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ENHANCING BRAND EXPERIENCE IN ADVERTISING BY
IMPLEMENTING UGC AND CSR INITIATIVES IN DIGITAL
ADVERTISEMENTS

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Title

Enhancing Brand Experience in Advertising by Implementing UGC and CSR Initiatives in Digital Advertisements

Abstract

With digitalization constantly advancing, businesses have various choices to improve their marketing activities in a trackable, testable, and scalable way, including digital advertising. Marketers can deliver their advertised messages to the defined audience across channels to effectively interact with them in every stage of a buying cycle. However, consumers' judgments on advertising overload, relevancy, and trustworthiness signify a trust crisis in the advertising industry. As recent surveys and research show that consumers increasingly distrust online advertising, a question is raised: How can brands create engaging digital advertisements that signal a connection between them and consumer life goals to enhance the brand experience and yet be credible?

After reviewing literature and recent research, the authors suggested that using user-generated content and corporate social responsibility initiatives in digital advertisements could enhance advertising engagement and thus brand experience. This study evaluates brand experience through brand awareness, brand trust, and purchase intention. Then, this paper examines the relationships between consumers' positive attitudes towards user-generated content and corporate social responsibility and advertising awareness, advertising trust, and advertising purchase intention using quantitative data analysis with data collected from the study's survey.

This study concludes that using user-generated content and corporate social responsibility initiatives in digital advertisements positively influences brand experience. However, since the study did not investigate the causal relationships between the proposed elements, future studies are recommended to clarify this matter.

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Abbreviations

CSR   Corporate Social Responsibility, an ethical management concept that aims to align companies' social and environmental activities with their business purposes and values.

SEO   Search Engine Optimization, a set of practices that aim to increase web rank in the search engine result page.

SERP   Search Engine Result Page, a page that search engine provides a user who submits a search query.

SMM   Social Media Marketing, the use of social media and social networks to promote a company's product or service.

UGC   User-Generated Content, any form of content created by a brand's followers, users, or consumers.

1 INTRODUCTION

As the Internet becomes an ever-growing presence in human life, it provides new opportunities for businesses to reach their audiences. Constant technological innovations result in novel social media platforms, algorithm updates, big data evolution, and much more. These require businesses to adapt quickly to digitalization in order to enhance their marketing performances. The cultural, technological, and societal shifts have led to the fast growth of digital marketing, making the world a more digital place. As a result, the advertising industry is quickly advancing to the digital world. Digital advertising is an aspect of digital marketing that leverages paid traffic and placements to deliver brand messages in a testable, trackable, and scalable way. With digital advertising, advertisers and consumers can establish two-way communication that enables both sides to gain a meaningful understanding of each other without location and time boundaries. In a recent report, businesses stated that half of their revenue is influenced by social selling, ensuring the effectiveness of digital advertising in driving revenue (Camicheal 2019). There are enormous platforms and options for a business to advertise online, in which Facebook and Google are the two most popular channels. In 2019, advertising activities brought almost 69.7 billion US dollars to Facebook (Statista 2020a) and 134.81 billion US dollars to Google (Statista 2020b), reflecting the attractiveness of these platforms to advertisers.

However, the constant growth of digital advertising results in a decrease in consumers' trust. Many surveys and studies have revealed the alarmingly low percentage of people who trust advertisers or advertising channels such as social media, search engines, and email (Tenzer & Chalmers 2017; Trustpilot 2019; Steward 2020). With many noises in all open platforms caused by brands that try hard to sell, consumers build up skepticism towards the trustworthiness of the advertisements. As advertising is facing a public trust crisis (Minnium 2018; Steward 2020), brands need to regain their advertising credibility to prevent negative brand experiences. Advertising generates contact between brands and consumers, and this contact should create a meaningful engagement to help enhance the overall brand experience perceived by consumers (Malthouse & Calder 2018).

Those reasons motivate the authors to study how a brand can create engaging and credible digital advertisements that signal a connection between them and consumer life goals to enhance the brand experience. After reviewing articles and working on the literature review, the authors evaluated that user-generated content (UGC) and corporate socially responsible (CSR) initiatives are favorable to consumers. They also viewed that the two elements potentially enhance consumers' brand experience via advertising. Based on the context of the study, the authors measured the brand experience of a consumer who sees a digital advertisement using three elements: brand awareness, brand trust, and brand purchase intention.

The study focused on answering two main questions: 1) do positive attitudes toward UGC in digital advertisements positively influence brand experience? and 2) do positive attitudes toward CSR initiatives in digital advertisements positively influence brand experience? The authors adopted an empirical research method, which allowed them to conduct a Likert-scale survey and drew conclusions from the quantitative data analysis. The study neglected data from profiles reacting negatively to UGC and CSR initiatives. To answer the research questions, the authors started with investigating the possible correlations between positive attitudes towards UGC and CSR initiatives in digital advertisements and advertising awareness, advertising trust, and advertising purchase intentions. Then, through reviewing existing literature, connections between advertising awareness and brand awareness, advertising trust and brand trust, and advertising purchase intentions and brand purchase intentions were examined to generate conclusions.

2 FRAMEWORK

2.1 Digital advertising as a part of digital marketing strategy

According to Chaffey and Smith (2017, 13), digital marketing is a terminology referring to the scope of digital media, technology, and digital platforms used by marketers worldwide to reach and interact with customers and businesses. Marketers can leverage different digital media channels such as online

advertising, search advertising, and affiliate advertising to execute their marketing strategy - reaching and understanding customers, increasing product values, widening distribution channels, and generating sales (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 13). These digital media can be categorized as paid, owned, and earned media (Lovett & Staelin 2015) that require marketers to use different strategies and analysis when they execute them.

Chaffey and Smith (2017, 14-16) suggested eight primary activities to be considered in a digital marketing plan, including digital experience management, digital marketing strategy and planning, content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), paid search marketing, social media marketing (SMM), email marketing and marketing automation, and multi-channel analytics (Picture 1). In this digital era, businesses and marketers must be digitally savvy and analytically fluent (Grewal, Roggeveen & Shankaranaraynan 2015).

Picture 1.   Eight primary activities in Digital Marketing (Digital Marketing Excellence Planning, Optimizing, and Integrating Online Marketing).

