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Additional Information

A framework for Facebook advertising effectiveness: A behavioral perspective

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A B S T R A C T

Social network use is a global phenomenon, with Facebook taking prime position as preferred social network service. Use of Facebook is huge in developed and developing economies, yet the immense marketing potential of Facebook's full range of advertising tools (paid and free/organic) has been under-researched. This cross- country study examines advertising on Facebook. Social influence theory and regulatory focus theory provide the theoretical grounding. Data for a sample of 802 respondents (South Africa n = 401; Australia n = 401) were gathered. The results of structural equation modeling show that in both a developed context (Australia) and a developing context (South Africa), there are significant relationships between the constructs considered in the model (privacy concerns, trust, importance of control, advertising intrusiveness, attitudes toward ads, adver- tising value, attitudes toward Facebook advertising, and behavior toward the advertised and ad message). Importantly, however, these contexts differ in terms of users' avoidance approaches.

1. Introduction

Approximately a third of the world's population used a social net- work at least once a month in 2017 (eMarketer, 2017). Facebook alone had 2.23 billion monthly users as of 2018 (Statistica, 2018). Thus, it is reasonable to infer that Facebook is the world's foremost social network service (SNS) and a tool that has become an integrated part of con- sumers' lives. The growth in social network use is evident not only in developed countries but also, in fact even more so, in developing countries (Internet World Stats Report, 2017).

Social media offer numerous marketing opportunities (Fink, Koller, Gartner, Floh, & Harms, 2019). Social media advertising is one such opportunity that is becoming an increasingly attractive way of enhan- cing advertising effectiveness (Lee & Hong, 2016; Shen, Chioub, Hsiao, Wanga, & Li, 2016). SNSs present opportunities for brands to advertise in a more targeted and personalized manner. Unsurprisingly, therefore, brands are allocating more and more of their advertising expenditure to social media (Knoll, 2016; Okazaki & Taylors, 2013). To leverage this new means of advertising, advertisers and brands must understand what leads social media users to engage in positive behavior toward brands and toward their marketing messages.

Traditional website advertisements are mostly delivered through banner ads, or sponsored links, that are clearly identified as marketing communication messages. However, Facebook advertising differs from traditional website advertisement because Facebook ads are often in- distinguishable from user content. Most Facebook ads are designed to resemble a typical post, making it difficult for Facebook users to dif- ferentiate between advertising and other types of user-generated con- tent (Sanne & Wiese, 2018; Taylor, Lewin, & Strutton, 2011). Nielsen (2010) differentiates between two principal types of social network advertisements (SNAs): "homepage ads", which have a social context; and 'organic impressions', that appear on friends' newsfeeds as "stories" in reference to the brands with which friends engage.

Brands can thus engage and communicate with Facebook users through paid advertising or through organic (free) advertising such as content posted on their brand pages that can be liked, commented on, or shared (Curran, Graham, & Temple, 2011; Logan, 2014). Paid ad- vertising includes sponsored posts, pay-per-click ads, carousel ads and video ads (Blackburn, 2017; Facebook. , 2011; Gaber & Wright, 2014), to name but a few.

However, research that focuses on both paid and free advertising is scant. Renfroe (2015) predicted that, as SNA evolves, the lines between paid content (ads) and organic content will become even more blurred, hampering users' ability to distinguish between the two. Even though some academics' endeavors to expand our current understanding of social media in the context of marketing (Alalwan et al., 2017), few researchers have addressed the issue of SNA (Taylor et al., 2011), and research about how SNA is perceived is limited (Yaakop, Anuar, Omar, & Liung, 2012).

Knoll (2016) conducted an extensive review of SNS advertising re- search, identifying several gaps that still exist. Research, in particular research on Facebook, is still in its early stages in developing countries (Duffett, 2015; Rahman & Rashid, 2018). Our study follows Knoll (2016) suggestions that researchers should first focus on the effect of advertising on consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, espe- cially behavior other than word-of-mouth (Stephen, 2016), second in- vestigate the possible collaborations between social media and tradi- tional media, and lastly measure actual

behavior instead of just behavioral intentions. Furthermore, despite the growth and popularity of social media and SNA, there is limited knowledge (both theoretical and empirical) of the cross-country effectiveness of these platforms as advertising vehicles and of the influence of SNA on consumer behavior (Johnston, Khalil, Nhat Hahn Le, & Cheng, 2018; Wesley, Khalil, Le, & Cheng, 2018). Jung, Shim, Jin, and Khang (2016) suggested that future research is required to explore the connection between attitudes and behavior toward social media advertising through larger, more diverse cross-cultural studies. As identified by Johnston et al. (2018), Jung et al. (2016), Knoll (2016), Stephen (2016), Wesley et al. (2018), and (Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi, & Algharabat, 2017), there is scant empirical research, leaving unanswered questions. To address some of these gaps the aim of this study is to develop and empirically test a framework for Facebook advertising effectiveness. As key variables for the assessment of Facebook advertising effectiveness, this study uses perceptions of the various messages and their characteristics (ad value and intrusiveness), SNS characteristics (trust), consumer characteristics (privacy concerns, general attitude toward advertising, and importance of control), and attitudes toward Facebook advertisements and the resultant brand and message behaviors.

Social influence theory is employed to frame the study, reflecting
the social aspect of SNSs, while Regulatory focus theory (RFT) serves as the main theoretical underpinning because it is a goal-pursuit theory of people's perceptions and behavior. Psychological theory has often been applied in communication research and, more recently, in investiga- tions of SNA (Mosteller & Poddar, 2017; Zarouali, Poels, Walrave, & Ponnet, 2018).

