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**USES AND GRATIFICATIONS OF ONLINE
ADVERTISING**
A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN GERMANY AND EGYPT

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degree of Doctor of philosophy (PhD) in mass communication*

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Declaration

This is my original work and it has not been presented to any other university for a degree award or anywhere else for academic purposes.

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Dedication

- To my daughter/ Fatema Al – Zahraa Shaheen.

- To my father/Sheikh Ahmed Hashem Mahmoud Abdullah Shaheen who passed away during my work in this dissertation, may Allah bless him and forgive all his sins.

- To my friend/ Sheikh Montaser Mahmoud Alrabab who passed away during my work in this dissertation, may Allah bless him and forgive all his sins.

- To my uncles who passed away during my work in this dissertation:
 - Mr. Abd Elkareem Saadeek Shaheen
 - Mr. Adel Elwardani Shaheen
 - Mr. Ahmed Elwardani Shaheen
 - Mr. Kamal Eldeen Hamdoon Kenawi
 - Mr. Nashat KenawiMay Allah bless all of them and forgive all their sins.

- To the soul of my mother and the soul of my grandmother, may Allah bless them and forgive all their sins.

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However, all errors and omissions, views and interpretations remain mine and should not be attributed to any one of the above mentioned persons.

Abstract

This study attempted to clarify the motives, attitudes, and obtained gratifications from commercial websites as the most important format of online advertising, and to examine the relationships among these elements. The present research has demonstrated that the intersection of uses and gratifications theory and online marketing can lead to a deeper understanding of the marketing constraints and utilities offered by interactive computer-mediated communication technology.

An online survey was conducted with Egyptian and German users who visited commercial websites. A total of 648 people responded to the survey, 352 of them to the German version and 296 to the Arabic version of survey that questioned the reasons they use commercial websites as well as what gratifications they obtain from this experience.

With more and more businesses worldwide establishing web presences, it is also important to understand how an organization's commercial website may affect a customer's perception of the organization. However, customers from different cultures would most likely perceive different website characteristics as providing a value-added experience. Therefore, it is important to understand how commercial websites vary in their approach not only across businesses but across cultures, so content analysis of the sites, which were visited by sample, was employed to better understand the nature of the content being consumed. A total of 252 visited commercial websites by the sample of German and Egyptian users were content analyzed. Four websites had to be removed from the study due to technical errors involved in coding the sites. Coders looked at quantity and type of ads displayed; format and features of the ads, as well as the characteristics of the commercial websites as a whole.

The results of survey study indicated that respondents generally were positive about their experience of using commercial websites, German respondents were slightly more positive about using shopping utility of commercial websites than Egyptian counterparts. This study also presented a theoretical model describing the relationships between the uses and gratifications elements (motives, attitudes, usages, and gratifications) in the context of online advertising particularly commercial websites. All the hypotheses of this study have been fully supported except hypothesis 1; since it was partially supported.

Both of age and educational level of respondents have a significant effect on their overall motives for using commercial websites, overall motives of using commercial websites have a significant effect on the average time spent on these websites, motives of using commercial websites and gratifications obtained from using these websites were both positively and significantly related to positive attitudes toward using these sites, there is a strong relationship between overall motives for using commercial websites and overall obtained gratifications from using these sites, positive attitudes have a significant effect on the average time spent on these websites, the consumers' time spent on commercial websites had a strong effect on consumers' gratifications obtained from these websites, and vice versa, consumers' gratifications obtained from these websites had a strong effect on consumers' time

spent on these sites, and finally there is a significant difference between Egyptian and German consumer's attitudes toward using commercial websites.

Findings of content analysis study found that the websites that were visited by German users used the basic and contact information more than did the sites that were visited by Egyptian users. The study found that the websites that were visited by German users used interactive features and offered ads more than did the sites that were visited by Egyptian users.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Studie versucht die Motive, Haltungen und erhaltenen Gratifikationen aus kommerziellen Webseiten als wichtigstes Format der Online-Werbung darzustellen und die Beziehungen zwischen diesen Elementen zu untersuchen. Es wurde eine Online-Umfrage mit deutschen und ägyptischen Nutzern durchgeführt, die kommerziellen Webseiten besucht haben. Insgesamt haben 648 Personen an der Befragung teilgenommen. Davon nahmen 352 an der deutschsprachigen und 296 an der arabischen Umfrage teil, um die Gründe für die Nutzung kommerzieller Webseiten sowie die Gratifikationen, die sie aus dieser Nutzung erhalten, zu erfahren. Es wurde vorab eine Content-Analyse der Webseiten durchgeführt, um ein besseres Verständnis für die Natur des Inhalts zu gewinnen. Insgesamt wurden 248 kommerzielle Webseiten besucht, die von deutschen und ägyptischen Nutzern inhaltlich analysiert wurden. Der Forscher betrachtete die Menge und Art der Werbung, die angezeigt wurden, sowie Formate und Eigenschaften der Online Anzeigen als auch die Eigenschaften der kommerziellen Webseiten als Ganzes.

