motivation to act on their intentions (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020). The theory of planned behavior acknowledges the influence of social factors on an individual's intentions and behavior. Emotions play a crucial role in social interactions and relationships, and by including them in the theory, we can better understand how they influence social behaviors.

It is also important to consider individual differences in emotional responses to ads. Different people may have varying emotional reactions to the same ad based on their personal preferences, experiences, and values. Therefore, understanding the relationship between emotion and behavioral intention is crucial for advertisers to create effective and engaging Facebook ads that resonate with their target audience (Ajzen, 2020; Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020; Ma et al., 2023). By leveraging emotional triggers and understanding how they influence behavior, advertisers can optimize their ad content to maximize engagement and ultimately achieve their marketing objectives (Erul et al., 2020; Wallace & Buil, 2023; Zadeh et al., 2023).

2.2 Attitude

According to the (TPB), attitude towards a behavior is one of the key determinants of an individual's intention to engage in that behavior (Ajzen, 2020). In the context of Facebook advertising, attitude towards Facebook ads refers to an individual's overall evaluation or perception of these ads.

The recent study of Malik et al. (2023) has argued that attitude towards Facebook ads can be influenced by various factors, such as the content, relevance, and personalization of the ads. If individuals perceive Facebook ads positively, they are more likely to have a

favorable attitude towards them. On the other hand, if individuals perceive Facebook ads negatively (e.g., as intrusive or irrelevant), their attitude towards these ads will be less favorable (Ma et al., 2023).

The TPB suggests that attitude towards a behavior influences an individual's behavioral intention, which in turn affects their actual behavior (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020). In this case, behavioral intention refers to an individual's willingness or motivation to engage with Facebook advertising. If individuals have a positive attitude towards Facebook ads, they are more likely to develop a stronger intention to engage with these ads.

In summary, according to the Theory of Planned Behavior, a positive attitude towards Facebook ads is likely to lead to a stronger intention to engage with these ads, as suggested by Zadeh et al. (2023). This suggests the following relationship between attitude toward Facebook ads and behavioral intention:

H 1: *Attitudes toward Facebook ads has a positive impact on behavioral intention.*

2.3 subjective norms

It is important to note that attitude is not the only factor influencing behavioral intention. Other factors such as subjective norms (perceived social pressure) also play a role in determining whether individuals have the intention to engage with these ads, as pointed out by Ajzen & Schmidt (2020) and Wallace & Buil (2023).

According to the (TPB), subjective norms refer to an individual's perception of social pressure to perform or not perform a certain behavior (Ajzen, 2020; Ma et al., 2023). In the context of engaging with Facebook ads, subjective norms would involve the influence of friends, family, and peers on an individual's decision to interact with ads on the platform.

The theory of planned behavior posits that subjective norms have a direct impact on an individual's behavioral intention, which is their readiness to engage in a specific behavior. In the case of Facebook ads, if an individual perceives that their social circle values

and encourages interaction with ads, they are more likely to have a positive behavioral intention towards engaging with those ads (Malik et al., 2023).

In other words, if an individual believes that their friends and family approve of interacting with Facebook ads, they are more likely to intend to engage with those ads themselves. On the other hand, if they perceive social pressure against engaging with ads on Facebook, their behavioral intention may be negatively affected (Zadeh et al., 2023).

Therefore, according to the theory of planned behavior, subjective norms play a significant role in shaping an individual's behavioral intention to engage with Facebook ads. This highlights the importance of social influences in determining consumer behavior towards advertising on social media platforms. Overall, these results indicate that there is an association between subjective norms and behavioral intention. Therefore the following relationship is proposed:

H 2: *Subjective Norms have a positive impact on behavioral intention.*

2.4 perceived behavioral control

As stated by the (TPB), perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform a behavior and the presence of factors that may facilitate or hinder the behavior (Ajzen, 2020). In the context of engaging with Facebook ads, perceived behavioral control would involve factors such as the individual's confidence in their ability to interact with ads on the platform, as well as external factors such as time constraints or technical barriers.

The theory posits that perceived behavioral control influences an individual's behavioral intention, which is their readiness and willingness to engage in a particular behavior (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020; Ma et al., 2023). In the case of Facebook ads, individuals with higher levels of perceived behavioral control are more likely to have a positive intention to engage with ads on the platform.

In other words, if an individual feels confident in their ability to navigate and interact with Facebook ads, they are more likely to

have a stronger intention to engage with those ads. On the other hand, if they perceive barriers or obstacles that make it difficult for them to engage with Facebook ads, their intention to do so may be weaker.