The lack of empirical evidence based on behavioral data makes this study valuable for a wide academic (and industry) readership. The value of the research also lies in its cross-country approach, whereby the conceptual framework is tested in a developed country (Australia) and a developing country (South Africa). This approach reflects the fact that Facebook is a global phenomenon (Kirkpatrick, 2011). As we continue to embrace (and comprehend) the apparently endless array of social media platforms, brands are determining not only how best to engage with their local communities but also how to make the most of the global audience (Nitu, 2014). The findings of our study make the-oretical and practical contributions in relation to advertising on SNSs such as Facebook. The remainder of the article presents the literature review, the research method, the results, and the discussion. The paper concludes with the limitations and suggestions for future research.

2. Literature review

Social media are deeply integrated into people's daily lives, with 18 million Australians being active social media users (Social Media Statistics Australia, 2019). With specific reference to Facebook, the latest statistics indicate that 16 million Australians are on Facebook, while 50% of Australians use Facebook daily. Regarding demographics, 53% of Facebook users are female and 47% are male, with most users aged between 25 and 39 years (Social Media Statistics Australia, 2019). Facebook's popularity in South Africa is also huge, and it is by far the largest platform in the country, with 21 million users. There is an al- most equal split between genders, with most users aged between 31 and

40 years (Pienaar, 2018). Unsurprisingly, brands are capitalizing on Facebook's popularity to connect and communicate with their con- sumers.

Social media advertising is a general term referring to all forms of advertising, whether explicit or implicit, that are distributed through social network sites (Taylor et al., 2011). Nielsen (2010) classifies Fa- cebook advertising as "homepage ads" that are located on the sidebar of the Facebook page that contains brand content but that also allow users to engage with the brand. There are three distinct classes: first, paid advertising refers primarily to "homepage ads". Second, free adver- tising (or earned media) refers to "organic impressions" that often blur the lines for users because these are "social stories" that appear on friends' newsfeeds as a result of friends' engagement with a brand. Lastly, "social impressions" refer to a combination of paid and organic advertising. Social media users are thus open to a multitude of influences when using social media platforms. These influences include marketing communication messages (e.g., advertising), peer-information sources (such as comments or shares), and the inherent characteristics of the specific social network site (e.g., trust, control, and privacy concerns). Walther et al. (2010) suggest that these are all social agents that in- fluence social media users. Furthermore, social media users often have social relationships with the information sources to which they are exposed (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007), linking them to other users as well as brands, as demonstrated by Facebook fan pages. Con- sequently, users are likely to be influenced through these relationships. Therefore, social influence theories offer an applicable theoretical lens to investigate Facebook advertising.

Knoll (2016) found that social theories (e.g. social identify and so- cial influence) are often used in social media research due to the in- fluence of social relationships formed through the creation and ex- change of content by users on these sites (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social influence thus ensues when one's feelings, opinions, or behaviors are impacted by others. Social influence can be seen in socialization, persuasion, marketing, or, as in this study, advertising. Creating a connection with other users or brands as a Facebook friend is thus enough to make that individual or brand a source of influence, and social influence via these systems is spontaneous (Aral & Walker, 2011). Therefore, as soon as an individual forms a connection with an ad- vertised brand, social influence can occur without any additional action from the brand.

In addition to understanding the relational aspect of SNSs such as Facebook, the use of social influence theories also shows that in- formation and interaction resulting from these social relationships can influence users' perceptions and decision-making processes by en- couraging promotion or prevention strategies, as reflected by RFT. RFT refers to self-regulation toward desired outcomes, stipulating that in- dividuals are steered by two separate motivational systems: promotion and prevention (Higgins, 1997). Firstly, promotion is an orientation toward positive outcomes based on nurturing needs and goals such as growth or advancement. In contrast, prevention reflects an avoidance orientation that is anchored in protection, safety, and security needs (e.g., aversion to risk and losses). It can take the form of defective, defensive, or disruptive strategies or behavior.

According to Wirtz and Lewin (2009), the regulatory focus can be instigated by situational and relational factors – that is, advertisements (situational) and social media (relational) in the context of this study. Individuals learn from their exchanges with others to regulate them- selves in relation to promotion- or prevention-focused strategies (Higgins, 1997).

Conceivably, therefore, consumers' interactions with a brand or brand message could depend on consumers' promotion-fo- cused or prevention-focused tendencies to achieve desired outcomes. The promotional (or approach) behaviors described by RFT focus on nurturance-related gains (Higgins, 1997). Accordingly, users with a positive attachment to social media enjoy gains such as affirmation, enjoyment, and connection (Van Meter, Grisaffe, & Chonko, 2015).

Research in online contexts also confirms that trust is associated with a promotion orientation (Wirtz & Lewin, 2009). Online gains, for the purpose of our study, are evident in the advertising value obtained from information, entertainment or social interaction with advertisements and trust in the social network.

By contrast, avoidance behaviors related to security regulation prevention (Higgins, 1997) through tactics that center on preventing negative consequences, hence referring to a sensitivity to the absence or presence of negative outcomes or costs. Online prevention motives, for example, include minimizing or preventing personal data from being collected or disseminated to third parties through spam, unsolicited ads, and the like (Poddar, Mosteller, & Scholder-Ellen, 2009). Blocking cookies, not disclosing personal information, and employing control over receiving advertisements exemplify prevention-related behaviors. Privacy concerns are also a precursor to prevention-related defective, defensive (control over receiving ads), and disruptive behaviors. Avoidance behaviors are operationalized in our study as privacy con- cerns, intrusiveness, and control over receiving advertisements (Wirtz & Lewin, 2009).