Die Ergebnisse der Studie ergaben, dass die Befragten im Allgemeinen positive Erfahrungen mit kommerziellen Webseiten gemacht haben. Die deutschen Befragten waren etwas positiver gegenüber die Verwendung von Einkaufs-Dienstprogrammen der kommerziellen Webseiten eingestellt als ägyptischen Nutzer. Zudem wird in dieser Studie ein theoretisches Modell zur Beschreibung der Beziehungen zwischen den Elementen Uses und Gratifikationen (Motive, Haltungen, Gewohnheiten und Gratifikationen) im Rahmen der Online-Werbung hinsichtlich kommerzieller Webseiten präsentiert. Alle Hypothesen dieser Studie wurden bis auf die Erste vollständig bestätigt, die nur teilweise bestätigt werden konnte. Die Inhaltsanalyse ergab, dass die grundlegenden Informationen und Kontaktinformationen der Webseiten von deutschen Nutzern mehr verwendet werden als von ägyptischen Nutzern. Des Weiteren ergab die Studie, dass die deutschen Nutzer mehr Webseiten mit interaktiven Features und angebotenen Anzeigen besuchten als die ägyptischen Nutzer.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CCTLD:	The country code top level domain
CMC:	Computer-Mediated Communication
E-Mail:	Electronic Mail
FAQs	Frequently asked questions
FTF:	Face to Face Communication
FTP:	File Transfer Protocol
GO:	Gratifications Obtained
GS:	Gratifications Sought (Motives)
HDTV:	High definition television
IAB:	Interactive Advertising Bureau
IAM:	Interactive Advertising Model
Internet:	International Net
IRC:	Internet Relay Chat
IT:	Information Technology
IWS:	Internet World States.
MUDs:	Multi-User Dungeons
SPSS:	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
VCRs:	Video Cassette Recorder
WWW:	World Wide Web.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Online advertising is growing day by day; the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) announced that revenues exceeded \$5.2 billion for the third quarter of 2007, representing yet another historic high for a single quarter period and a \$1.1 billion increase, or 25.3 percent, over the third quarter of 2006 (IAB, 2007). The most updated online advertising revenues exceeded \$5.4 billion for the second quarter of 2009 (IAB, 2009). The continued growth of online ad revenues clearly illustrates marketers' increased comfort with the extraordinary vitality, interactivity and accountability of this new advertising medium (IAB, 2007); web ad “reaches consumers with an unprecedented level of efficiency and measurability that provides marketers with actionable data, and the ever-changing landscape of new platforms and technologies that enrich interactive guarantees that this growth trend will continue” (IAB, 2007, p.2).

1.1 Statement of the problem

Researchers and historians have determined that if anything is a rapidly growing area: The web's commercial sector has skyrocketed, outpacing by far the growth rate of nonprofit, educational, and governmental sites. Moreover, despite a "dot-com bust" in the early twenty-first century that dashed hyperbolic optimism about web commerce and media ventures, connections between commerce and the web, media companies and the web, advertising and the web, have become natural parts of the marketing communication landscape (McAllister & Turow, 2002).

Commercial websites are the most important format of online advertising; these sites are designed to build customer goodwill and to supplement other sales and advertising channels, rather than to sell the company's products directly. For example, the companies' websites of Bosch, BMW, Toshiba, Nokia, and Dell offer a rich variety of information and other features in an effort to answer customer questions, build closer customer relationships and generate excitement about the company. These websites generally provide information about the company's history, its mission and philosophy, and the products and services that it offers. They might also tell about current events, company personnel and financial performance, and employment opportunities. Many companies' websites also provide exciting entertainment features to attract and hold visitors. They might also provide opportunities for customers to ask questions and make comment through email before leaving these sites (Kotler et al, 2008). They are an increasingly important communication and distribution channel for companies (Musante, Bojanic & Zhang, 2009).

Commercial websites are considered a good environment for studying online advertising; this is because they include a variety of different types and formats of online advertising, located throughout the site. And in the same time they are instruments of advertising/promotion themselves (Janoschka, 2004).