Overall, according to the theory of planned behavior, perceived behavioral control plays a significant role in shaping an individual's intention to engage with Facebook ads (Malik et al., 2023). This suggests that efforts to increase individuals' confidence and abilities in interacting with Facebook ads could lead to higher levels of engagement with those advertisements, as argued by Zhou, Loi, Tan, Lo, & Lim (2022). These studies suggest:

H 3: *Perceived behavioral control has a positive impact on behavioral intention.*

The theory of planned behavior also suggests that perceived behavioral control directly influences actual behavior, meaning that individuals who believe they have high control over engaging with Facebook ads are more likely to do so compared to those who perceive low control. This suggests that individuals who feel confident in their ability to engage with Facebook ads are more likely to actually do so.

However, it is important to note that perceived behavioral control is just one of the factors influencing behavior according to the theory of planned behavior. Attitudes and subjective norms also play a role in shaping behavior (Zadeh et al., 2023). Therefore, while perceived behavioral control may have a direct impact on engagement with Facebook ads, it is also influenced by other factors such as personal attitudes and social influences.

In summary, according to the theory of planned behavior, perceived behavioral control plays a significant role in shaping actual engagement behavior with Facebook ads (Ajzen, 2020). Individuals who feel confident in their ability to interact with these ads are more likely to do so compared to those who perceive low control (Zhou et al., 2022). Therefore, this study suggests this relationship between perceived behavioral control and engagement behavior with Facebook ads:

H 4: *Perceived behavioral control has a positive impact on engagement behavior*

2.5 Emotion

It is important to note that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are not the only factors that influence behavioral intention. Other factors such as emotion also play a role in determining individuals' behavioral intentions (Erul et al., 2020; Ma et al., 2023).

In the context of the current study, emotion plays a significant role in shaping an individual's behavioral intention to engage with Facebook ads, as proposed by Malik et al. (2023). Positive emotions such as happiness, excitement, or curiosity can lead to a higher likelihood of engaging with ads, as they may be more appealing and persuasive. On the other hand, negative emotions such as anger or frustration may lead to avoidance or disengagement from ads. These results further support the results of Sandberg and Conner (2008) who found that the inclusion of emotions in the prediction equation leads to a dramatic increase in behavioral intentions. Previous research (e.g. Eroglu et al., 2003) has also reported that emotional judgments on online stimuli are positively related to behavioral intentions.

Additionally, the emotional appeal of an ad can influence the individual's attitude and perception towards the brand or product being advertised, which in turn can impact their intention to engage with the ad (Ma et al., 2023; Wallace & Buil, 2023).

Emotion can also have a significant impact on actual behavior, including engagement with Facebook ads. When individuals experience positive emotions such as happiness, excitement, or joy, they are more likely to engage with ads by clicking, liking, commenting, or sharing (Erul et al., 2020). On the other hand, negative emotions such as anger, frustration, or sadness may lead to disengagement or even avoidance of ads.

Additionally, the specific emotional content of an ad can also influence engagement behavior. Ads that evoke strong emotions and resonate with the audience are more likely to drive engagement

compared to those that fail to elicit any emotional response. Ma et al. (2023) have recently pointed out that actual behavior is determined by emotional states.

In the context of Facebook ads, the proposed model of this study suggests the following hypotheses regarding the effect of emotion on user responses and behavior:

H 5: *Emotion has a positive impact on behavioral intention*

H 6: *Emotion has a positive impact on attitude*

H 7: *Emotion has a positive impact on engagement behavior*

2.6 Behavioral intention and engagement behavior

As mentioned earlier, behavioral intention refers to an individual's willingness and readiness to engage with Facebook ads. This can be influenced by various factors such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude towards the ad, and subjective norms (Ojedokun, Henschel, Arant, & Boehnke, 2022).

Engagement behavior, on the other hand, refers to the actual actions taken by individuals in response to Facebook ads, such as clicking on the ad, liking or sharing it, commenting on it, or making a purchase.

The relationship between these two concepts is proposed in many research studies (Ma et al., 2023; Zadeh et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2022). If individuals have a strong intention to engage with Facebook ads (e.g., they find the ad useful and easy to interact with), they are more likely to exhibit engagement behaviors. On the other hand, if their intention is weak or negative (e.g., they perceive the ad as irrelevant or intrusive), they are less likely to engage with the ad.