Fig. 1 portrays the conceptual model, and the following subsections provide theoretical support for the constructs and the hypothesized relationships.

2.1. Privacy concerns, control, and trust

Social media marketing has massive potential for companies and consumers, but it may also lead to privacy violations. Brand advertising on interactive social platforms such as Facebook could be seen as an invasion of users' privacy. Consequently, the growth of SNSs as ad- vertising platforms has important repercussions for consumers and advertisers (Lin & Kim, 2016). Privacy issues are especially applicable because Facebook allows advertisers to personalize and customize their marketing communication messages for individuals by using these in- dividuals' personal information. Although targeting and personalization increase advertising effectiveness for brands, they can also increase users' privacy concerns (Jung, 2017). Research has revealed a negative relationship between age and privacy disclosure. As people get older, they become more conscious, and the disclosure of sensitive informa- tion becomes less common (Li, Lin, & Wang, 2015; Litt, 2013).

Global Internet users have high levels of distrust in social media sites, and 63% of Internet users report that "social media" have too much power (Ipsos Internet Security and Trust Global Report, 2018). This view is even stronger among South Africans, with only 44% trusting ads on social networks (Reidon, 2015). South Africa (48%) was also the highest ranked country out of the 25 surveyed – followed by the USA (40%) and, further down the rankings, Australia (31%) – in in- dicating that Internet companies have contributed a great extent to the increase in online privacy concerns (Ipsos Internet Security and Trust Global Report, 2018).

Balancing the benefits of social media use with users' privacy con- cerns is challenging. One way of striking this balance is to provide users in the online environment with more control (Wang, Lee, & Wang, 1998). It has also been suggested that consumers may experience more privacy risks when they perceive advertisements to be intrusive (Bauer, Reichardt, Barnes, & Neumann, 2005; Merisavo et al., 2007). This perception may be the case with SNS advertising that users did not give their permission to receive. One could thus argue that the more con- cerned users are about their privacy on Facebook, the more control they want to protect their privacy, thus increasing the importance of having control. One such example is control over receiving advertisements on social media sites either by giving permission to receive ads from brands or by declining this option.

The importance of control is evident in research (Milne & Boza, 1998; Phelps, Nowak, & Ferrell, 2000) that has shown that consumers' level of concern over using and sharing personal information increases when they have limited or no control. Control or permission over re- ceiving Facebook ads could be viewed as defensive behavior. Research has shown that perceived control negatively impact perceived privacy risks (Hajli & Lin, 2016), while privacy concern is an antecedent to RFT prevention-focused behaviors (Wirtz & Lewin, 2009). Using RFT rea- soning, privacy concerns can be classified as a prevention orientation, which would imply a need to negate this risk with prevention-beha- vioral strategies such as control over receiving ads on Facebook from advertisers. We thus hypothesize the following:

H1:. Privacy concerns positively influence control over receiving Facebook advertising.

Supplying consumers with control over the use and distribution of their information is generally considered to affect consumers' trust in online brands (Culnan, 2000; Phelps et al., 2000). Providing control to consumers typically refers to "opting-out" or "opting-in." Commonly, "opting-out" requires consumers to take action, whereas "opting-in" requires the brand to take action to get permission from the consumer. Trust conveys a confidence in the behavior of another or an ability to depend on another or predict another's behavior (Thorelli, 1990). In support of this contention, we follow Culnan and Armstrong (1999) reasoning by arguing that, in relationships involving non-personal ex- changes such as SNA, choice practices and permission marketing that are perceived as being "fair" can result in trust in a brand. Trust is a result of the extent and kind of control one has in a relationship (Heath & Bryant, 1992). As a result it could be argue that trust in the online environment results from online users' feelings of "control" over the access that online firms or brand have.

Trust is best accomplished by allowing the balance of power to move toward users or consumers. However, if consumers signal the need for more control over receiving advertisements, this signal is an indication that the power has not yet shifted. Research on organiza- tional behavior (Hosmer, 1995) and consumer behavior (Wirtz & Lewin, 2009) has shown that trust is primarily promotion focused. Si- milarly, in marketing, trust is viewed as fundamental in relationships between brands and consumers (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), even more so in online contexts (Luo, 2002) and on social networks. Mosteller and Poddar (2017) found that perceived control over personal information use positively influences a consumer's trust in social media websites. Hoffman, Novak, and Peralta (1999) argued that if users were given more control in online environments, companies would be rewarded with consumer trust. Arguably, therefore, based on social

influence theory and RFT, if a social network site such as Facebook or the brands on that site provide users with control over the marketing messages they receive, users may have greater trust in the network. We thus hypothesize the following:

H2:. The importance of control negatively influences trust in Facebook

Mosteller and Poddar (2017) argued that trust is fundamental in relationships, implying that one party is expected to perform actions that would result in positive outcomes and not to take actions that would result in negative outcomes (e.g., spamming or showing un- wanted ads). Because social network environments are social yet pri- vate spaces, users often favor trusted sources (Leppaniemi & Karjaluoto, 2005; Vatanparast & Asil, 2009), and this is reflective of the RFT pro- motion orientation. Schlosser, Shavitt, and Kanfer (1999) reported that trust is one of the factors that influence attitudes toward Internet ad- vertising. Trust in the brand or firm leads to positive consumer attitudes because the firm's action creates a positive relationship with their consumers (Hajli & Lin, 2016). We thus hypothesize the following:

H3:. Trust positively influences attitudes toward Facebook advertising.

