

Social Media Advertising: The Role of the Social Media Platform and the Advertised Brand in Attitude Formation and Purchase Intention

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Abstract: Social media provide not only platforms for individual users for personal communication, but also serve as media for the dissemination of promotional messages. Recently, the role of social media platforms as earned media has been in focus, but paid advertising still plays a significant role in this respect. This study seeks to deepen the understanding of consumer behavior in this context by addressing consumer attitude towards social media advertising on two levels, i.e., general attitude towards advertising on a social media platform and specific attitude towards an individual advertisement on the social media platform. The study proposes and empirically tests a research model that shows a significant impact of platform enjoyment on general attitude towards advertising as well as brand familiarity as an antecedent of specific attitude towards an advertisement on the platform. Further, a significant impact of both levels of attitude on purchase intention could be shown. The findings stress the importance of a clear conceptualization of consumer attitude on different levels and highlight the relevance of paid advertising in social media.

1 INTRODUCTION


Social media have evolved from their initial idea of enabling socializing and sharing content with others to presenting interactive outlets for businesses and consumers alike. Platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, or Twitter have not only transformed the way Internet users are communicating amongst each other but also how marketing and advertising messages can effectively be spread among highly relevant target groups. The impact social media have within the realm of consumer behavior ranges from emphasizing the power of word-of-mouth to strengthening business-to-consumer relationships. A survey conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers' (2017) in which over 24,000 participants from 6 continents and 29 territories were analyzed, showed that 39 percent of the participants state that social networks provide their main inspiration for purchases. This highlights the reach and effectiveness potentials of contemporary social media marketing.

There are now over 50 million small businesses using their own Facebook pages to connect with

individual platform users and over 4 million of those businesses pay for advertising on the platform (Chaykowski, 2016). A study by DigitasLBi (2016) found that 52 percent of online consumers were influenced by Facebook to make online and offline purchases. Social media have been identified as an influential new element within the marketing promotion mix (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

In this setting, having timely knowledge about specific factors that influence purchase intention triggered by social media advertising is needed to better understand and predict consumer behavior on social media. Even if individual platforms may undergo their life cycles and show constant or even declining user numbers, social media advertising is expected to continue its role as a key pillar in modern Internet marketing.

Especially within the context of paid advertising in social media, there are several indications of relevant conceptualizations of key variables that received little attention in research so far. In particular, there is evidence from related domains in two issues (Mehta, 2000; Celebi, 2015; Lukka and James, 2014): First, there is an interplay between social media platforms as the advertising medium and

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the advertised product or brand. Second, consumers' simultaneous perception of the advertising medium and the individual advertisement suggests the existence of consumer attitude on different levels, especially on the level of general attitude towards advertising in the respective medium and specific attitude towards the individual advertisement on this medium. Both aspects have only partly been investigated in the context of social media advertising. In order to gain a deeper understanding of this issue, the study at hand pursues the following goals.

First, this study seeks to understand consumers' attitude towards advertising on social media by investigating consumer attitudes on different levels, i.e., on the level of the social media platform and the individual advertised product or brand. Research has investigated consumer attitudes on different levels, i.e., more general media-specific as well as individual brand-specific attitudes. Second, the study intends to examine how different factors that are relevant based on marketing and information systems research influence attitudes related to social media advertising. Third, the study aims to predict whether the impact of the attitude in social media advertising on different levels shows varying impacts on a key variable in consumer behavior research, i.e., purchase intention. Hence, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do specific influencing factors impact consumers' attitude within social media advertising on different levels?
2. How do consumer attitudes within social media on different levels impact purchase intention?

For this purpose, the study at hand develops and empirically tests a research framework in this context. Data collection is based on an online survey among Austrian social media users. In doing so, the study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the drivers of effectiveness of social media advertising by identifying and evaluating the impact of platform and advertisers' brand-specific antecedents as well as the in-depth examination of consumer attitudes on different levels.