The following paragraph introduces Chaffey and Smith's explanations (2017, 14-16) of eight prime activities in a digital marketing plan. As they explained in their publication, the goal of digital experience management is to optimize the customer experience at every touchpoint they encounter. That means companies need to keep a customer-centric mindset when building desktop and mobile versions of the website, creating mobile apps, growing social media business

pages, and developing email marketing. The second element mentioned in the publication is digital marketing strategies and planning, which revolves around staying organized and getting the most out of digital marketing's prime activities. Content marketing is the third mentioned core activity. As explained by Chaffey and Smith, it is the practice in which marketers feed digital platforms with content that serves the purpose of engaging and persuading online audiences. The authors clarified that online materials such as videos, blog posts, and social media posts are products of content creation that aim to distribute valuable content consistently to audiences. Besides reaching audiences with relevant content, marketers can maximize brand visibility whenever customers search for it by investing in SEO - a set of practices that helps brands rank highly in the organic search results pages (SERP), as discussed in Chaffey and Smith's publication. However, the authors acknowledged that SEO is a long process that does not provide fast results. In this case, they suggested marketers gain faster results by paying for placements in search networks to display their brands' messages, called paid search marketing. Following this, the sixth component of the digital marketing mentioned by Chaffey and Smith is social media marketing. As they introduced, this activity optimizes visual use to help brands share ideas, contents, and messages to attract, nurture, and delight customers using paid and organic practices. They also mentioned email marketing and marketing automation - a channel for businesses to deliver the most relevant messages to consumers - as one prime digital marketing activity. Finally, because executing these activities will bring a large amount of rich and in-depth data to marketers, Chaffey and Smith included a multi-channel analytics system in their eight prime digital marketing activities model.

Digital advertising is a part of digital marketing, which has experienced fast-paced changes and significant shifts in practices. It is hard to exaggerate the level of impact that digital technology has on advertising and the human cultural experiences of advertising (Orme & McAllister 2017). As digitalization generates new contexts and platforms to display advertising messages, the role of advertising in the digital world and its relation to the consumer buying journey requires revaluation (Nyström & Mickelsson 2019). For instance, traditionally, advertisers perceived consumers as passive receivers of advertising messages (Vakratsas & Ambler 1999), but today's digital media has been giving consumers more control in this experience. This is the result of the proactive involvement of

advertisers worldwide in utilizing digital media and embracing the latest technologies. The digital behavior of advertisers has significant implications on the existence of media types, the collection of personal information, the consumer ability to spot out ads and non-ads, consumer participation and attitudes in advertising activities, and their adaptation to multiple digital ads (Orme & McAllister 2017). Therefore, advertising can no longer be perceived as one-way communication in today's digital era but rather as a "service" - an advertising approach that emphasizes consumer control, engagement, and value (Nyström & Mickelsson 2019).

2.1.1 The role and significance of digital advertising

Digital advertising as a marketing channel

Digital advertising is a promotion form that aims at delivering marketing messages to gain consumer attention (Kim, Park, Kwon & Chang 2012). It has an influential reminding effect in which information provided by advertisers is put in a form of memory triggers that helps consumers keep the brand in consideration (Lovett & Staelin 2015). According to their research, Lovett and Staelin (2015) saw that the reminding effect of digital advertising is meaningful and it accounts for most of the total impacts of paid media. Gao, Sheng, Change, and Shim (2013), as cited in Enginkaya and Cinar (2014), emphasized the characteristics and features of digital advertising as follows:

- Digital advertising offers two-way communication between advertisers and consumers, resulting in better advertising performance.
- Digital advertising creates a direct connection to brands' offerings.
- Digital advertisers can use static or dynamic, representative or display ads to target the audiences.
- Digital advertising is globally accessible and available at any given time and date.
- Because of their nature, digital advertisements are easy to be "transmitted, exhibited, preserved and modernized".
- Advertisers can monitor and evaluate digital advertisements on a deep level.

Advertisers are investing heavily in interactive advertising via social networks and mobile phones using the Internet, as they trust the effectiveness of digital media over traditional media (Fuxman, Elifoglu, Chao & Li 2014). In their research on consumer perceptions of traditional and digital advertising, Fuxman et al. (2014) concluded that traditional media would not be replaced completely by digital media. Koetsier (2014) had a similar suggestion that digital advertising needs to work in conjunction with traditional media such as television, newspapers, and magazines to maximize marketing effectiveness.

The characteristics and effectiveness of digital advertising

Many researchers have studied the effectiveness of digital advertising in various aspects. Mishra and Mahalik (2017) worked on the effectiveness of digital advertising on consumer behavior. Digital advertising has consisted of many attributes, namely entertainment, intensity, information, reliability, economic matters, annoyances, trust, and creditability, as described in their study. Their research discovered very little association between age groups and factors linked to digital advertising, indicating that all were independent. As all the forces can persuade the customers with no unique barriers, the stronger the digital advertising's effectiveness, the higher the sales number. Mishra and Mahalik (2017) also suggested digital advertising to be referred to as infotainment that is "accessible, feasible, and reliable" if the advertisements exclude negativity and contain a trustworthy value. Enginkaya and Cinar (2014) studied the evaluation of digital advertisements from the consumer perspective. Their research showed that most consumers perceive digital advertisements as informative with some level of annoyance and distraction. It also revealed that demographic factors including ages, income, and gender remarkably affect consumer attitudes towards the ads: women show more positive attitudes than men. In their research, women tended to more easily be influenced and convinced by the ads to make a purchase than men.

Burns and Luz (2006) discovered that consumers have different opinions regarding different digital advertising formats. In their study, six advertising formats were examined, including banners, pop-ups, floating ads, large rectangles, interstitials, and skyscrapers. Banners were the highest informative factor that revealed the most positive attitudes from consumers. To be more

specific, banner ads scored highest in all behavioral measurements such as clickthrough percentage, clickthrough frequency, and percentage visit later. The research also showed that pop-up and floating ads were the most annoying, and interstitial ads were the most entertaining. The study by Davidavičienė (2012) contributed some similar insights. This author found that pop-ups, interstitials, and sponsored results performed the least on search engines; on the contrary, banners were the most effective formats, together with rich media and contextual sponsorships.

Dinner, Heerde, and Neslin's findings (2014) suggested that online advertising could effectively grow offline channels. In their study, the significant cross effects of search advertising potentially made consumers who saw the ads come to purchase at the brick and mortar store. This behavior was rational, caused by ads or other non-digital attributes such as the uncertainties about the sizes, colors, and models. The study also indicated that traditional advertising exposed a negative association with paid search click-through rates. Marketers may need to re-design their old-time adverting copies, something that encourages consumers to search for their offerings online.

This paragraph presents Percy and Elliot's study (2012, 13) of the connection between advertising impressions and consumer perceptions of the brands or their offerings. According to the authors, advertising can create a connection and signal product quality to consumers. They explained that as consumers see the same advertisements repeatedly, they start to develop a certain level of trust towards the brand. To be more specific, consumers believe that the product or service must be adequate if they continuously appear in advertisements. As a result, consumers have moved from assigning credibility to the advertising to putting it into the brand offers. Percy and Elliot indicated that by exposing advertising messages many times to their audiences, brands help consumers effortlessly store that information in their minds. The authors suggested that when there is a stimulus that has a positive influence on the consumers, consumers can recall the brand information and develop their interest in a level of possession. Conversely, if the stimulus gives consumers a negative impression, their interest and perception of that brand will turn to be negative. Advertising and online paid advertising to share the above idea (Percy & Elliot 2012, 13).