In summary, behavioral intention plays a crucial role in shaping engagement behavior with Facebook ads (Zhou et al., 2022). Marketers and advertisers need to understand and influence users' intentions in order to effectively drive engagement and achieve their advertising goals. This suggests:

Hypothesis 8: *Behavioral intention has a positive impact on engagement behavior*

2.7 Hypothesis summary

H 1: Attitudes toward Facebook ads has a positive impact on behavioral intention.

H 2: Subjective Norms have a positive impact on behavioral intention.

H 3: Perceived behavioral control has a positive impact on behavioral intention.

H 4: Perceived behavioral control has a positive impact on engagement behavior

H 5: Emotion has a positive impact on behavioral intention

H 6: Emotion has a positive impact on attitude

H 7: Emotion has a positive impact on engagement behavior

H 8: Behavioral intention has a positive impact on engagement behavior

2.8 Conceptual framework

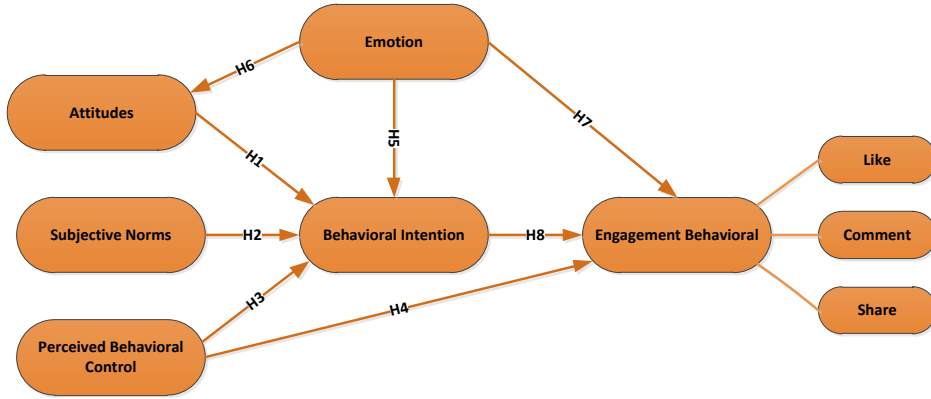


Figure 1: Research framework

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study develops a conceptual model that extends the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in order to examine the impact of Facebook ads on engagement behavior. The proposed model integrates attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and emotion to better understand how behavioral intention and engagement behavior with Facebook ads are shaped.

Humans are emotional beings, and our emotions shape our experiences and interactions with the world around us. By adding emotion to the theory of planned behavior, we can create a more comprehensive understanding of human decision-making and behavior.

The study adds to our understanding by showing that online behavioral intentions are influenced not only by cognitive factors like beliefs and attitudes, but also by affective feelings such as pleasure and arousal. The study suggests that emotional states caused by Facebook ads can be a significant predictor of behavioral intentions, in addition to cognitive responses.

The proposed model support the extension of the theory of planned behavior to include social media advertising as a factor influencing user behavior. The results suggest that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control all play a role in shaping engagement behavior in response to Facebook ads. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of considering emotional factors when examining the impact of social media advertising on user behavior. Overall, this research contributes to our understanding of how Facebook ads influence user engagement and provides valuable insights for marketers and advertisers seeking to effectively target Libyan Facebook users. It adds to the theoretical understanding of the relationship between advertising and user engagement in the context of social media platforms.

By examining engagement behavior, such as likes, comments, and shares, in response to Facebook ads, the study sheds light on how users interact with advertisements on social media (Charoensereechai, Nurittamont, Phayaphrom, & Siripipatthanakul, 2022). It provides insights into user motivations and preferences when engaging with ads, which can be valuable for marketers and advertisers.

The research contributes to understanding the effectiveness of Facebook ads in driving user engagement. By analyzing engagement metrics, it helps identify which types of ads are more likely to

generate higher levels of interaction from users, thus informing advertisers about effective strategies for maximizing engagement.

The proposed model of this study can guide advertisers in designing more effective Facebook ad campaigns. By understanding which ad characteristics or content elements are more likely to drive engagement behavior, marketers can optimize their ad creative and targeting strategies to increase user interaction.

The study's insights can help advertisers improve their return on investment (ROI) by focusing on ad formats or content those generate higher levels of engagement. This knowledge can assist in allocating resources effectively and optimizing campaign performance.

Understanding how users engage with Facebook ads can also contribute to enhancing user experience on the platform. Advertisers can use these insights to create more relevant and engaging ad content that aligns with users' preferences, thereby improving overall satisfaction with advertisements displayed on Facebook.

Overall, this study provides both theoretical advancements in understanding advertising effects on engagement behavior and practical implications for advertisers aiming to optimize their Facebook ad campaigns and improve user experiences.

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