The paper is organized as follows: The following section two provides a literature review on social media advertising and the formation of consumer attitudes. In section three, the proposed research model and hypotheses are elaborated and presented. The research methodology is detailed in section four, followed by the presentation of the analysis results obtained by PLS data analysis in section five. Section six discusses research and managerial implications of the study.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social Media Advertising

Social media serve as Internet-based and communication-exchange networks that allow users to communicate with a large number of other people simultaneously. This communication is not limited to the private realm but also includes commercially relevant communication such as online word-of-mouth on products and companies. Hence, social media impact consumer-to-consumer communication but, as a new hybrid element in the promotion mix, also largely influences company-to-consumer communication (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Social media communication in dimensions of content, timing, and frequency largely occurs outside the direct control of marketers. This significantly limits marketers' control over the content disseminated through social media, but simultaneously largely increases the reach of messages spread across such platforms. Hence, shaping consumer discussions and impressions on social media platforms need to be coordinated with companies' overall mission, message strategy, and performance goals. More specifically, it is important to integrate social media into companies' promotional marketing mix by applying networking platforms, blogs, or social media tools in order to engage customers with the companies' advertisements, products, and services (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

Social media marketing can be used for online marketing in three ways: as owned, paid, and earned media (Burcher, 2012). Whereas owned media are applied in the form of a corporate presence on the social media platform (e.g., a Facebook page or Instagram business account), paid and earned media are achieving a higher reach among users who do not actively visit the owned social media presence. Paid media is applied by marketers which pay other companies to provide a space to disseminate promotional content for reaching their audience (Burcher, 2012; Strauss and Frost, 2016). Examples are display advertisements that appear on webpages, paid search entries on search engines, or paid advertisements and sponsored posts in social media. The third category is earned media. In this category, promotional content is not controlled by the marketer, but Internet users who disseminate the content in question. Earned media includes worth of mouth, comments and shares, ratings, and generally any content generated by people online, to mention some (Strauss and Frost, 2016).

Serving the purpose of socializing, social media can be used by companies for their brands to connect with potential customers. Social media marketing helps brands generating greater exposure to customers, increasing product traffic, building new business partnerships, raising search engine rankings, generating lead generation efforts, selling more products and services, and reducing overall marketing expenses (Neti, 2011).

Several studies point at the relevance of social media as an earned medium by demonstrating the role of user-generated content in social media (e.g., Lee et al., 2018; Yoon et al. 2018). Within the context of Facebook, research shows that user-generated content, i.e., user comments on a brand's social media fan page, influences purchasing behavior to the same extent as solely marketer-generated content. Further, the more consumers are engaged in social media, the more likely they are to spend money on the promoted brand's products or services (Goh et al., 2013). An exploratory study on the role of trust in social media revealed that users are more willing to engage with marketer-created content if the promoted brand or product is recommended by their trusted friends. Within this context, a trust hierarchy exists – recommendations from real-life friends enjoy the highest degree of trust, followed by recommendations from users who are only known from the Internet, but not in person. The lowest level of trust is attributed to recommendations on the brand's website generated by individuals who are unknown to the users (Harris and Dennis, 2011).

2.2 Drivers of Purchase Intention based on Social Media Advertising

Commercial messages and promotional content play a crucial role in the content created and disseminated on social media. A study on 15 specific activities on social media shows that all kinds of social media activities, i.e., information processing, entertainment activities, and social connection, can be related to consumers' perception of products. Within information processing, such activities entail retrieval of product information, collection of factual information, sharing information and experiences, acquiring knowledge from user-generated content etc. Entertainment activities include relaxation or escape activities, following other consumer's discussions, self-expression, managing one's self-image activities, etc. Social connection activities contain sharing of content with others, experiencing new issues, feelings of belonging and bonding, or being up-to-date concerning events and happenings.

All of the activities identified in the study are often revolving around the ideas of consumption and consumer input so that companies need to design and adapt their social media marketing strategies accordingly (Heinonen, 2011).

Attitude towards the social media platform plays a relevant role in purchasing behavior. Users' attitude towards using a social media platform as a tool to make purchases is driven by several factors, i.e., usefulness perception of recommendations and suggestions (made either by the marketer or other platform users), users' perception of platform enjoyment when searching for information on products and brands, and users' perceived ease of use of the platform. Among those factors, perceived platform enjoyment has a direct impact on purchase intention. As a result, the social media platform has the ability to motivate users to obtain product information. The more users like the network they find advertisements on the more likely they are to purchase the items that are advertised there (Pietro and Pantano, 2012). In the light of an increasing role of customer empowerment and privacy protection (e.g., as strengthened by the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation), research shows that need for new friends on social media, need for social self-portrayal, but also need for data privacy increase social media usage intensity and the acceptance of personalized social media advertisements (Wirtz et. al., 2017).