Clearly customers perceive commercial websites in general as useful, providing a value-added experience. But questions remain as to how effective commercial websites are in promoting different businesses to their constituent audiences. Further, even while this type of websites can take local companies global, it is important to note that Internet penetration as well as cultural differences could result in a commercial website that is successful with a regional customer base being a total failure with different customers. Successful website strategies may therefore differ within various communities.

Although a great deal of research has examined how different countries and regions vary in their forms of advertising (Roberts & Ko, 2001), there are very few studies have addressed the issue of a digital divide or comparisons among different cultures and countries in online abilities, especially commercial websites. So the current study has examined German and Egyptian users' motives and gratifications of commercial websites to better understand the cultural differences among users in their using commercial websites, as well as this study has also attempted to compare between the commercial websites that were visited by the sample of study (German and Egyptian users).

1.2 Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of this study were to:

- a) Examine user's attitudes and opinions that affect their uses of commercial websites.
- b) Identify the uses of the commercial websites among the users.
- c) Determine the motives of using commercial websites among the users.
- d) Determine the gratifications obtained from using these websites among the users.
- e) Identify the challenges faced by users when using these websites.
- f) Present a new uses and gratifications model of commercial websites.
- g) Illustrate properties of websites that were visited by German and Egyptian users.
- h) Evaluate and compare the formats and features of websites that were visited by German and Egyptian sample.

1.3 Prior studies on commercial websites

Academic researchers have commented on the need to examine the audiences' opinions and attitudes toward commercial websites (e.g., Lee & Thorson, 2009; Udo & Marquis, 2000) and particularly the uses and gratifications of commercial websites, since there are few studies have focused on examining uses and gratifications of commercial website (e.g., Eighmey & McCord, 1998; Eighmey, 1997; Maignan & Lukas, 1997).

Udo and Marquis (2000) explored the opinions of commercial websites users in order to identify the most important features of an effective commercial website. The

results found that an effective website design must (1) have short download time, (2) be easy to navigate, (3) use animations that are not distracting, (4) be highly interactive, (5) be careful with the use of frames, (6) choice of grammar and color combination, and (7) show high degree of cohesion and consistency throughout the webpages.

Lee and Thorson (2009) explored the moderating effects of individuals' own levels of cognitive needs and emotional needs on banner responsiveness in the cognitive and emotion-based websites. The results indicated that the attitude toward banners is better when their context is an emotion-based website, and it is better to be higher in need for cognition on a cognitive website, but lower in need for cognition on an emotional website.

By using a group of gratification statements from previous studies as rating scales to evaluate commercial websites, Eighteen (1997) described a method of examining user perceptions of commercial websites. The results of study indicated that website users are assisted by three factors (1) information placed in an enjoyable context; (2) organizational ideas that make sense in a term of the strategic purpose of the website; and (3) efficiently executed designs. And by using three-step-process in-depth interviews of Internet users, Maignan and Lukas (1997) investigated consumers' perceptions and uses of Internet. The results presented four main social uses descriptions of the Internet: (1) a source of information; (2) a place or object of consumption; (3) a communication tool; (4) a social system. As well as the study found three main factors that effect on perceptions of the Internet: (1) Past experience with the Internet; (2) variety of usage; (3) degree of involvement.

Eighthmey and McCord (1998) investigated users of commercial websites based on the findings of previous research on traditional media. The researchers focused on the uses and gratifications perspective to examine the users experience associated with these websites. They found that entertainment value, personal relevance, and information involvement are three major motivational factors for surfing commercial websites. They also offered similarities to the types of uses and gratifications reported in studies of other media. New dimensions called personal involvement and continuing relationship were identified and found to be important factors when examining user's reactions to websites.

The contributions in this area still are limited and weak, for this reason, this study attempts to investigate: how users view commercial websites as the most important format of online advertising, how their attitudes and opinions affect their uses of this new medium in a marketing context, which reasons push them to use online commercial websites and how they interact with the advertisements on commercial websites.

Academic researchers have also commented on the need to investigate the characteristics of commercial websites as an advertising medium; some studies focused on evaluation of commercial websites (e.g. Dholakia & Rego, 1998; Hwang, McMillan & Lee, 2003; Jones, 2007; Young & Foot, 2005).

Dholakia and Rego (1998) attempted to describe the types and nature of marketing information on commercial homepages. Their study results indicated that a significant number of commercial websites are small and limited in scope. Many companies used the web in the late 1990s for more traditional marketing objectives. The information content of webpages did not appear to attract visitors to the websites. More recently, Hwang, McMillan and Lee (2003) attempted to explain the concept of commercial website as company advertisement. They found that commercial websites are able to combine multiple functions such as providing information and direct and indirect selling functions.