The negative side of digital advertising from consumers' perspectives

On the other hand, many criticisms are pointed at advertising. People criticize advertising for encouraging materialism and convincing consumers to buy more than what they need to maintain a good life (Percy & Elliot 2012, 17). Boateng and Okoe (2015) agreed that materialism has a negative relationship with consumers' attitudes toward social media advertising. Because advertising intensively leverages consumer data collection nowadays, the targeting function of many advertising networks is getting better and better. As a result, advertisers can acquire in-depth knowledge about their customers and create ads that are highly targeted and persuasive. People who see ads might believe that they need the offer even though they have not thought about it before. As advertising's convincing power is remarkable, people have some suspicions about its trustworthiness (Minnium 2018). Consumers are concerned that advertising might take advantage of their data and the understanding of human psychology to create persuasive messages, and in some cases, it could be misleading or dishonest. Percy and Elliot (2012, 16) pressed that deliberate lying is wrong whether people perceive it as unethical or not. They believed that this is even worse if the targeted audiences are vulnerable or have limited knowledge about internet marketing, for instance, children and the elderly. According to them, a certain level of puffery is acceptable in advertising, but advertisers must alert their audiences of every fact that can potentially cause harm.

Digital advertising offers various ad formats to marketers. Enginkaya and Cinar (2014) suggested the five most popular digital adverting types, including banner advertising, email marketing, social media advertising, mobile advertising, and advergaming. Bala and Verma (2018), through various research and analysis of marketing trends, added some other techniques such as SEM, display advertising, and interactive marketing. The authors of this research acknowledged the broad scope of digital advertising. However, to align with the research's objectives and goal, the authors briefly discuss SMM and SEM only.

2.1.2 Social media advertising

The rise of social media advertising: Facebook as leading network

Social media usage has been exploding in recent years with no sign of decreasing. As of July 2020, there were almost 4.14 billion active social media users worldwide, of which 4.08 billion actively use mobile devices to consume social media content (Statista 2020c). This medium enables many businesses to interact with end-customers immediately and directly at the lowest cost with a higher efficiency level than any traditional media could bring (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). Maurer and Wiegmann (2011), as cited (Rahman and Rashid 2018), stated that social media is a marketing tool that helps marketers to interact with consumers, be at the same place with them and gain access to their attitudes, needs, interests, preferences, wants, and buying patterns. By using different direct and indirect marketing forms, marketers use social media to build brand awareness, recall, recognition, and action for a brand, product, person, or other entity (Gunelius 2011).

On the foundation of Web 2.0, social media appeared as a group of Internet-based applications that encourage the creation of exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). Social media consists of social networks, wikis, multimedia sharing sites, virtual worlds, and rating sites (Mir 2012). According to Statista (2020d), Facebook is the leading social media network with over 2.7 billion monthly active users. Data from Statista (2020d) also shows that Facebook owns four of the biggest social media platforms: Facebook (core platform), WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Instagram each have over 1 billion monthly active users. Accordingly, advertisers are flocking to this attractive medium to find and connect with their core audiences.

This section summarizes Facebook's explanations (2020a) of Facebook ads and their capabilities. With Facebook ads, marketers use paid messages that reflect the brands' voices to reach their target audiences. According to Facebook, its large user population allows the platform to find various audience types that serve advertisers' needs. Facebook stated that its platform offers simple self-service tools and easy-to-read reports to make advertising on Facebook doable for everyone. There are seven main elements to consider when creating a Facebook

advertisement: objectivity, the audience, placement, budget, ad format, ad auction, and performance tracking, as publicized by Facebook. Facebook indicated that depending on what brands want to achieve when their audiences see the ad, advertisers could choose a relevant objective that falls under three main goals: awareness, consideration, and conversion. According to Facebook's suggestion, advertisers should use awareness objectives to generate interest in a brand's product or service. Awareness-oriented messages often highlight the value proposition of the ads. When the target audiences have first impressions of a brand, Facebook suggested using consideration objectives to make consumers think more about that brand and look for additional information. Lastly, Facebook advised marketers to use conversion objectives to encourage consumers who are showing interest in a brand's offers to purchase or use it. A business will have different campaign goals depending on its growth state (Facebook 2020b).

Consumers' attitudes and perceptions of social media advertising

Rahman and Rashid (2018) surveyed 308 participants to study how consumers' perceptions of social media advertising influence their views toward this advertising channel. The result indicated that users do not differ in their attitudes towards social media and advertisements on social media. Noticeably, that attitude is a significant predictor of social media users' buying decisions. Additionally, their research suggested that knowledge about the product and brand consciousness positively affects the behavioral responses toward social media advertising. To be more specific, consumers' viewpoints toward social media advertising and behavioral responses such as searching for product information or interacting with social media content potentially encourage them to take actions, such as making purchases.

Boateng and Okoe (2015) found four factors that drive consumers' stances toward social media advertising, including credibility, materialism, value corruption, and cooperate reputation. According to their study, there is a positive relationship between credibility and consumers' attitudes towards social media. That means consumers enjoy social media when they trust the information provided in the advertisements. While materialism has a negative relationship with consumers' attitudes, the study showed that value corruption positively influences consumers' views of social media advertising. The authors suggested

the reasons could be because consumers believe advertising does not take advantage of them and force them to buy, or there is little to no sensitive content allowed on advertisements. Another factor that has a significant impact on how consumers feel about social media advertising is cooperate reputation, as stated in the study. This finding is consistent with other studies (Alexandrov, Myers & San 2010; Rahman & Rashid 2018; Stone, Besser & Lewis 2000), which indicates the relationship between brand consciousness and consumer attitudes towards advertising.

2.1.3 Search advertising

The rise of search advertising: Google as a leading network

Search advertising or search marketing is a term to describe a set of techniques used to make a website visible on search engines (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, Johnston & Mayer 2006). Advertisers can understand user behavior by analyzing how they interact with the search engine. On search networks such as Google or Bing, businesses can focus on SEO by improving their websites to attract organic visitors or leverage SEM by buying traffic through specific keywords that users are searching for (Sponder & Khan 2018). Sponsor and Khan (2018) divided search engine analytics into SEO and search engine trends analysis.

As Sponsor and Khan (2018) discussed in their publication, SEO suggests a set of practices that aims to increase web rank in the SERP. On SERP, results can be either organic or paid. The authors explained that while the search engine shows organic listings to audiences based on their relevance compared to the search query, searchers receive paid results with more tailored content to their needs. The growth of technology has made the search engine more successful in matching search results with user experience on the landing page through advanced algorithms and analytics (Sponder & Khan 2018, 26). However, this does not guarantee consumer satisfaction. Research by Jansen and Resnick (2006) indicated that consumers have a negative emotional reaction towards sponsored listings. In their study, participants expressed skepticism towards sponsored links via verbal protocols and rated sponsored links lower than organic links despite the descriptions displayed. Participants in Lee's study (2007) also expressed that sponsored ads were as relevant as organic listings. Therefore,

besides understanding advertising performance by analyzing metrics such as click-through rate, conversion rate, and ad rank, advertisers need to optimize the user experience on the search network and study their behaviors.