Permission or control is considered an important factor that affects attitudes (Barnes & Scornavacca, 2004; Barwise & Strong, 2002; Kavassalis et al., 2003). Tsang, Ho, and Liang (2004) found that per- mission-based advertising leads to positive attitudes, whereas un- approved advertising (spamming) result in negative attitudes in the context of mobile advertising. Permission-based advertising provides more control to consumers and, accordingly, enhances consumers' in- clination to accept advertising in a mobile context (Leppaniemi & Karjaluoto, 2005). The importance that consumers attach to control is thus a reflection of consumers' feelings of a lack of control. Attaching a high importance to the amount of control users have over receiving advertisements reflects the imbalance they feel. Thus, this high im- portance of control would lead to attitudes that are more negative. Consumers would thus be using an RFT defensive-preventive approach. We thus hypothesize the following:

H4:. The importance of control negatively influences attitudes toward Facebook advertising.

2.2.   Advertising intrusiveness

As social media advertising grows, users become more exposed to advertising on Facebook. This increased exposure can result in negative perceptions (Shen et al., 2016). Advertising intrusiveness is defined as "the advertisement's ability to interrupt users to the extent that their train of thought is disrupted" (McCoy, Everard, Polak, & Galletta, 2008, p. 676). Findings from previous studies have revealed that intrusions and irritation lead to negative attitudes and ultimately affect behavior (McCoy et al., 2008). The intensity of invasiveness perceived by con- sumers is likely to effect SNS users' attitudes toward SNA. Li, Edwards, and Lee (2002) argued that consumers might perceive advertisements as invasive when they impede their goal-oriented behaviors. More re- cently, Lin and Kim (2016) also identified intrusiveness as a valid antecedent to consumer

attitudes toward sponsored advertising (Lin & Kim, 2016). According to RFT, advertising intrusiveness has a negative or preventive (disruptive) orientation. We thus hypothesize the fol- lowing:

H5:. Advertising intrusiveness negatively influences attitudes toward Facebook advertising.

2.3. General advertising attitudes

Tan and Chia (2007) found that attitudes toward general advertising have a mutually reinforcing and causal effect on attitudes toward ad- vertising on television. Similarly, Beneke, Cumming, Stevens, and Versfeld (2010) found that the more positive a consumer's attitude toward advertising is in general, the more positive the attitude toward mobile advertising will be. Yang (2003, p. 60) findings suggest that Internet users' beliefs about online advertising are comparable to users' beliefs about traditional advertising. Furthermore, the theory of cog- nitive dissonance describes an individual's need to keep the cognitive system in balance by "integrating a single attitude into his overall 'at- titudinal system'" (Bauer et al., 2005). Doing so ensures that the si- tuation "feels right" because there is an inherent fit, and this fit links to RFT in the form of a promoter orientation. This fit helps consumers to receive and evaluate experiences throughout a particular message de- livery such as that of Facebook ads by fitting in with their existing advertising attitudes. The implication is that general advertising atti- tudes may affect attitudes toward a specific advertisement or adver- tising in a specific context such as Facebook. We thus hypothesize:

H6:. Facebook users' general advertising attitudes positively influence these users' attitudes toward Facebook advertising.

2.4. Advertising value

Advertising value is a measure of advertising effectiveness and is a "subjective evaluation of the relative worth or utility of advertising to consumers" (Ducoffe, 1996). Advertising value offers a general depic- tion of the worth of marketing messages for consumers. SNS advertising value may be a combination of several elements such as the perception of the advertising message as being informative, entertaining, or en- hancing social image, the value of online personalization, and the credibility of the advertiser, to name but a few.

Haghirian and Madlberger (2005) posited that the value of website advertisements has a significant influence on consumers' attitudes to- ward web advertising. Several researchers have confirmed that the value obtained from advertising positively influences consumers' atti- tudes and behaviors toward Internet advertising (Ha, Park, & Lee, 2014; Taylor et al., 2011). Moreover, perceived value improves consumers' attitudes and behaviors toward products and services (Gallarza & Saura, 2006). Thus, the higher the perceived value of an advertisement is, the more positive the attitude toward the advertisement will be. Conse- quently, the more positive the reaction and response toward the ad- vertising will be too.

In addition, online advertising research on the relationship between perceived advertising value and consumers' advertising responses has confirmed the existence of such an association (e.g., Logan, Bright, & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Taylor et al., 2011; Zeng, Tao, Yang, & Xie, 2017).

It is suggested that consumers tend to like or approve an adver- tisement if and when the advertisement's ability to provide value, re- flected by a promotional orientation in RFT terms, is recognized. Advertising via Facebook that is perceived as valuable is therefore ex- pected to reflect positively on users' attitudes toward advertising on Facebook. We thus hypothesize the following:

H7:. Advertising value positively influences attitudes toward Facebook advertising.

2.5. Attitudes and behavior toward Facebook advertising

According to Pollay and Mittal (1993) and Yang (2003), attitudes toward an advertisement are described as the tendency to respond in a positive or negative manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion. Attitudes toward advertising affect consumers' responses toward advertising, which ultimately affect their purchasing behavior (Mitchell & Olson, 1981, p. 320). Boateng and Okoe (2015) also confirmed a positive connection between attitudes toward social media advertising and behavior. Still, there is little evi- dence of how social media marketing messages influence consumers' behavior toward a brand.