Research on purchasing behavior related to social media shows that advertising value plays a key role (Hamouda, 2018). Factors such as interactivity, perceived relevance, hedonic motivation, performance expectancy, and informativeness are significant drivers of purchase intention based on social media advertising (Alalwan, 2018). Research on the role of recommendations in social media shows that social media previews of products can stimulate actual online purchases. In this context, consumers prefer to purchase either very high-priced or very low-priced items as well as generally social media platforms that operate on a quick time schedule to make purchases (Forbes and Vespoli, 2013).

The influence of behavioral attitudes towards social media platforms can not only influence attitudes towards advertised content on the platform but also shows an impact on purchase intention. Within the context of Facebook, a survey-based study shows that advertising has a positive attitudinal influence on purchase intention and actual purchases amongst Millennials. Within this context, advertising on Facebook shows the largest impact on users' intention to purchase if they spend two or more hours

at a time on the platform. The larger exposure gives the users more time to interact with advertisements on the platform, hence there are more opportunities to form positive attitudes towards the advertisements and ultimately increase willingness to purchase the advertised products or services (Duffett, 2015).

Another key driver of purchase intention on social media is brand awareness, conceptualized as how strongly a brand is present in consumers' minds (Hutter et al., 2013). The more users are engaged with the marketer's brand, the more likely they are to make repeat purchases from that brand. Further, the higher users' awareness, the more they are willing to communicate this awareness with others. In contrast, dissatisfaction or annoyance with a brand negatively impacts purchase intention on social media platforms (Hutter et al., 2013).

2.3 General versus Specific Attitudes towards Advertising on Social Media

The effectiveness of advertising is strongly associated with consumer attitudes. Since advertisements are always bound to the media they appear in, consumer attitudes toward the medium influence attitudes towards individual advertisements on this medium.

Attitude towards social media is particularly driven by factors that are known from information systems research. Key drivers are perceived ease of platform use, usefulness, enjoyment, social influence, and drama. Ease of use is the degree to which a user perceives the platform to be free from effort on his/her part. Usefulness denotes the degree of which the platform improves certain tasks for the user. Platform enjoyment relates to the affective expression of joy and entertainment on social media. Social influence relates to the perception of engagement of users with others via the platform. Finally, drama summarizes the extent to which users evaluate social media postings to be spectacular. Among these factors and unlike in other findings on attitudes towards information systems, platform enjoyment shows the largest impact on attitude (Curran and Lennon, 2011).

Within a more specific context, also a distinction between consumer attitudes towards advertising on the medium in general as well as individual advertisements has to be made (Mehta, 2000). Such attitudes can be positively or negatively influenced by factors surrounding the medium or the advertisement and finally result in an increase or decrease of willingness to purchase.

Research in the context of offline print media shows the paramount role of this understanding of attitude. Survey participants who were exposed to magazine advertisements content expressed positive (e.g., feeling of being kept up-to-date by ads) and negative (e.g., mistrust about truthfulness of claims made in ads, annoyance) attitudes towards advertising on the medium in question. Individual effectiveness measures on advertisements, such as intrusiveness, recall, or persuasion, are related to these attitudes (Mehta, 2000).

These effects could also be shown in research on online advertising. Contrasting attitude towards advertising on the Internet with attitude towards advertising on a specific social media platform reveals that both are connected and can provide users with a sense of belonging and an interpersonal utility, turning users' perception of advertisements on the social media platform more positive (Celebi, 2015).

On an even more specific level, research on drivers of engagement has shown that users' engagement with a social medium drives engagement with advertising on this medium. This is due to the specific experience users make on different social media (Voorveld et al., 2018). There is also an evidence that attitudes towards advertising on a social media platform in general are associated with attitudes towards individual advertisements on this platform.

Consumers can be largely divided into three groups in respect of their overall attitude towards advertising on social media (Lukka and James, 2014): individuals who are clearly negative about social media advertising, individuals who are neutral, and individuals who show positive attitudes towards social media advertisements and their likelihood to engage with them.