Ultimately, advertisers want their websites to appear at the top of the search results. This goal aims at increasing the chances that users will click on their websites and thus increase the conversion rate. The top-ranked site receives an average of 42% clickthrough rate, the second-ranked site is 12%, and the third-ranked site is 8.5% (Chotikitpat, Nilsook & Sodsee 2015). According to Mable's experiment (2003), nearly 50% of web searchers selected links from the first pages because they trusted that search engines would always provide the best results first, making it feel unnecessary to go through later pages. Sponder and Khan (2018) pressed that keyword and relevancy are two main factors for the search engine to rank a website, but the utmost one belongs to the PageRank algorithm. The author explained that the Google search engine uses this algorithm to rank websites based on the quality in-links. They also mentioned that in-links from reliable and famous websites help a website rank higher than one with no in-links or in-links from lower-quality sources. By performing SEO practices, advertisers thrive towards building quality in-links (Sponder & Khan 2018, 26). Choosing in-link sources requires advertisers to understand their customers to keep the relevancy level high and maximize their digital journey experience at any point. Chotikitpat, Nilsook, and Sodsee (2015) found that the main feature in executing SEO practices is to discover and improve the "Golden Keywords", as keywords are the fundamentals for website improvement and content creation.

Consumers' attitude and perception of search advertising

There are some prior studies on the consumer perception of paid listings. Jansen and Resnick (2006) saw that users appear to be skeptical about search ads, potentially due to the lower relevancy when compared to organic results, and they are therefore less likely to click them. In a survey conducted in May 2017, only 11% of consumers in the United States found advertising on search engines to be very useful, while up to 31% of the participants stated that it was not helpful at all (Statista 2019). Mable (2003) discovered that vague terms such as "sponsored" confused the participants in his study, as they would question the

difference between sponsored and pure search. As a result, consumers could turn to be more vulnerable when they click sponsored ads because they think they likely to encounter misleading or biased information from brands that are willing to afford to be listed on top of SERP. Jansen and Resnick (2006) pointed out in their research that the differences in consumer expectations regarding organic and sponsored results belong to a trust issue, which requires further investigation to understand why online users have low expectations for sponsored listings. Mable's study (2003) also revealed that most participants expressed negative reactions - including feelings such as anger, disappointment, and helplessness when they were told how search advertising worked. Mohammad (2010) indicated that many online users have either positive or negative prior experiences with sponsored search advertising that influence their perceptions of this advertising method. Such perceptions will have positive or negative impacts on their attitudes towards search advertisements. The research also indicated that if consumers pay more attention to sponsored search ads with higher trust in their credibility, they are more likely to have a positive attitude towards the ads and click on them. Relevancy is the most significant factor that contributes to the length of attention allocation from the consumers (Mohammad 2010).

2.2 The relationship between digital advertising and brand experience

The authors of this research evaluated the brand experience of a consumer who sees a digital advertisement using three elements: brand awareness, brand trust, and brand purchase intention.

2.2.1 The effects of digital advertising on brand awareness

In such a competitive business environment where businesses must stand out offline and online, increasing consumer brand awareness is crucial to every brand. One of the indicators of brand awareness is the consumer's ability to recall or recognize a brand in different situations. Keller (2009) stated that brand awareness could increase by anything that caused the consumers to pay attention to the brand, at least in terms of brand recognition. According to Keller (2009), a more intense and complex process of creating strong brand links to the product or consumers' needs might be necessary to enhance brand recall. Aaker

(1996) constructed four brand awareness levels, including brand recognition, brand recall, top of the mind brand, and dominant brand. While brand recognition is associated with a sense of consumers' familiarity, brand recall is the thought of a brand coming first when facing many offers (Farjam & Hongyi 2015). At the level of the top of the mind, brands come to consumers' minds at first in a product category, and once these brands replace the product category, they reach the dominant level (Aaker 1996).

As the goal is placing the offer in consumers' minds, brands need to maximize consumers' memorizing process with repetition and reinforcement. A report by Kantar (2019) indicated that digital advertising drives brand impact across all industries in which 20% of the original brand impact remains after eight weeks of a digital campaign's exposure. Therefore, managing the frequency of a digital campaign is an important task in maximizing the brand impact. Advertisers can flexibly target or retarget consumers with compelling advertisements at their desired frequency. Serving enjoyable and involving advertisements is fundamental to enhance advertising memorability. Social and video formats are constantly growing in the cost efficiency of brand effect over time and certainly have "truly come of age in terms of adoption and reach" (Kantar 2019). Facit Research conducted a market study named *Media Equivalence Study: Video* and found out that using videos is effective across all channels, especially in terms of brand recall and brand awareness indicators (ServicePlan Group Germany 2018).

Previous research (Alhaddad 2015; Rizkia & Martini 2018) indicated that advertising awareness has a positive effect on brand awareness. Noticeably, advertising measures are seemingly the same as brand awareness as they have top-of-the-mind, spontaneous, and aided components (Romaniuk & Sharp 2003). It means an advertisement that draws a consumer's attention can help increase brand awareness as well.

2.2.2 The effects of digital advertising on brand trust

Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) defined brand trust as "the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function". Discussing brand trust on the web, Ha (2004) put brand trust simply as "the trust

a consumer has in that specific brand." Brand trust is crucial because it influences several factors, including security, privacy, brand name, and word-of-mouth (Ha 2004). Alam and Yasin (2010) stated that trust emerges when consumers believe a brand has specific values that make it competent, responsible, honest, consistent, and so on.

Consumers have different opinions regarding advertising. One of the most popular issues that attract researchers is consumer trust in advertising. The present study adopted Soh, Reid, and Kind's (2009) definition of trust in advertising. Soh et al. (2009) defined trust as "confidence that advertising is a reliable source of product/service information and willingness to act based on information conveyed by advertising", which aligns with prior conceptualizations stated that trust involves cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions (Lewis & Weigert 1985). As businesses are spending tremendous effort and budget on reaching customers with advertising, enhancing advertising trust can influence purchase decision-making. In their study, Soh et al. (2009) discovered a positive relationship between advertising trust in general and the trust in specific ads. Their findings also confirmed that the more ads are trusted, the more likely they are to be liked and used in purchase decision-making. Noticeably, participants in their study neither particularly trusted nor distrusted advertising. This finding is consistent with the discovery of Sæmundsson (2012). In his research, Sæmundsson (2012) saw that participants seemed to enjoy the entertainment side of advertising but did not trust much in its message. Tenzer and Chalmers (2017) revealed 69% of consumers from Great Britain distrusted advertising, while Trustpilot (2019) saw less than three out of ten study participants expressed trust in popular digital advertising channels. The data signifies a need to increase consumer trust in advertising - a communication method between brands and consumers. Brand communication has a positive effect on brand trust through brand satisfaction (Azize, Cemal & Hakan 2012), and brand satisfaction leads to brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook 2001). Therefore, improving consumer trust in advertising can positively influence their brand trust.