A Facebook advertisement is a stimulus designed to encourage a consumer to engage with a brand or product. The effectiveness of an advertisement is usually measured in terms of conversation or click- through rates. The behavioral action toward online advertising is also typically determined by "clicking" on an advertisement (Wang & Sun, 2010, p. 335) or purchase behavior. Thus, users' behavior regarding SNS advertising can take various forms such as advertising-related be- havior (e.g., viewing advertisements or liking advertisements) and firm- related behavior (e.g., visiting the brand's Facebook page or purchasing its offering).

In this study, the reported behavior was examined in terms of be- havior toward the advertisement and toward the firm or brand. Johnston et al. (2018) findings confirm that a positive attitude toward SNA increases social-media-specific behaviors. Empirical findings on the positive relationship between attitudes and behavioral intentions and behavior in advertising are abundant (Mehta, 2000; Wesley et al., 2018). Attitudes toward advertising can influence consumers' attitudes toward the brand and their purchase intention (Stone, Besser, & Lewis, 2000). A similar influence for Facebook advertising can therefore be expected. Following the social-influence theory, which suggests that attitudes are embedded in social relations and that promoters and preventers influence consumers' perceptions and decision making (Regulatory focus theory), and drawing on the theory of planned be- havior (Ajzen, 1991), which suggests that a consumer's behavioral in- tention and ultimately that consumer's behavior depends on their at- titude, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H8:. Attitudes toward Facebook advertising positively influence Facebook users' behavior toward the brand.

H9:. Attitudes toward Facebook advertising positively influence Facebook users' behavior toward the message.

3. Research method

Knoll (2016) noted that the overdependence on college students in samples for SNS research is problematic because they are not necessa- rily representative of all social media users. Furthermore, older people are increasingly joining Facebook, while teenagers and university stu- dents are disappearing from Facebook (Cuthbertson, 2018). Conse- quently, the study population comprised adult Facebook users.

The cross-country approach is justified for several reasons. First, the expansive structure of Facebook enables the study of trends within as well as across countries. Surprisingly, however, Wilson, Gosling, and

Graham (2012) observed that, although many articles have explored social media and Facebook trends in developed countries, even basic comparisons across countries are rare. Additionally, the behavioral data collected from Facebook are appropriate to compare trends across groups. Wilson et al. (2012) argued that, as Facebook continues to grow globally, exploring basic differences and similarities becomes increas- ingly important as brands compete with each other on both local and international levels (Demangeot, Broderick, & Craig, 2015). Second, growth in the social-networking environment is evident not only in developed countries such as Australia, which had 67% growth in Fa- cebook subscribers between 2010 and 2017, but also, and even more so, in emerging countries such as South Africa, which had growth of 809% in the same period (Internet World Stats Report, 2017).

Our exploratory cross-country approach to test the applicability of our proposed model – in not only a developed but also an emerging country-specific context – provides deeper insights into our under- standing of social-media advertising's effectiveness on an international level. From a research perspective, understanding heterogeneous market environments not only provides insight into developing markets but also adds to the theoretical development of the consumer behavior field (Sudhir et al., 2015).

An English online survey was completed by consumer panels in each country under the supervision of a local research firm. This data col- lection procedure resulted in 802 responses. A screening question was used to ensure that the respondents were active Facebook users aged 18 years or older, as well as general section with questions on Facebook use and demographics. Attitudes toward general advertising and Facebook advertising were based on research by Pollay and Mittal (1993) and Mahmoud (2013). The two sections had six items each. The scale for perceived behavioral control had four items (Merisavo et al., 2007). Trust was measured with six items from Fogel and Nehmad (2009) and Wu, Huang, Yen, and Popova (2012). Advertising intrusiveness was mea- sured with nine items from Taylor et al. (2011) and Ducoffe (1996). Malhotra, Kim, and Agarwal (2004) six-item Global Information Privacy Concern scale was used to measure privacy concern. Reported behavior was measured toward marketing messages (ads)

such as liking or clicking on the advertisement. Behavior toward the brand was measured in terms of visiting the company website, visiting the fan page, or purchasing. All constructs were measured on an 11-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). The scales were adapted to reflect the Facebook context and the questionnaire was pretested. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) and validity were confirmed, and no other adjustment was necessary.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive results

The total sample for the study comprised 802 respondents (South Africa n = 401; Australia n = 401). The gender distribution for the South African sample was skewed toward males (Male = 63%; Female = 37%). A more equal distribution was evident in the Australian sample (Male = 46%; Female = 54%). Most respondents (SA = 78%; Aus = 79%) were in the 18 to 35 year-old age group. The sample could be described as well-educated because the majority of respondents (SA = 60%; Aus = 57%) had attained a degree, diploma, or postgraduate qualification. Furthermore, 70% of respondents had been on Facebook for 3 years or more, and 50% of the sample spent 5 h or more per week on Facebook. The data confirm that the respondents were active Facebook users that were exposed to a variety of adver- tisements on their Facebook pages.

4.2. Measurement model

To assess the reliability and validity of the multi-item constructs, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted.

However, these results may be sensitive to sample size and model complexities. Therefore model fit was determined by inspecting the incremental fit index (IFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the com- parative fit index (CFI), and the root mean square error of approx- imation (RMSEA) values (see Table 1), following the guidelines of Bagozzi and Yi (1988).
Table 1 shows that acceptable model fit was achieved in both in- stances because the CFI, TLC, and IFI indices were all greater than 0.9, RMSEA was less than 0.08, and χ^2/df was less than 3, as suggested by Bagozzi and Yi (1988).