By using content analysis and rhetorical criticism to catalog content types, Young and Foot (2005) analyzed a random sample of fortune 500 companies' websites. The study indicated that these sites were not merely places to post job openings, but reflected companies' attempts to sell a good image of job. Jones (2007) compared samples of companies' homepages gathered in 1996 and 1997 with homepages of the same sites gathered in 2006. The study found that the design of commercial homepages was more homogeneous in 2006 than from 1996 to 1997, and it also found that there was increased standardization in the 2006 commercial websites in the categories of: homepage length, primary navigation orientation, primary navigation style, search engine, presence and location.

Other studies have focused on examining commercial websites features (e.g., Liu et al, 1997; Singh & Point, 2006; Vattiyam & Lubbers, 1999; Vaughan & Wu, 2004; Wu, 2008; Youn, 2002). By using content analysis, Liu et al (1997) analyzed the websites of 500 fortune companies to investigate the objectives of establishing these websites. The results of study found that these objectives were: To announce the company's presence on the web, to enhance public relations, to promote the companies' image, to attract users to browse products and services and to collect user responses and other related data. Vattiyam and Lubbers (1999) were also interested in homepage features and performed a content analysis of 83 of the Fortune 100 companies. Their results indicated that many activities found on these homepages are traditionally associated with public relations. Youn (2002) was interested in how marketers use promotional tactics on commercial websites; the top 100 megabrands websites were content analyzed. The researcher found that 20 websites used online games, 30 websites utilized sweepstakes, and, to a lesser extent, 18 sites employed contests.

Vaughan & Wu (2004) analyzed websites of China's top 100 information technology (IT) companies to test the effect of hyperlinks to commercial sites on a business performance indicator and to investigate the importance of business information to web business intelligence and web data mining. The results of this study indicated that there was no relationship between link count and the business performance for these companies. The study also found that hyperlinks to commercial

sites are a business performance indicator, and the sources of business information are important to web business intelligence and web data mining.

Singh and Point (2006) analyzed 241 top European commercial websites to depict how specific notions of gender and ethnic minorities are integrated into diversity discourses shown on these websites. They found that 72% of these websites gave some dimensions of diversity especially in their antidiscrimination lists and they found that diversity statements, photographs and discourses sometimes appear to reinforce existing business images of women and foreign ethnic minorities.

Wu (2008) used content analysis to analyze and compare the performance of three types of hotels websites (state-owned, foreign-funded and private) to examine characteristics of design (interactivity, functionality and navigation) and online marketing practices on these websites. The results indicated that most of these websites provided basic contact information, including phone number, address, and e-mail. One half of overall websites conducted online survey, and much fewer websites provided FAQ-pages (Frequently Asked Questions). The results also found that domestic brand hotels lacked the feature of download facilities on their websites comparing with international brand hotels.

Interactivity was the focus of two additional studies of commercial websites (Cho & Cheon, 2005; Gustavsen & Tilley, 2003). Gustavsen and Tilley (2003) examined the interactivity of 16 commercial websites, finding that the sites contained very low levels of interactivity. Cho and Cheon (2005) examined the use of interactivity on commercial websites from the U.S., the United Kingdom, Japan, and South Korea. The study considered three dimensions of interactivity on the websites of each country's top 50 advertisers. The results of research indicated that western websites tended to emphasis consumer-message and consumer-marketer interactivity, whereas eastern websites highlighted consumer-consumer interactivity. It is the only study to date designed to compare and analyze commercial websites among different cultures and countries. The researcher of the present study hopes to illustrate properties of commercial websites that were visited by for German and Egyptian users. This study attempted to evaluate and compare the formats and features of commercial websites that were visited by German and Egyptian users.

1.4 Choice of Germany and Egypt

The current analysis focused on German and Egyptian users of commercial websites to help shed light on three perceived differences in the two countries: the technological gap; levels of Internet usage; and cultural differences. Additionally, the study hopes to add to the small body of cross-cultural commercial research. The diffusion of the Internet from developed countries like U.S. or Germany to other countries depended and continues to depend on several hard factors such as technical infrastructure and income per capita—i.e., economic development. This may be one

reason for the Internet's differing popularity in various parts of the world —also known as the digital divide (Hermeking, 2005).