2.2.3 The effects of digital advertising on purchase intention

The constant development of Internet media has empowered advertising ability to influence every Internet user to some extent. Grewal, Monroe, and Krishnan

(1998) defined purchase intention as the probability that customers intend to purchase a particular product. In this era, brands must go digital to meet their potential consumers and communicate with them on digital-based platforms. The information available online, as a result, drives consumers' purchase decisions. It can come from other consumers such as comments, reviews in text, video, or images or come directly from brands such as product descriptions or blogs. Advertising has a significant effect on consumer purchase decision-making, but this is not absolute (Bonney 2014). Bonney (2014) pressed that consumers still need to evaluate other factors such as packaging, product quality, and especially endorsements from other users before making purchase-related decisions. Among all, online consumer endorsement or reviews have been attracting much research to study its influence on various aspects of a brand. Knight (2007) suggested that businesses are shifting push advertising to trust-based advertising by integrating word-of-mouth into marketing campaigns that encourage consumers to share their reviews about the product. Many studies have already confirmed that consumers relied on user-generated content to make purchase decisions (Kiran & Vasantha 2016; MacKinnon 2012; Malthouse, Calder, Kim & Vandenbosch 2016). With the understanding of the power of consumer feedback, brands can integrate it into their advertising campaigns to enhance effectiveness. As attitude towards advertisements has a significant effect on purchase intention (Sallam & Algammash 2016), creating engaging, enjoyable, informative, and reliable advertisements is the key to positively influencing purchase intentions.

2.3 Enhancing brand experience via advertising engagement during the trust crisis

2.3.1 Consumers increasingly distrust advertising

Social media advertising is one of the fastest marketing channels that is improving every day. As consumer beliefs and stances about ads are significant indicators of marketing effectiveness (Enginkaya & Cinar 2014), advertisers must ensure that consumers can trust their messages. However, there have been signals alarming the decrease in consumer trust in advertising. According to a study by Tenzer and Chalmers (2017), up to 69% of consumers in Great Britain distrusted advertising. In 2020, a survey saw similar results where 70% of people

in the United Kingdom stated that they "don't trust" many things they see on social media, including content from brands (Steward 2020). Eight thousand people in eight markets responded to that survey. The results showed that only 14% of people trusted advertisers. In the same survey, social media was ranked as the least trusted medium, as only 17% of participants considered sites such as Facebook and Twitter reliable. Kumar and Pradhan (2015) had seen many analytical predictions that fake social media would result in litigations against several strong brands. Their study also indicated that as consumers increase trust in ratings and reviews, they see an increase in the budget that enterprises spend on paid ratings and reviews that potentially make consumers more skeptical. As consumer trust is a growing issue, during Q1 2019, advertising revenue from six companies, including Facebook, Pinterest, Snap, Twitter, Tencent, and Weibo, was around half the rate of growth seen during Q1 2018 (WARC 2019, cited in What's New in Publishing 2019). Undoubtedly, consumers are having a trust issue regarding social media as a platform and advertisements on social media.

Not only advertisements from social media are facing a trust crisis, but search ads have also seen a decrease in trust in recent years. With approximately 98% of all Internet users using search engines monthly and 81% of people searching for a product or services to buy, these tools continue to play a crucial role in consumers' online activities (Kemp 2020). The literature review in this section indicated that even though search engines and search ads aim at improving consumer online experience, many consumers still hold suspicions towards search advertising. The skepticism or negative attitudes are mostly related to the trustworthiness and relevancy of the advertisements. Trustpilot (2019) surveyed over 2000 individuals in the United States and the United Kingdom to study consumers' thoughts on advertising and its trustworthiness. The results showed that most consumers consider ads ineffective in influencing their purchase decision. Less than three out of ten consumers expressed trust in major digital advertising channels such as search engines, social media, or email (Trustpilot 2019). Therefore, it is clear that brands need to regain consumer trust in their advertising to improve marketing performance.

2.3.2 The relationship between advertising engagement and brand experience

Malthouse et al. (2016) stated that the fundamental cause for consumers to spend time, view pages, and so on is because of the "consumer's thoughts, beliefs, and feelings about how the brand contributes to a personal goal important in the person's life". Calder and Malthouse (2018) labeled the above statement as the brand experience, where experience indicates consumers' thoughts and feelings about how a brand can contribute to their personal life goals, rather than the experience gained through using the brand. While studying how to use engagement theories to create better advertising and marketing programs, Calder and Malthouse (2018) contributed some significant insights. First, the authors pressed that how consumers experience a brand (think and feel) affects their dialog and (or) usage behavior, and behavior is itself experienced in real-time. What matters the most is remembered experience - the constructed story of the original experience (Kahneman 2011). Therefore, experience and behavior should be treated as parts of the engagement process, rather than as separate alternatives, as viewed in some literature (Calder & Malthouse 2018).

As mentioned earlier, the trust crisis signifies that consumers feel less trust in brand advertising, which can influence their trust towards the brand itself. That affects the brand experience from consumers' perspectives, as advertising is an interaction between brands and consumers. Taken from Calder and Malthouse's study (2018), engagement is the key to enhancing the overall brand experience. Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger (2016) discussed the engagement design perspective, where brands engage with consumers by creating activities that help them recognize the connection between brands and their personal life goals. It is crucial because when consumers feel involved, they are more likely to engage with actions. The literature review raised a question for the present study: How should companies create engaging digital advertisements that signal a connection between brands and consumer life goals to enhance the brand experience and yet remain credible and trustworthy?
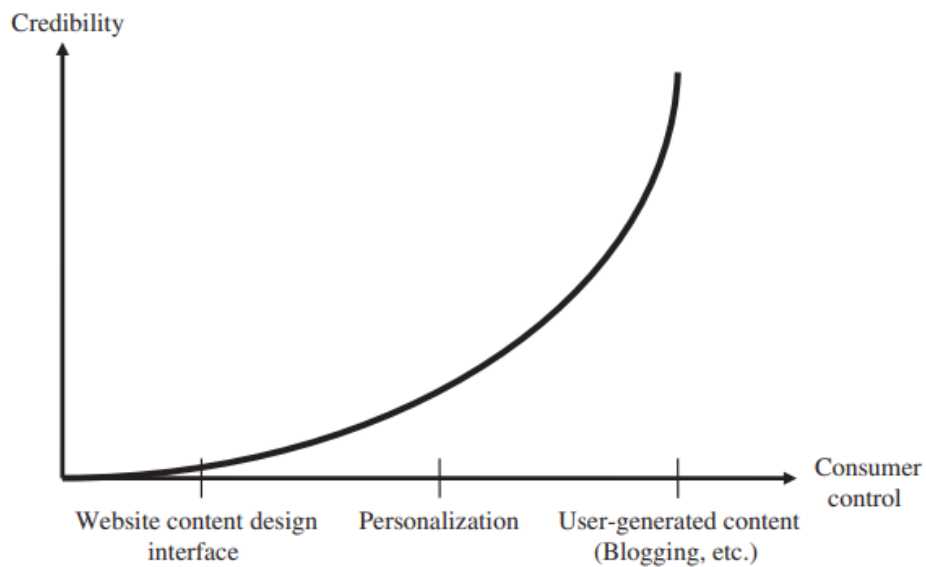
2.4 Introduction to user-generated content and corporate social responsibility initiatives