4.3. Reliability and validity

Convergent and discriminant validity were assessed while Cronbach's alpha and the more stringent composite reliability (CR) were considered for reliability (Table 2).
All factor loadings were significant and > 0.5, and the average variance extracted (AVE) was > 0.5 for both samples. These results indicate that an acceptable amount of variance was explained by each factor and imply convergence in measurement (Bagozzi & Yi, 1981, p. 375–376; Fornell & Larker, 1981, p. 46). Reliability is reflected by the Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability (CR) values, which were all greater than 0.7 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988, p. 80). As suggested by Fornell and Larker (1981, p. 46), discriminant validity was

confirmed (See Table 3 below) by checking that the square root of the AVE of the two factors was greater than the correlation between each pair of con- structs.

4.4. Invariance test

Because our objective was to examine the relationships between constructs in a cross-country setting, invariance testing to determine the equivalence between the measures for the two countries was performed following Byrne, Shavelson, and Muthén (1989) indications. First, the configural invariance must be assessed to verify whether the South African and Australian respondents used similar patterns for measures in the survey. The results of the CFA confirm the discriminant and convergent validity, and the model fit indices reported earlier for both countries indicate acceptable fit. Therefore, configural invariance may be assumed.

Second, metric equivalence was assessed (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006, p. 875) to determine the extent to which these measures have a similar meaning for the two groups. Metric in- variance is assessed by testing for factor loading equivalence, which entails constraining the factor loading estimates in the South African model to equal those in the Australian model. Table 4 shows that the model fit of the unconstrained measurement weights model and the model fit of the constrained measurement weights model were ade- quate. The chi-square differences test confirmed that the constrained model was not significantly different from the unconstrained model (p = 0.222). Full metric invariance was thus supported ($\Delta\chi2$ = 43.231, Δ df = 37, p > 0.05).

Third, to determine whether invariance was present in the structural weight comparison between the South African and Australian re- spondents, the structural weights were constrained equally across both groups. The chi-square difference test was significant ($\Delta\chi2$ = 18.517, Δ df = 9, p = 0.030), thereby indicating some variance between the two samples.

The fourth step was to identify the source of the non-invariance. Each structural weight was constrained equally across the two samples, while the remaining structural weights were left unconstrained. Significant differences were only evident for the regression paths be- tween advertising intrusiveness and attitudes toward Facebook adver- tising (p = 0.010) and between perceived control and trust (p = 0.007).

4.5. Structural model

The CFA was followed by an empirical assessment of the structural model using AMOS 19. The results (See Table 5) indicate that the model fit for both countries was adequate.

4.6. Hypothesis results

The results for the hypothesis testing are reported in Table 6 for the South African sample and in Table 7 for the Australian sample.

For the South African sample, support was found for all hypotheses, expect the non-significant relationship between perceived control and attitudes toward Facebook advertising (H4; p = 0.823). This non-sig- nificant relationship contradicts the findings reported by Barwise and Strong (2002) and Hajli and Lin (2016). For the Australian sample, only two hypotheses were not supported: H2, on the influence of perceived

control on trust (p = 0.350), and H5, on the negative influence of advertising intrusiveness on attitudes toward Facebook advertising (p = 0.198). This second finding contradicts McCoy et al. (2008) and Lin and Kim (2016) findings that advertising intrusiveness affects atti- tudes toward Facebook advertising. For both samples, the variance explained in terms of behavior toward the brand (Aus = 54.5%; SA = 50.9%), behavior toward ads (Aus = 62.4%; SA = 61.6%), and the proposed antecedents to attitudes toward FB advertising (Aus = 62.1%; SA = 61.8%) was moderate (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009).

Examining the findings for the peripheral variables shows a positive significant relationship between privacy concerns and the importance of perceived control (H1) in both samples, although the strength of this relationship was stronger in the Australian sample than in the South African sample (β = 0.539; β = 0.464). However, the influence of control on trust (H2) was only observed in the South African sample (β = -0.156; p = 0.007).

The results on the antecedents to Facebook advertising attitudes lend support to both H3, on trust (Aus β = 0.175; SA β = 0.184), and H6, on attitudes toward advertising in general and the positive influ- ence on attitudes toward Facebook advertising (Aus β = 0.285; SA β = 0.210). Notably, the significant relationships were weak. Furthermore, support for the influence of perceived control (H4) was only evident in the Australian sample (β = −0.130), and the influence of advertising intrusiveness (H5) was only observed in the South African sample (β = −0.213). In both instances, the negative re- lationships were weak. Support for H7 was supported by the strong positive significant relationship between advertising value and the at- titudes toward Facebook advertising in both samples (Aus β = 0.545; SA β = 0.584).

The results on the outcomes of the framework reveal a similarity in the strength of the relationship for Australia and South Africa with respect to user behavior toward messages (β = 0.790; β = 0.801) and toward the brand (β = 0.737; β = 0.714). In both instances, there was a strong relationship between attitudes toward Facebook advertising and behavior toward the brand and message, thereby indicating sup- port for H8 and H9, respectively. Our results are consistent with those of Wesley et al. (2018), who also found support for the hypothesis that positive attitudes toward SNA increase social-media-specific behaviors.

5.   Discussion and conclusions

Today, brands have realized that, to connect with current and new customers, their online presence in social media is a vital component of their overall strategy. Brands thus use their social media marketing strategy to form part of online networks such as Facebook. Social media have affected, altered, and disrupted traditional marketing efforts and, because of their attractiveness, have altered marketing practices such as advertising (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011; Venkatesh & Jayasingh, 2017).