Internet World Stats (2009) announced that the number of Internet users in Germany was around 65.9 % of the population of Germany – or 54,229,325 users. On the other hand, 12,568,900 Internet users in Egypt only represent 15.9 % of the Egyptian population (Internet World Stats, 2009). Cultural differences between German and Egyptian societies can also affect Internet usage and satisfaction. For example the use of the sex for advertising purposes in Egypt is forbidden and Egyptian culture does not accept such this method, but it may be used in German society. Finally, while the trade between Western World and Africa and Middle East has increased, there have been very few cross-national studies of marketing practices, advertising messages, and commercial websites between western world and Middle East – particularly Germany and Egypt.

1.5 Hypotheses and questions of the study

The researcher divided the questions and hypotheses of this study into survey's questions and hypotheses and the questions of content analysis study.

2.5.1 First: General questions and hypotheses of survey study.

The researcher attempted to offer the demographic characteristics of commercial websites users in Germany and Egypt, and the characteristics of their usage of the Internet and the usage of commercial websites in each country. The present study attempted to explore the motivations, attitudes and gratifications of using commercial websites in each country, and it attempted to examine the users' benefits from the shopping utility offered by commercial websites in each country and it also tried to offer ethical and cultural reasons of avoiding some commercial websites and the types of these websites as well as the users' suggestions to develop commercial websites in each country.

Beside these survey questions, the researcher proposed the nine main hypotheses:

H1. There is a significant effect for demographic variables of users on their usage's motives of commercial websites.

H2. Consumers' motives of using commercial websites have a significant effect on the consumers' time spent on these websites.

H3. Motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with the attitudes toward these websites.

H4. Obtained gratifications from commercial websites are positively associated with the attitudes toward these websites.

H5. Motivations of using commercial websites are positively associated with obtained gratifications.

H6. Consumers' attitudes toward commercial websites will have a significant effect on the consumers' time spent on these websites.

H7. The consumers' time spent on commercial websites will have a significant effect on consumers' gratifications from these websites.

H8. Consumers' gratifications from commercial websites will have a significant effect on the consumers' time spent on these websites.

H9. There is a significant difference between German and Egyptian consumer's attitudes toward websites.

2.5.2 Second: General Questions of content analysis study

This study examines the formats and features on the commercial sites that were visited by the sample of survey study and the ads that available on these sites, as well as the comparison between commercial websites that were visited by German and Egyptian users. The following research questions guided this content analysis study and enabled a comparative analysis among these websites:

RQ1: What are the general practices of commercial websites regarding the languages that are presented on these commercial websites, type of these websites, also the quantity, advertisers, and locations of ads on these websites?

RQ2: What are the general practices of organizations regarding posting of company contact information and also the facilitations to surf the websites?

RQ3: What are the interactive features of these commercial websites?

RQ4: What are the formats of online advertisements that are presented on these commercial websites?

RQ5: What are the features of online advertisements that are presented on these commercial websites?

1.6 Method

An online survey was conducted with German and Egyptian users who visited commercial websites. The researchers used a convenience sample of Internet users who are directed to the survey through online announcements and hyperlinks. This is because the Internet poses a unique set of problems in guaranteeing a random sample of respondents. Unlike telephone and mail surveys where samples can be produced through census lists and random digit dialing, the web has no central registry of users, and e-mail addresses are so varied that they are virtually impossible to construct randomly (Johnson & Kaye, 2003); since there is no mechanism for random sampling the population of web users, nonprobability sampling is more appropriate when posting an online survey. Cyber surveys are commonly defined as volunteer samples because respondents are self-selected (Kaye & Johnson, 1999). Snowball sampling was used to obtain a higher response rate. The survey was administered in German and Arabic languages. A total of 648 people responded to the survey, 352 of them to the German version and 296 to the Arabic version.

The content analysis of sites visited by sample was employed to better understand the nature of the content being consumed. Of the initial 252 visited commercial

websites by the sample of German and Egyptian users, a total of 248 were content analyzed. Four websites had to be removed from the study due to technical errors involved in coding the sites. Sixty – seven point three percent (167) websites were visited by the German users, and eighty- one websites (32.7%) were visited by Egyptian users.

Results were obtained through analysis of the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 13).

1.7 Significance of the study

Information collected in this study relating to the uses and gratifications of commercial websites among German and Egyptian users, as well as the content analysis of commercial websites that were visited by them, can be helpful in building good commercial websites and predicting behaviors relating to the consumptions of these websites. These data is useful in a number of areas including international marketing, online advertising, websites' design and psychology of Internet and new media. Online marketers and websites' designers would benefit from conceptualizations of commercial websites usage's motivations and gratifications identified in current study. In addition, company's managements revolve around helping customers get what they need and understanding their expectations in order to meet them. While a study such as the current one is only just step in the quest to assess the value of commercial websites, it permits identification of the motivations and gratifications of these websites usages.