2.4.1 User-generated content (UGC)

Researchers found that quality information positively affects brand trust (Alam & Yasin 2010; Ha 2004; Sultan, Urban, Shankar & Bart 2002). Before the advent of the Internet, consumers had limited information sources that helped them make purchase decisions. Consumers perceived word-of-mouth as reliable information, but this method limited consumers to only a small number of reviews. Another way was to rely on a brand's message, which spreads faster and broader thanks to advertising but could also be biased. Nowadays, people can easily share their reviews through the Internet, and everyone can access this information from everywhere, at any time, in every language with just a few clicks. As a result, user-generated content has become a credible information source for consumers' needs of learning and evaluating an offer.

Kucuk (2011) listed UGC as an aspect of content- one element in the 4Cs of e-marketing value creation, together with connectivity, community, and commitment. Because consumers can freely generate the content and decide the intensity of their relationship with brands, messages produced by consumers are perceived as highly credible (Hope 2002, cited in Kucuk 2011). In this research, the authors adopt Naab and Sehl's criteria (2016) to define UGC in the context of the Internet:

- UGC reflects a degree of personal attribution.
- UGC is available for public comments and discussions in a published form, particularly on social networks and weblogs.
- UGC creators do not create it in the context of a profession and include any professional routine or institutional control during the creation process.

Credibility

Consumer
control

Website content design   Personalization   User-generated content
interface   (Blogging, etc.)

Picture 2. Level of consumer control and credibility over content (Stackla 2019)

Stackla (2019) surveyed 1,590 consumers and 150 business-to-consumer marketers from the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia and found that 79% of people are strongly influenced by UGC when making purchase decisions while only 13% of people claimed the same effect for brand-created content. UGC also brings about an increase in brand equity (Rachna & Khajuria 2017) and creates the effect of entry purchasing behavior (Malthouse et al. 2016).

MacKinnon (2012) discovered that consumers rely heavily on UGC to make purchase decisions and trust UGC more than advertisements. However, UGC and digital ads are no longer two distinguishable elements. Today consumers can recognize a significant rise of UGC in marketing and advertising campaigns such as content marketing, digital point-of-sale, email, and website enhancement (IAB 2019). UGC under digital forms could be images, videos, social posts, or reviews (Picture 3).

Picture 3: Types of UGC (IAB 2019)

As consumers confirm authenticity with UGC and the survey by Stackla (2019) showed that 86% of consumers admitted the importance of authenticity when deciding which brand they like and support, UGC is an appealing tool for advertisers to approach their consumers.

2.4.2 Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives

The relationship between CSR initiatives and company performance has been receiving research attention (Aguinis & Glavas 2012; Cheng, Ioannou & Serafeim 2014). Studies have indicated the benefits of implementing CSR practices, such as enhancing corporate reputation (Hildebrand, Sen & Bhattacharya 2011), boosting value creation, increasing demand, and decreasing price sensitivity (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Cheng et al., 2014). In this research, we discuss CSR initiatives in the scope of advertising and marketing. According to Rangan, Chase, and Karim (2015), CSR is an ethical management concept that aims to "align a company's social and environmental activities with its business purpose and values." The commonly known "shared value" suggests CRS initiatives to

create economic value in a way that also brings social value at the same time. CRS initiatives have direct and indirect impacts on corporate and organizational reputation (Hildebrand et al. 2011). Hildebrand et al. (2011) also indicated that CSR is a quasi-perfect strategic lever in marketing to help companies align their different identities.

Kim and Lee (2019) researched the relationship between CSR fit, CSR authenticity, and brand attitude. The study proved that consumers perceive a company as more genuine when it executes CRS activities related to its industry or product characteristics. Therefore, when companies plan their CSR activities, they should consider consumer psychology and their potential involvement in proposed CSR initiatives.

Edelman (2019) surveyed 16,000 people in eight markets to study consumer trust towards brands. In this survey, 81% of people said companies' social-oriented purposes drive their decision-making. The survey also revealed that only 21% of participants thought the brands they used keep society's best interests in their minds. Noticeably, 56% of participants felt that brands were using social issues as marketing ploys to boost their sales. With this belief, consumers tend to distrust brands' CRS authenticity. This behavior negatively affects how consumers view the brands. (Kim & Lee 2019). The report also revealed that besides product-oriented and consumer-oriented concerns, societal concerns were why brand trust had been becoming more important to them.

Cox (2019) presented the result of a survey by Clutch, which showed that 75% of people were more likely to shop for brands that supported an issue they agreed with. When the survey asked about the company attributes that consumers felt most important to them, around three-fourths of people mentioned environmentally friendly practices. The rest cared about companies giving back to the local community, social responsibility, supporting social movements, and at last, price or value. For those reasons, it is undoubtful that consumers expect businesses to take stances on social movements and contribute societal values. The higher the consumers' involvement in the companies' CSR initiatives, the more positive effect these initiatives will have on their brand attitudes (Kim & Lee 2019).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research questions

The purpose of the study is to validate whether positive attitudes toward UGC and CSR initiatives in digital advertisements positively influence brand experience via advertising. The survey consisted of questions that clarify the correlations between the mentioned attitudes in digital advertisements and advertising awareness, advertising trust, and advertising purchase intention. The authors used a five-point Likert-scale survey to collect data. Firstly, the study evaluated consumers' views of using UGC and CSR initiatives in digital advertisements. Then, the authors utilized only survey profiles in which participants expressed positive attitudes to perform further analysis to answer research questions. The study did not include answers expressing negative attitudes in data analysis, as these data did not contribute to the study's objectives and goals.

- **Research question 1:** Do positive attitudes toward UGC in digital advertisements positively influence brand experience?
- **Research question 2:** Do positive attitudes toward CSR initiatives in digital advertisements positively influence brand experience?

3.2 Research design

A survey was developed based on established constructs' measures from existing studies with some modifications. The authors conducted the survey using Google Forms. Participants must have seen digital advertisements on some online platforms within the last six months. In total, the survey obtained 146 answers. However, 12 respondents answered "No" to the questions "Have you seen advertisements from at least one of the above-selected platforms?" The authors excluded these 12 answers from the sample size, leaving the 134 accepted survey answers.

The survey has eight sections. Each of them has three to six Likert-scale questions. Attitudinal measures toward UGC and CSR initiatives were six adjective pairs taken from Batra and Ahtola (1990). Four awareness items were

taken from Kilei, Iravo, and Omwenga (2016), while four trust items were taken from Chi (2011). Finally, three items for measuring purchase intention were adapted from Wang (2015). The authors calculated the mean as a descriptive statistic for every research construct. The study defined answers as "negative" when the mean value fell below 2.00. Mean values between 2.01 and 3.00 produced "neutral" answers. A mean value above 3.00 signified a "positive" answer.