While empowering the public at large, social network platforms present innovative opportunities for markets to communicate with their consumers (Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy, & Sashittal, 2015). Despite the excitement and interest regarding SNSs, few studies have sought to comprehend the distinctive characteristics of SNA and its resulting. Facebook advertising effectiveness depends on consumers' partici- pation in social media, but, more importantly, the understanding of the social network platform, message, and consumer characteristics are important indicators of consumers' overall

attitudes toward Facebook advertising and the resultant interactive behavior with the message and brand (Ferreira & Barbosa, 2017). The key variables for the assessment of Facebook advertising effectiveness in this study were the perceptions of advertisements, message characteristics (ad value and intrusiveness), the SNS characteristics (trust), consumer characteristics (privacy, atti- tudes toward advertising in general and importance of control), and attitudes toward Facebook advertising and behaviors (toward the brand and message). A promotion- and a prevention-theoretical perspective was proposed based on RFT in conjunction with social influence theory. These theoretical foundations were useful to provide insight into users' perceptions and behaviors toward Facebook advertising.

From a theoretical perspective, our findings contribute to adver- tising literature in general but more specifically social network adver- tising. Despite the growth of advertising on SNSs, few studies have sought to understand the unique characteristics of SNA and its effec- tiveness. More importantly, unlike previous studies, which have conceptualized behavioral intent as a single measurement such as liking or shopping, this study specified two different types of behaviors on Facebook, and significant influencers on each were compared. This approach further departs from previous studies by examining self-re- ported behaviors rather than behavioral intent. The results validate the proposed framework of Facebook advertising effectiveness in a multi- country context. Therefore, this study can inform businesses while contributing to our theoretical understanding of consumer behavioral responses to SNA in an international marketplace. From a theoretical perspective, our findings not only add insight to the SNA literature but also provide empirical support for the applicability of RFT in social media research. RFT consequently offers a lens that can help consumers receive and review a particular marketing communication message on Facebook. Positive reinforcement while deciphering marketing mes- sages creates a stronger engagement and connection, whereas negative reinforcement lessens the engagement, attitude, and behavior.

The results also indicate that combining social influence theory and RFT is a feasible theoretical approach for future empirical studies. Our research adds to the literature on the behavioral implications of SNA and the sparse evidence on the influence of SNA attitudes on users' behavior (Knoll, 2016). It also advances research on international ad- vertising on social media, the majority of which is either descriptive (Okazaki & Taylors, 2013) or only perception- and attitude-based (Hudson, Li, Martin, & Madden, 2016) instead of being based on be- havior. The results also supplements research on cross-country behavior (Wesley et al., 2018) and enrich the scant literature on social media in emerging countries. We thus advance the theory on interactive beha- viors by explicitly focusing on two forms of interactive behaviors: message-related and brand-related behaviors.

This study also contributes to industry, providing implications for brands that use social media as part of their overall advertising cam- paigns. The two self-regulatory motivational systems seem to predict users' attitudes in different ways because the promotion-focused re- lationships (ad value, trust, and general attitudes) were generally ob- served to be stronger than the prevention-focused relationships (control and ad intrusiveness). Marketers could thus target two different reg- ulatory focus orientations and their corresponding types of fit to aid with the persuasive charm or pull of the marketing message.

Furthermore, although trust is a significant promotional approach, advertising value is the strongest influencer in both countries. For brands, this finding is of importance because they have more control over the value perception of their ads than trust in the social network, where they depend on a third party such as Facebook to build a trust-worthy environment. This finding has implications for SNSs such as Facebook. If they want to increase brands' expenditure on advertising on their platforms, they must ensure and be able to demonstrate that they are a trusted network. Marketers, on the other hand, must ensure that consumers perceive their ads as valuable. This goal could be achieved using personalized ads and more effective targeting while addressing the informational and entertainment aspects of the ads to convey value to customers. For example, advertisers could announce upcoming promotions, prices, offers, and incentives as well as in- formation on brand features such as the choices available and the un- ique benefits the product or service offers. However, marketers should be careful about the amount of product-related information they in- clude in the ads. They should not neglect the entertainment aspect that creates interest and amusement and that can even make ads seem less invasive.

Once again considering the broad purpose of Facebook, social in-teraction and relationship building via information exchange and en- tertainment could ensure value while also reducing the invasive nature of ads. Thus, instead of creating feelings that marketing communication is pushed onto the consumers (e.g., by spamming, which elicits feelings of intrusiveness and the need for more control), advertisers should join the conversation through brand content that is presented in a variety of advertising formats such as videos, photos, games, polls, and blogs.

Providing useful information for consumer decision making while en- tertaining consumers is frequently referred to as infotainment. Using a combination of different ads and engaging with consumers could also reduce feelings of invasiveness. To this end, Facebook offers a range of interactive options such as blogs, virtual gifting, photo uploads and newsfeeds that can be used as incentives and enable interaction with customers, thereby allowing brands to join consumers' social space instead of invading their private yet public social space.

Another managerial implication relates to the finding by previous studies that attitudes toward advertising in general reinforce attitudes toward advertising in other contexts such as television and mobile marketing (Beneke et al., 2010; Tan & Chia, 2007; Yang, 2003). This study also confirms this finding for social network advertising in both developed and emerging contexts. This result validates the theory of cognitive dissonance because consumers tend to keep their cognitive systems in balance in relation to advertising. This finding is important to highlight the caution that must be exercised when researching con- texts in isolation. For example, focusing on consumer attitudes toward a brand's Facebook advertisements without considering how consumers feel about advertisements on other platforms may yield misleading results. A positive or negative attitude toward Facebook ads may be an issue not only with the platform but also with the very nature of ad- vertising, regardless of the context.