Besides these general attitudes, specific perceptions of individual advertisements are distinguished. First, perceived reasonableness of an advertisement refers to how an ad is understood by users. This variable generally influences individuals' evaluation of advertisements (Haberland and Dacin, 1992). Second, perceived disruptiveness of an advertisement denotes the degree to which an ad is seen as distracting from the intended usage of the platform. Disruptiveness has turned out to have little impact on the overall attitude towards social media ads (Lukka and James, 2014). On the other hand, several studies show that a related construct, intrusiveness, does negatively impact attitude towards the respective individual advertisement (Lin et al, 2002; Mehta, 2000, Haberland and Dacin, 1992). Third, there is perceived personalization of an

ad that impacts attitude towards the advertisement but also the general attitude towards advertising on the social media platform. Lastly, also the familiarity with the marketing companies or brands is associated with the formation of general attitude towards social media platform advertising (Lukka and James, 2014). The latter finding is consistent with insights into the role of brand awareness for the formation of attitudes towards online advertisements (Ha and Perks, 2005).

3 RESEARCH MODEL

The proposed research model investigates antecedents of purchasing behavior on the basis of advertising on social media platforms and particularly addresses attitudes towards social media advertising in general as well as specific attitude towards an individual advertisement. Figure 1 displays the research model as well as the hypotheses.

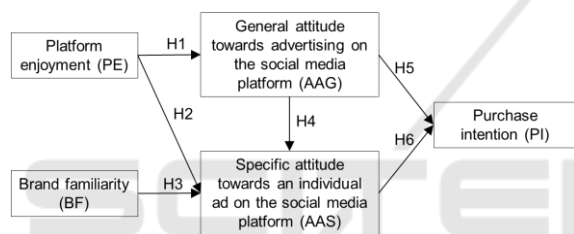


Figure 1: Research model.

Following the notion of Lukka and James (2014), Celebi (2015), and Duffett (2015), we distinguish between two attitudinal constructs: Attitude towards advertisements on the social media platform in general (AAG) and specific attitude towards an individual advertisement on the social media platform (AAS). Overall attitude towards advertising can be described as “a learned predisposition to respond in the consistently favorable or unfavorable manner to advertising in general” (Lutz, 1985). On the other hand, we define attitude towards the specific ad as the users’ predisposition towards one individual advertisement that is displayed on the particular social media platform.

Drawing on the findings obtained by Curran and Lennon (2011) and Pietro and Pantano (2012) we consider the role of perceived platform enjoyment. Users’ experience of enjoyment of social media platforms can show a significant impact on attitude towards stimuli shown on the platform (Curran and Lennon, 2011). The more enjoyable a platform is to the users, the more likely they are to appreciate advertising on this platform (Pietro and Pantano,

2012). Hence it can be assumed that platform enjoyment has a positive influence on the two forms of attitude relating to social media advertising, i.e., general attitude towards advertising on the platform and specific attitude towards the shown advertisement. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: Perceived platform enjoyment positively impacts general attitude towards advertisements on the social media platform.

H2: Perceived platform enjoyment positively impacts specific attitude towards the individual advertisement on the social media platform.

As research on social media advertising has shown repeatedly, users’ relation with the advertised brand plays a key role in attitude formation (Lukka and James, 2014). High brand familiarity can increase the positive experience with the brand and also trust in it, (Ha and Perks, 2005), ultimately positively affecting attitude. Since brand familiarity is specifically addressing the advertised brand, we hypothesize a positive impact of this factor on the specific attitude towards the individual advertisement, but not on general attitude towards advertisements on the social media platform.

H3: Brand familiarity positively impacts specific attitude towards the individual advertisement on the social media platform.

Research that identified the distinction between general attitude towards advertising on a medium and specific attitude towards an individual advertisement (e.g., Mehta, 2000; Celebi, 2015; Lukka and James, 2014) has shown that these two constructs are, although different, related to each other. Hence, we propose that there is also a relationship between these two variables. Concluding logically from the temporal sequence we propose that this relationship comes in a form that the more general construct, general attitude towards advertising on the medium, impacts the specific attitude towards the individual ad and therefore hypothesize:

H4: General attitude towards advertisements on the social media platform has a positive impact on specific attitude towards the individual advertisement on the social media platform.