4   FINDINGS

4.1   Respondent profile

Table 1. The survey's respondent profile

Item	Measure	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	52	38.8%
	Female	79	59.0%
	Unknown	3	2.2%
	Total	**134**	**100%**
Region	**Measure**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Americas	19	14.2%
	Europe	93	69.4%
	Asia	12	9.0%
	Africa	4	3.0%
	Middle East	3	2.2%
	Australia	3	2.2%
	Total	**134**	**100%**
Age	**Measure**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	17 or younger	12	8.9%
	18-20	19	14.2%

	21-29	75	56.0%
	30-39	21	15.7%
	40-49	7	5.2%
	50-59	0	0.00%
	60+	0	0.00%
	Total	**134**	**100%**
Have you seen advertisements from at least one of the above-selected platforms? (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, etc.)	Yes	134	91.8%
	No	12	8.2%
	Total	**146**	**100%**

Most of the participants were females (58.96%), followed by males (38.81%). 2.24% of the participants did not want to indicate their gender. In terms of the age groups, 21-29 year-olds produced 55.97% of the answers. None of the participants were over 50 years old, limiting the research's reliability in the older age group. Most of the participants resided in Europe (69.40%), followed by Americas (14.18%). The number of answers from Africa, the Middle East, and Australia was low. This again limited the reliability of the results in these geographical locations.

4.2   Descriptive statistics, reliability, and validity results

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, reliability, and validity results

Construct	Mean	Alpha (α)
Attitudes toward UGC in digital advertisements	3.30	0.936
Attitudes toward CSR initiatives in digital advertisements	3.83	0.943
Advertising awareness (from UGC)	2.93	0.938

Advertising awareness (from CSR initiatives)	3.42	0.939
Advertising trust (from UGC)	3.07	0.954
Advertising trust (from CSR initiatives)	3.48	0.956
Advertising purchase intention (from UGC)	2.96	0.939
Advertising purchase intention (from CSR initiatives)	3.31	0.949

Key: (α) Alpha: Cronbach's alpha

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency. This study used it to measure the reliability of multiple Likers questions. The reliability coefficient of 0.70 is considered acceptable. Table 2 shows that all Cronbach's alpha coefficients are above 0.9, meaning the survey's result follows high internal consistency.

4.3 Results

The results revealed consumers' view of UGC and CSR initiatives usage in digital advertisements. Ninety-five of the 134 participants rated their attitudes above 3.00 towards UGC usage, reflecting positive attitudes. Following this, 21 answers indicated neutral stances, and 18 showed negative attitudes.

Table 3. Respondents' attitudes toward UGC usage

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Attitudes toward UGC usage in digital advertisements	71%	16%	13%

Additionally, 117 of the 134 participants rated their attitudes above 3.00 toward CSR initiatives usage in digital advertisements, reflecting positive attitudes. Following this, seven answers indicated neutral attitudes, and ten answers showed negative attitudes.

Table 4. Respondents' attitudes toward CSR initiatives usage

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Attitudes toward CSR initiatives usage in digital advertisements	87%	5%	8%

The result indicated that people generally react positively toward UGC and CSR initiatives usage in digital advertisements. Next, the study examined whether these positive attitudes correlate to consumers' advertising awareness, trust, and purchase intention. As 95 of 134 participants viewed UGC in digital advertisements positively, the authors utilized only these 95 answer sets to perform data analysis. Likewise, as 117 of 134 participants viewed CSR initiatives in digital advertisements positively, the authors analyzed only these 117 answer sets in their data analysis.

Positive attitudes toward UGC and CSR initiatives in digital advertisements and advertising awareness

The analysis revealed that positive viewpoints toward UGC in digital advertisements had a positive relationship with advertising awareness. The Pearson correlation coefficient was $r(93) = .62$ and $p < .001$. The value of 0.62 showed that there was a moderately strong positive relationship between these two elements. With $r(115) = .50$ and $p < .001$, there is a moderately strong positive correlation between consumers' positive reactions to CSR initiatives in digital advertisements and their advertising awareness.

Positive attitudes toward UGC and CSR initiatives in digital advertisements and advertising trust

According to the study's findings, there was a correlation between positive stances toward UGC in digital advertisements and advertising trust. The Pearson correlation coefficient here was $r(93) = .61$ and $p < .001$., indicating this correction was moderately strongly positive. The correlation between the positive views of CSR initiatives usage in digital advertisements and advertising trust was also moderately positive at $r(115) = .52$, $p < .001$.

Positive attitudes toward UGC and CSR initiatives in digital advertisements and advertising purchase intention

The relationship between positive perspectives of using UGC in digital advertisements and advertising purchasing intention, although technically positive, was weak. Pearson correlation coefficient for this relationship was $r(93)$

= .252 and *p* < .013. The correlation between the positive views of CSR initiatives usage in digital advertisements and advertising purchase intention was also moderately positive at was also weak at $r(115) = .38$, $p < .001$.

Table 5. Results of correlation testing

Correlations	*r*	P value	Results
Positive attitudes toward UGC and advertising awareness	.62	< 0.01	Supported & significant
Positive attitudes toward UGC and advertising trust	.61	< 0.01	Supported & significant
Positive attitudes toward UGC and advertising purchase intention	.25	.013.	Supported (weak) & significant
Positive attitudes toward CSR initiatives and advertising awareness	.50	< 0.01	Supported & significant
Positive attitudes toward CSR initiatives and advertising trust	.52	< 0.01	Supported & significant
Positive attitudes toward CSR initiatives and advertising purchase intention	.38	< 0.01	Supported (weak) & significant

Accepted level of significance = (p < 0.05)

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Conclusions of the data analysis

The authors distributed a quantitative survey virtually using a five-point Likert scale to measure the defined constructs. After excluding the 12 profiles stating that they had not seen any digital advertisements in the past 6 months, the study accepted 134 answers. Among these, 95 respondents felt optimistic about UGC, while up to 117 people felt that way for CSR initiatives. The study used the Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*) to evaluate the relationship between these positive attitudes and advertising awareness, trust, and purchase intention. P-values revealed the level of significance of proposed correlations. All correlations were successfully confirmed. Hence, both positive attitudes toward UGC and CSR initiatives in digital advertisements had positive relationships with advertising awareness, advertising trust, and advertising purchase intention. The relationship among these variables varied from weak to strong.

Over 70% of participants felt positive (mean above 3.00) about using UGC in digital advertisements, while this number for CSR initiatives was up to 87%. It means that people think UGC and CSR initiatives is "valuable", "useful", "beneficial", "pleasant", "nice" and "agreeable" to some extent. The finding reinforces the study's direction: examining whether there is a relationship between positive stances toward UGC and CSR initiatives and advertising brand experience.