By contrast, avoidance behaviors focusing on security-related reg- ulation prevention (control over ads received) and the presence of ne- gative consequences or disruptive behavior (intrusiveness) are less in- fluential. However, consistent with the findings of Wirtz and Lewin (2009), privacy concerns are found to be a strong precursor to

prevention-related defensive strategies in both countries. Because privacy is a crucial part of SNSs and plays an important role in advertising ef- fectiveness, SNSs and advertisers should focus on providing a range of privacy options and avoiding complexity to ensure that consumers understand all options.

Interestingly, users from each country prefer two different avoid- ance approaches. For the Australian sample, the importance of control is an influential preventive avoidance strategy, whereas, for the South African sample, the preferred avoidance strategy is disruptive behaviors. For the South African sample, the preventive strategies of control do not influence consumer attitudes directly but rather indirectly through the promotional approach of trust. The South African sample is, however, directly influenced by disruptive behaviors, as reflected by the intru- siveness of Facebook advertising.

In contrast, for the Australian sample, the two self-regulatory mo- tivational systems are not intertwined (i.e., control does not influence trust) because trust as a promotional strategy and control as a pre- ventive strategy both affect attitudes separately. However, Australians are only influenced by preventive strategies (control), and the dis- ruptive invasive nature of Facebook ads does not influence their atti- tudes toward Facebook ads. This finding is partly consistent with those of Jung et al. (2016), who also did not find a significant relationship between invasiveness and attitudes toward advertising on social net- works. In conclusion, when Australian consumers see marketing mes- sages in their Facebook newsfeeds, they do not necessarily view them as invasive or as a threat to their privacy. In contrast, the invasion that South African users feel from Facebook advertising is closely linked to negative attitudes. For South Africans, if an ad interrupts or irritates them when they view posts or read their newsfeeds, this situation leads to a negative attitude toward these ads. Advertisers should therefore be wary of intrusions, especially in emerging markets.

Ads viewed as irritating, interfering, or annoying are often asso- ciated with bombardment by too many perhaps irrelevant ads. The importance of control over receiving ads signals to advertisers and so- cial media marketers the perceived imbalance of control between brands and consumers. Providing sufficient options such as filtering ads on Facebook pages or opting-in and opting-out not only provides more control and realigns the balance between the two parties but also reduces the invasiveness of ads because consumers receive fewer yet more relevant ads.

If advertisers encourage and stimulate interactivity and electronic word of mouth through their advertisements, marketing communica- tions may be shared with other Facebook users or friends. Marketing communications from a friend may seem less invasive than commu- nications from a brand or advertiser. This sharing could be encouraged using promotions, competitions, or giveaways.

The role of control as an influential antecedent to trust (for the South African sample) and to attitudes toward Facebook advertising (directly for the Australian sample and indirectly for the South African sample) has several practical implications. The high importance that consumers attach to having secondary control over which and how many ads, if any, they receive signals to advertisers that consumers do not currently feel that they have sufficient control. This inference is consistent with the results of a report by the Pew Research Centre., 2014, which showed that 91% of adult Americans feel that they have lost control over the use of their personal online data. Giving consumers the control they desire would not only foster trust in the emerging- country context but also improve their attitudes toward ads in the de- veloped-country context.

A few considerations for brands and advertisers should be noted in relation to control. First, users should have a fair opportunity to opt out of advertising. Second, they should have more control over the number of ads they receive. Clear opt-in and opt-out instructions would not only give users control but also provide a means for advertisers to respect users' privacy. Third, if permission is not obtained, the communication brand could be viewed as counterproductive and potentially harmful to the customer relationship (Yaniv, 2008). Permission marketing is therefore a valid aspect to be considered, especially in the social media context, because it represents users' explicit consent to receive mar- keting information. Thus, permission marketing is the converse of tra- ditional interruptive marketing because it differentiates spam from valuable, relevant, and sought content, thereby reducing clutter and possible irritation and interruption for consumers.

The similarity of findings between the two countries confirms Okazaki and Taylors (2013) speculation over the appearance of a global consumer culture in the context of global social networks because of mutual meanings and symbols. This proposition is confirmed by our results, which show that consumers on global social media platforms such as Facebook generally display similar attitudes and behaviors to- ward SNA despite cultural differences.

Many brands act as if simply establishing a Facebook page and then posting content and marketing communication messages will increase sales (Duffett, 2015). However, understanding exactly what influences the effectiveness of these messages is crucial, as reflected by the in- teractive behavior of consumers toward the brand and its messages. Our research provides valuable understanding of this underexplored topic. This understanding has a definite emerging-market perspective, but the model is nonetheless fully applicable to developed markets. The find- ings benefit brands that use or intend to use Facebook as an interna- tional marketing tool as well as scholars of attitudinal theory.

6.   Limitation and future research

Some important limitations should be noted. First, the sample was limited to the South African and Australian contexts. Although both countries are experiencing rapid growth in Facebook use, the general- izability of the findings is limited because of the use of a non-prob- abilistic sampling approach. Second, although our model explains > 60% of the variance in attitudes and more than half of the variance in behavior toward the brand, other antecedents could also be in- vestigated. Third, it might be difficult to generalize or replicate the findings of this study because of the constant shifting in Facebook's features, privacy policies, and advertising options.
These limitations could be overcome if future research focused on

applying this model in other countries and continents to account for other cultural contexts and considered another background to explain the remaining variance, perhaps in relation to the social network site, advertising messages, and consumer characteristics.

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