The results of this study are useful to marketing policy makers and commercial websites designers in designing commercial websites; since they can use these research findings to design websites with features or ads formats that can motivate users to utilize commercial websites more for a wide range of important uses. The results of this research have also added to the scarcely available information of international online marketing and uses and gratifications of this type of websites, as well as it is useful to advancing theoretical development of the uses and gratifications theory and its application in online communication field.

1.8 The importance of content analysis for current study

This study was restricted to the uses and gratifications of commercial websites among German and Egyptian users as well as content analysis of visited commercial websites by them (German and Egyptian users).

“Uses and gratifications research fails to link the functions of mass media consumption with the symbolic content of the mass-communicated materials or with the actual experience of consuming them” (Carey & Kreiling, 1974, pp. 232-233). The researchers become aware that they were studying content without audience; gratifications researchers came to realize that they were studying audience without content (Watson, 1998).

To get rid of the problem of ‘ignorance the media content’, the researcher analyzed commercial websites that were visited by German and Egyptian users, besides studying uses and gratifications of these websites among German and Egyptian users. Some survey questions concerning the nature of commercial websites in each two countries will be supported; such these questions will be answered through content analysis as well as they will support the field study.

The current study attempted to compare among commercial websites that were visited by German and Egyptian users and to describe the most important formats and features (e.g., online shopping, making free account, online transaction, and the advertising practice) of these websites, because all of these formats and features are related to the survey questions and hypotheses. In addition, content analysis of sites visited by users was employed to better understand the nature of the websites that were visited by users. As well as, this study is not the first one that used content analysis with applying uses and gratifications approach (e.g., Ebersole, 2000; Okinda, 2007; Trammell et al, 2006).

1.9 Thesis content

This thesis contains six main chapters:

CHAPTER 1 reviews general introduction and the related research for this work.

CHAPTER 2 reviews the related theoretical framework of this study. This includes an in-depth discussion on existing context of uses and gratification theory, the characteristics and formats of CMC, Online advertising and commercial websites. This chapter contains four basic sections:

- 1) Uses and gratification as the basic theory for this study: history and development, purposes of the theory, assumptions of theory, models of uses and gratifications theory, the relationship between cultural differences and uses and gratifications theory, the basic elements of uses and gratifications theory, the perspective of uses and gratifications in Internet use, and criticism of uses and gratifications theory.
- 2) Computer-mediated communication (CMC): As the type of communication for online advertising and it focuses on interactivity as the most important characteristic of CMC; since this section contains the concept of interactivity, dimensions of interactivity, types of interactivity, CMC (concept, types of CMC, and formats of online communication which includes online marketing and advertising).
- 3) Online advertising as the field of this study: this section discusses concept, birth and development of online advertising; the differences between online advertising and other forms of advertising; functions, and types of online advertisements; formats, features, and effectiveness of online advertisements.
- 4) Commercial websites as the most important format of online advertising and field of application: this section contains concept, birth and development, importance, types, constructions and problems of commercial websites, as well as the fact of online advertising and commercial sites in Germany and Egypt.

CHAPTER 3 introduces the previous models of online advertising including commercial websites, the suggested uses and gratifications model of commercial websites, and the questions and hypotheses of current study.

CHAPTER 4 discusses the methodology of the current study: this chapter explains the methodological aspects of current study such as the sampling of study, procedures for collecting and analyzing data, measurements of uses and gratifications, data collection, online questionnaire, content analysis, and statistical analysis.

CHAPTER 5 offers the results of survey and content analysis studies (questions of survey study, testing of survey hypotheses, and the results of content analysis study.

Finally, **CHAPTER 6** contains a discussion, conclusion, and recommendation with suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2

Theoretical background

The review of the literature addresses the theoretical framework of uses and gratifications theory, interactive CMC as communicative environment for this study, and online advertising (concept, types, importance, formats and features) as the area of this study. It also reviews commercial websites as the most important online advertising format (concept, types, importance, formats and features).

The sections of this chapter are so interconnected; since the first section provides theoretical explanations for the uses and gratifications theory and its application in CMC area, the second section offers general introduction into interactive CMC as the basic environment to online advertising. The third section offers the concept, characteristics, formats, and features of online advertising and the fourth section focuses on commercial websites as the most important type of online advertising. Figure (2-1) shows the relationship among the four sections of the present study's theoretical background.