The entire premise of the marketing mix, including the element of social media marketing (Mangold and Faulds, 2009) is ultimately influencing consumer behavior in a way that the advertised product is purchased. Following the widespread theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen, 1989), we contend (1) that purchase intention is a strong antecedent and therefore an appropriate proxy for actual purchasing behavior and (2) that both forms

of attitude show a considerable impact on purchase intention. This impact has also been shown in the context of social media (Duffet, 2015; Yang, 2012). We therefore suggest the following hypotheses:

H5: General attitude towards advertisements on the social media platform has a positive impact on purchase intention.

H6: Specific attitude towards the individual advertisement on the social media platform positively impacts purchase intention.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Instrument Development

The constructs that were applied in the study (PE, BF, AAG, AAS, PI) were all adapted from existing multi-item scales published in the literature (see Table 1). All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale with 1 representing “Strongly Disagree” and 5 representing “Strongly Agree”. To establish a clear context with a concrete scenario, respondents were requested to consider Facebook as the relevant social media platform. In addition, they were shown a screenshot of a real Facebook advertisement that was posted by a well-known consumer goods brand.

Perceived platform enjoyment was measured using three items adapted from Curran and Lennon (2011). Brand familiarity was captured using three items adapted from Ha and Perks (2005). General attitude towards advertisements on the social media platform was measured with two items from Mehta (2000). Specific attitude towards the individual advertisement on the social media platform was measured using two items adapted from Celebi (2015). Finally, purchase intention was measured with three items adapted from Duffett (2015).

4.2 Data Collection and Sample Description

The research model has been tested on data that has been collected through an online, self-administered, anonymous questionnaire implemented with the online survey tool Qualtrics. The geographic focus of the study is Austria and filter questions ensured that respondents were using Facebook as a social media platform as well as able to recognize the advertised brand used in the survey.

In total, 211 questionnaires were completed. After removal of 26 questionnaires that contained incomplete answers 185 questionnaires were used for further analysis. The sample shows the following

structure: The gender distribution in the sample is 46.7 percent males and 53.3 percent females. 70.7 percent are younger than 25 years, 9.4 percent are between 25 and 35 years, 5.5 percent are between 36 and 42 years, and 14.4 percent are 43 years or older. When it comes to highest completed level of education research participants mostly indicated high school (55.2 percent), followed by participants that completed a bachelor’s degree (26.5 percent), participants that completed a Master’s degree (11.1 percent), and participants that had completed education on the PhD level (3.3 percent). 3.9 percent of participants indicated “Other” as their highest level of completed education. In terms of experience with Facebook usage, 4.4 percent of participants indicated that they have been using Facebook for 3 years or less, 19.9 percent for 3 to 6 years, 60.2 percent for 6 to 9 years, and 15.5 percent for more than 9 years.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Measurement Model

The research model has been tested by means of a Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis. The used analysis software is SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2005). The test of the measurement model consists of analyzing the consistency (Cronbach’s Alpha), the convergent and the discriminant validity. Table 1 shows the Cronbach’s Alpha and AVE values of the variables.

Table 1: Reliability measures of variables.

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach’s Alpha	AVE
Platform enjoyment (PE)	3	.896	.826
Brand familiarity (BF)	3	.764	.678
General attitude towards advertising on the social media platform (AAG)	2	.739	.850
Specific attitude towards the individual ad on the social media platform (AAS)	2	.758	.805
Purchase intention (PI)	3	.910	.847

The Cronbach’s Alpha values all exceed the recommended value of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978).

Convergent validity is satisfactory if the average variance extracted (AVE) is higher than 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Also, this condition is met for all variables. Table 2 displays the numbers concerning discriminant validity.

Table 2: Correlation matrix.

	PE	BF	AAG	AAS	PI
PE	<i>.909</i>				
BF	.147	<i>.823</i>			
AAG	.502	.143	<i>.922</i>		
AAS	.189	.551	.293	<i>.897</i>	
PI	.029	.462	.441	.651	<i>.920</i>

In Table 2, the correlations of the variables are shown. The numbers on the diagonal in italics are the square roots of the AVE. For adequate discriminant validity, these values should exceed the interconstruct correlations. This condition is met for all constructs. Further, the loadings of the individual items on the corresponding variables are well above the recommended value of 0.5 for appropriate discriminant validity. They range between 0.809 and 0.936. Thus, overall the measurement model is highly satisfactory.