According to the study's findings, the relationship between positive attitudes toward UGC and advertising awareness was identified as the strongest. Consumers are more likely to recognize or recall the advertisements that utilize UGC. The study also confirmed a positive relationship between consumers' positive views of CSR initiatives usage and advertising awareness, even though its strength was weaker than the above-mentioned relationship. Prior studies show that advertising awareness has a positive effect on brand awareness (Alhaddad 2015; Rizkia & Martini 2018). Also, advertising measures are seemingly the same as brand awareness (Romaniuk & Sharp 2003). Therefore, referring to the study's findings and existing literature, positive attitudes toward UGC and CSR initiatives in digital advertising positively affect brand awareness through advertising awareness.

The second-strongest relationship found in this study was between positive attitudes toward UGC and advertising trust. When people see UGC in an advertisement and react positively, they tend to trust that advertisement. This insight is consistent with prior findings (MacKinnon 2012; Ramirez 2021) that confirmed consumer trust in UGC. Positive viewpoints toward CSR initiatives were also found to have a positive relationship with advertising trust. As advertising is a channel for brands to communicate with consumers, it is crucial to gain consumer trust. Brand communication has a positive effect on brand trust through brand satisfaction (Azize et al. 2012), while brand satisfaction leads to brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook 2001). Therefore, referring to the study's findings and existing literature, positive attitudes toward UGC and CSR initiatives in digital advertising positively influence brand trust through advertising trust.

Consumers rely on UGC to make purchase-related decisions (Kiran & Vasantha 2016; MacKinnon 2012; Malthouse et al. 2016; Stackla 2019). The present study

showed that there was technically a positive relationship between consumers' positive views of UGC usage and advertising purchase intention, although this relationship was weak. The same result applied their positive stances toward CSR initiatives and advertising purchase intention. It could be explained that consumers do not develop a significant purchase intention immediately and solely from consuming UGC or CSR initiatives from a particular advertisement. Attitudes toward advertisements have a significant effect on purchase intention (Sallam & Algammash 2016). Therefore, referring to the study's findings and existing literature, positive attitudes toward UGC and CSR initiatives in digital advertising positively influence brand purchase intention through advertising purchase intention.

As positive attitudes toward UGC and CSR initiatives in digital advertisement positively influence brand awareness, brand trust, and brand purchase intention, the study confirmed that they positively affect the brand experience.

Research question 1: Do positive attitudes toward UGC in digital advertisements positively influence brand experience?
Conclusion: Yes.

Research question 2: Do positive attitudes toward CSR initiatives in digital advertisements positively influence brand experience?
Conclusion: Yes.

5.2   Limitations and future research directions

The study's findings are subject to some limitations. Firstly, since the survey was distributed online without any geographical restrictions, the research participants were geographically scattered. Because most of the participants came from Europe, the results are more accurate for European consumers than consumers from other regions such as Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Australia. Secondly, because the research survey did not receive any participants whose age is above 50 years old, the reliability is affected for those age groups. Moreover, although the researchers found significant relationships between positive attitudes toward UGC and CSR initiatives usage in digital advertisements and brand experience, the study did not evaluate their causal relationships.

Future studies can limit their focus to a specific location to gain insights exclusively from consumers in that location. The researchers were able to distribute the survey to many online platforms but did not have access to a large-scale database of people of different ages. Therefore, it would be interesting to see the effect of ages on the findings in future research. Additionally, scholars can conduct hypothesis research to validate the cause-and-effect of the mentioned correlations to deepen the insights.

5.3   Implications for academia and practice

In terms of academia, new correlations were empirically tested in this study. Future studies could stimulate further research on the causal relationships between consumers' attitudes toward UGC and CSR initiatives and brand experience. The authors evaluated brand experience via brand awareness, brand trust, and brand purchase intention in this study. As for practice, this study is beneficial to marketers who practice digital advertising as a part of their strategies. Marketers can consider using UGC and CSR initiatives as materials for their digital advertisements to enhance the brand experience. It is important to note that brands should be honest when crafting their messages with UGC and CSR initiatives during the current trust crisis to maximize their effectiveness. The authors suggest that marketers test different UGC formats and (or) CSR initiatives on various channels such as social media, search networks, banner ads, etc. to find out which contents work best on which channels specifically for their businesses.

6   CONCLUSIONS

As statistics show the alarming extent of distrust consumers have towards digital advertising, the authors examined how brands can create engaging, involving, and reliable advertisements to enhance the perceived brand experience. Through studying literature and recent research, the authors suggested that UGC and CSR initiatives in digital advertisements could serve this purpose. The study used brand awareness, brand trust, and brand purchase intention to analyze consumer

brand experience through consuming advertising. Using the Pearson correlation coefficient, all proposed correlations in the study were successfully confirmed, and p-values (below 0.05) proved their significance. Specifically, both positive perspectives of UGC and CSR initiatives' usage correlated to advertising awareness, advertising trust, and advertising purchase intention. Referring to theoretical research and the study's findings, positive attitudes toward UGC and CSR initiatives in digital advertisements positively influence the brand experience.

As most participants reacted positively toward UGC usage (70%) and CSR initiatives usage (87%), the study recommends brands to utilize these two elements in their advertising activities. Because advertising is a communication channel between brands and consumers initiated by brands, their messages must stand out from the crowded advertising market and be credible to be trusted. The present study found strong relationships between positive attitudes toward UGC and CSR initiatives and advertising awareness, as well as advertising trust. This finding advises marketers to implement UGC and CSR initiatives in their digital advertisements. In the study context, UGC must reflect a level of personal contribution, available for public comments and discussions, and get its creation out of any context of a profession. UGC under digital forms could be images, videos, social posts, or reviews. If brands choose to execute CSR initiatives, they can be environmental, human rights related, philanthropic or economic. Consumers are more likely to perceive a company as more genuine if they implement CSR activities related to its industry or product characteristics. Therefore, when planning CSR initiatives and promoting them through advertisements, marketers should consider their authenticity and consumers' potential involvements in those CSR initiatives for the highest campaign performance.

This study also suggests a weak relationship between positive attitudes toward UGC and CSR initiatives in digital advertisements and advertising purchase intention. Consumers seem to not develop a significant purchase intention solely from consuming UGC or seeing CSR initiatives from digital advertisements. Other factors such as product quality, packaging, and endorsements from trusted sources involved in the purchase intention developing process. It worth noting that the present study investigated the proposed relationship at the advertising

level rather than the brand level. Therefore, it would be interesting if future research picks up this topic and validates these relationships at both levels for comparisons. This study is beneficial for marketing practitioners who involve digital advertising as a marketing channel. It also draws attention to the alarming amount of distrust consumers have towards advertising that needs to be addressed. The authors of this study highly recommend marketers test UGC and CSR initiatives in their digital advertisements to enhance campaign performances and consumer brand experience. It worth noting that brands should aim to be authentic and transparent in their advertising activities to gain consumer trust during the current trust crisis.

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