5.2 Hypotheses Tests

The test of the structural model comprises the path coefficients, the R-square values of dependent variables as well as the p-values. The p-values have been computed by bootstrapping with 100 cases and 500 samples. The R-square values are the following: .252 for AAG, .351 for AAS, and .493 for PI. Table 3 shows the results of the PLS analysis along with the p-values of the path coefficients.

Table 3: PLS analysis results.

Hypothesis	Hypothesized impact	Path coefficient	p-value
H1	PE -> AAG	.502	***
H2	PE -> AAS	.004	n.s.
H3	BF -> AAS	.520	***
H4	AAG -> AAS	.217	*
H5	AAG -> PI	.274	**
H6	AAS -> PI	.571	***
p-values: *** < .001, ** < .01, * < .05, n.s. not significant			

As the results of the PLS analysis show, five out of six hypotheses are supported by data. Platform enjoyment shows a high positive impact on general advertising attitude, supporting H1. In contrast, with

a path coefficient close to zero, platform enjoyment does not show any impact on specific attitude towards the shown ad, hence H2 is rejected. The impact of brand familiarity on specific attitude towards the ad is large and highly significant, hence H3 is supported. Also, the impact of general attitude towards advertising on specific attitude towards the ad and therefore H4 is supported by data although this impact is the smallest in the model. Further, general and specific attitudes are significant drivers of purchase intention, hence H5 and H6 are both supported by data. Here, the impact of specific attitude towards the ad is considerably stronger than the one of general attitude towards advertising on the social media platform.

We controlled for a possible impact of socio-demographic variables and included gender, age, education, and Facebook experience as control variables. This analysis did not show any significant impact of these variables on the outcome of the hypothesis tests.

6 DISCUSSION

The hypothesis tests show that the proposed research model is largely supported by the data. Except for one hypothesis, all hypothesized impacts are statistically significant at a 95 percent significance level or higher. The role of the antecedents, perceived platform enjoyment and brand familiarity, could both be demonstrated in this study. This finding is consistent with the research done by Pietro and Pantano (2012) who contend that the more enjoyable a platform is to the users the more likely the users are to appreciate the platforms' advertising. Like that study, the study at hand supports this finding within the context of general attitude towards advertising on the social media platform. Brand familiarity and its positive impact on specific attitude towards the individual advertisement on Facebook shows to be consistent with the findings in the study by Ha and Perks (2005) which has shown that high familiarity with a brand results in a more positive experience with the brand that ultimately can result in a more positive attitude towards its advertisements.

Also, the supported impact of general attitude towards advertising on the social media platform on the specific ad is consistent with prior research within and outside the social media context (Mehta 2000; Celebi 2015; Lukka and James, 2014). This result does not only point at the importance to distinguish between these two types of attitude, but also the relevant relationship between them. As a result, a

separate consideration of attitude towards advertising on these two levels is important for a proper understanding of consumer behavior related to social media advertising and its impact on purchase intention.

The two forms of attitude in respect of social media advertising also show a significant yet different impact on purchase intention which is consistent with the findings obtained by Duffet (2015) and Yang (2012). Whereas specific attitude towards the individual ad shows the strongest path coefficient throughout the model, the impact of general attitude towards advertising on the social media platform is considerably lower. Together, these factors explain more than 49 percent of the variance in purchase intention, as shown by the R square value. The different strengths of impact stress the notion that general and specific attitudes on social media advertising are conceptually different and exert their impact on purchase intention in different ways.

The only hypothesis that could not be supported by data is H2 that proposed an impact of platform enjoyment on specific attitude towards the advertisement. There are several possible explanations for this impact not to be significant. First, platform enjoyment and specific attitude are related to two different stakeholders from the user's perspective (i.e., social media platform and advertised brand) and it appears that users evaluate both independently from each other. Second, although a direct impact in this context does not exist, there is a mediated impact via general attitude towards advertising on the social media platform. Hence, users' formation of attitudes follows a kind of sequence from more platform-related issues to more brand-related ones. Lastly, the inconsistent outcome of the two hypotheses tests stresses the conceptual difference between general and specific attitude in the context of social media advertising.

From a research perspective, the study at hand provides the following insights that contribute to a better understanding of consumer behavior on social media advertising. First, the central idea of attitude towards advertising on various levels could clearly be demonstrated by the significant paths of impact that involve these variables. Like identified in other studies within and outside social media advertising, a more specific conceptualization of attitude is key to fully understand consumer behavior in this context. The role of attitude towards the medium can affect user behavior in various ways, as research on engagement has shown (Voorveld et al., 2018). Hence, spillover effects of attitude towards advertising on a social media platform on attitude

towards specific advertisements should be considered a key factor in research on social media advertising. Second, the overall explanatory power of the PLS model, shown by the high R square values, stresses the relevance of social media advertising. Overall, especially the specific attitude towards the advertisement shows a large impact on purchase intention, calling for stronger attention of research on the effectiveness of paid advertising on social media in contrast to earned media. In particular, this finding challenges the wide-spread assumption that paid advertisements play a minor role in purchase intention. In contrast, the findings support the notion that owned, paid, and earned media in social media marketing (Strauss and Frost, 2016) supplement each other. Third, two relevant antecedents of attitude could be identified in this study, i.e., platform enjoyment and brand familiarity. Like the two forms of attitude, these two independent variables highlight the relevance of users' perception of the social media platform (platform enjoyment) as well as the relevance of the advertised brand (brand familiarity). Therefore, this study confirms the notion of an impact not only of consumer perceptions of the advertised product on purchase intention, but also perceptions of the social media platform as the advertising medium.

The study also offers several managerial implications. The findings show that social media advertising can largely contribute to impacting consumers' purchasing behavior and therefore is a powerful promotional tool that should not be underestimated. In the current debate that largely relates to earned media communication, especially in social media, paid advertising still has its key place in the promotional mix. From a brand management perspective, the findings show that a high brand familiarity can positively influence the overall likelihood of purchase intention due to advertising, hence stronger brands will most likely be at an advantage compared to less popular brands. As a result, especially companies whose brands are well-known and established are recommended to make use of social media advertising to reach social media-affine target groups. The role of platform enjoyment, on the other hand, is an important implication for the choice of social media platforms and at the same time may offer an opportunity to less-known brands to increase awareness by exploiting the entertainment potential of social media. Finally, users' preferences and attitudes towards social media platforms are subject to changes. For example, the increasing popularity of Instagram goes hand in hand with a decrease of Facebook especially among Millennials and younger generations. Therefore, marketers are

recommended to constantly monitor their target groups' activities on different social media in order to regularly choose those platforms that allow for the highest possible effectiveness of their advertising campaigns.

7 CONCLUSION

The research model that is grounded in extant research on attitude towards advertising has turned out to be largely supported by empirical data. The study identified platform enjoyment and brand familiarity as antecedents in social media advertising that are driving two types of attitude – general attitude towards advertising on the social media platform and specific attitude towards the individual advertisement. Further, both types of attitude show a positive and overall strong impact on purchase intention which supports the notion that paid advertising on social media can still be very effective.

Like any research, this study has several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the findings. The first issue is the relatively low sample size of 185 completed questionnaires. While this sample size is sufficiently large to conduct the PLS analysis, it limits the generalizability of results and therefore only allows to draw preliminary conclusions from the data. Second, the structure of the sample is not representative of Austria's population that uses social media. The sample overrepresents younger social media users and underrepresents mid-aged ones. Further, the respondents' genders are not fully balanced in the collected data. Like in many online surveys, the data may also be affected by a self-selection bias due to the online survey design. Another limitation of the study is the focus on one specific social media platform, Facebook, as well as one specific brand used as a stimulus. Whereas Facebook is still by far the most widely-used social media platform, it does not necessarily allow to draw conclusions for other social media platforms.

The study allows for further research in this direction that should consider a larger range of variables stemming from different established theoretical bases, such as the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) theory or models that consider different stages in the purchase decision process. Further, possible impacts of the involved product categories as well as users' personality traits should be considered for further inclusion in a research model. Although we did not find any significant differences between socio-demographic groups,

future research should consider a possible impact of these variables based on a sample that covers a broader socio-demographic range. The study at hand provides initial insights into the specific role of attitude on different levels in social media advertising and therefore hopes to contribute to a more in-depth understanding of paid media effectiveness in social media advertising.

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