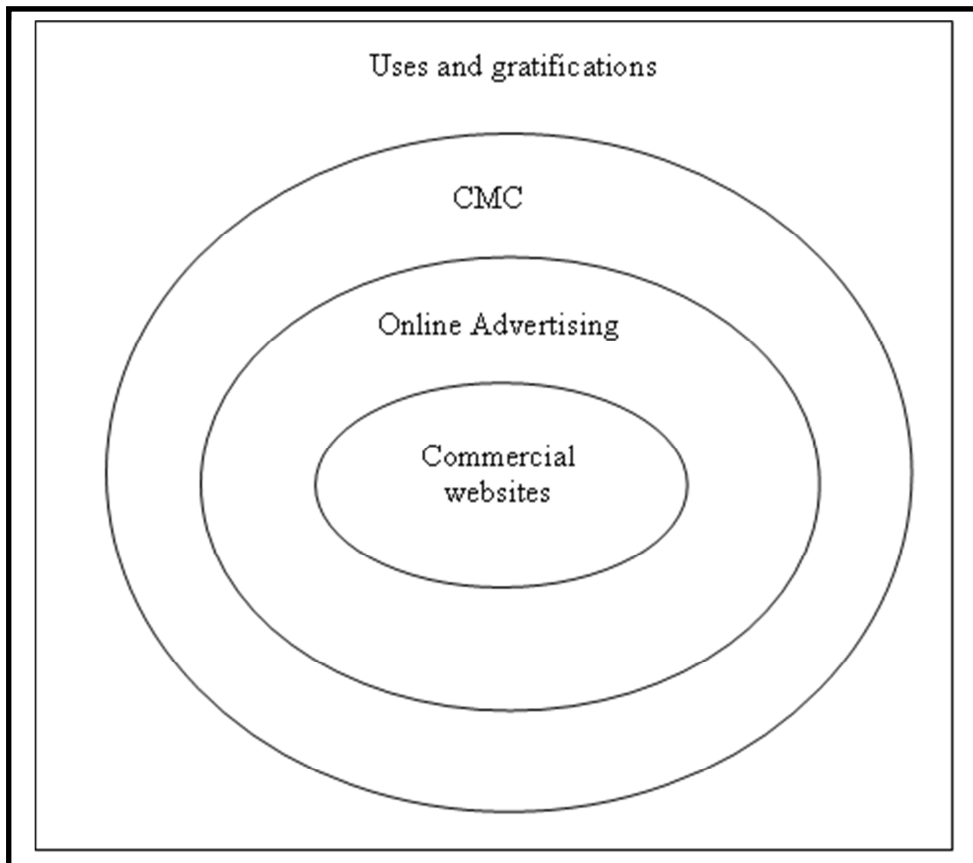


Figure 2-1. The relationship among the sections of the present study's theoretical background

2.1 Uses and gratifications theory

Uses and gratifications theory is considered one of the most important and popular theories in mass communication area. This theory focuses on exploring the motivations for media use and these motivations or reasons “sometimes include such things as passing time and learning about things or oneself, as well as for arousal, relaxation, companionship, and because of habit” (Perry, 2002, p.70). In this section, the researcher reviews the developments of this theory in mass communication and its applications in CMC area.

2.1.1 Historical background

The uses and gratifications approach is a theoretical tradition that spans 70 years (e.g., Blumler, 1979; Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974; Palmgreen, 1983). It suggests that audiences do not just accept media content. Rather, they actively endeavor to use media content to serve their purposes and interests (Saunders, Anderson & Conger, 2001). Perry (2002) divided the long history of this theory into three periods:

1) Functionalism

“The uses and gratifications approach has its roots in the 1940s, when researchers became interested in why people engaged in various forms of media behavior, such as radio listening or newspaper reading. These early studies were primarily descriptive, seeking to classify the responses of audience members into meaningful categories” (Wimmer & Dominick, 1997, p. 345); since “it was a shift from a view of the audience as passive to the realization that its members are active in their selection of preferred content and messages from the media” (Defleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989, p.187).

“The uses and gratifications approach came most prominently to the fore in the late 1950s and early 1960s at a time of widespread disappointment with the fruits of attempts to measure the short-term effects on people of their exposure to mass media campaigns. It reflected a desire to understand audience involvement in mass communication in terms more faithful to the individual user’s own experience and perspective than the effects tradition could attain” (Blumler, 1979, p.10).

Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch (1974) criticized these early studies: “first, a basically similar methodological approach whereby statements about media functions were elicited from the respondents in an essentially open-ended way. Second, they shared a qualitative approach in their attempt to group gratification statements into labeled categories, largely ignoring the distribution of their frequency in the population. Third, they did not attempt to explore the links between the gratifications thus detected and the psychological or sociological origins of the needs that were so satisfied. Fourth, they failed to search for the interrelationships among the various media functions, either quantitatively or conceptually, in a manner that might have led to the detection of the latent structure of media gratifications, consequently, these studies did not result in a

cumulatively more detailed picture of media gratifications conducive to the eventual formulation of theoretical statements” (p. 20).

2) Phases of research

In the 1970s, the theory witnessed great developments in its basic concepts, assumptions, and models. In this period, Blumler and Katz (1974) have introduced their basic volume by title: *The uses of mass communication: current perspectives on gratifications research*. This volume is considered the basic reference in this area. In this decade, there were many studies that had used this theory (e.g., Blumler, 1979; Katz, 1979; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974; McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974; Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979; Swanson, 1979).

3) More recent development

In the 1980s, the researchers had attempted to examine and develop the elements and the assumptions of the theory. In this decade, there were many studies that adopted the uses and gratifications theory (e.g., Babrow, 1989; Palmgreen, Wenner & Rayburn, 1980; Rayburn & Palmgreen, 1984). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the uses and gratifications approach had been utilized to explore the impact of the new technologies on the audience (Jin, Cropp & Cameron, 2002). The researcher will allocate the last part of this section, before the theory’s criticism, to discuss the applications of this theory in CMC area.

2.1.2 Purposes of the theory

In 1974, Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch outlined the principal objectives of uses and gratifications inquiry:

- (a) “To explain how people use media to gratify their needs,
- (b) To understand motives of media behavior, and
- (c) To identify functions or consequences that follow from needs, motives, and behaviours” (Pp.20-21).

2.1.3 Assumptions of theory

One of the most contemporary views of the theory was presented by Rubin (2002); since he assumed that “uses and gratifications underscore the role of audience initiative and activity. Communication behavior is largely goal directed and purposive. People typically choose to participate and select media or messages from a variety of communication alternatives in response to their expectations and desires. These expectations and desires emanate from and are constrained by personal traits, social context, and interaction. A person has the capacity for subjective choice and interpretation and initiates such behavior as media or message selection. This initiative affects the outcomes of media use” (Rubin, 2002, pp.528-529).

2.1.4 Models of uses and gratifications theory

Through the development of uses and gratifications theory, the researchers have introduced different models to express about their understanding to this theory; the major models of this theory are:

(1) The basic model

Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch (1974) presented the basic model of uses and gratifications in logical seven steps: “(1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones” (p.20). This statement was expressed by McQuail & Windahl (1997) in figure (2-2).

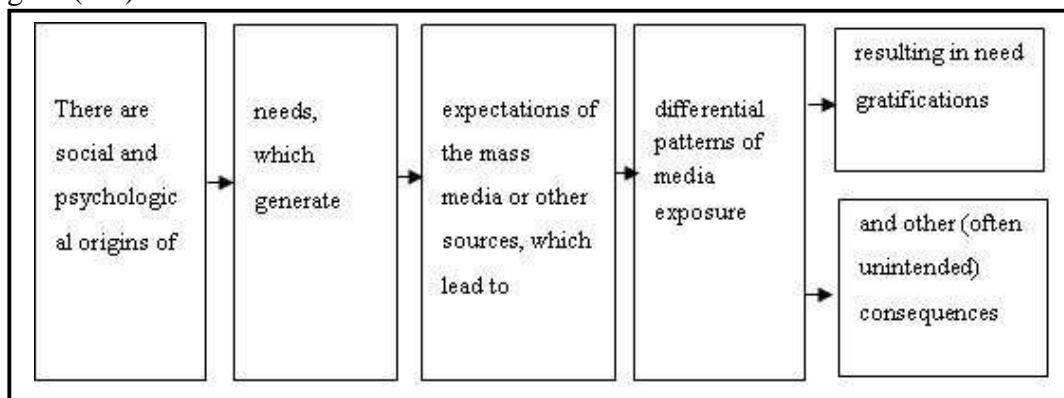


Figure 2-2. The elements of the uses and gratifications basic model (McQuail & Windahl, 1997, p.134)

(2) Rosengren's model

Rosengren (1974) introduced model of uses and gratifications theory to explain its sequence elements that contain: “the certain basic needs of lower and higher order (1. basic needs) under interaction with (2) differential combinations of intra-and extra-individual characteristics and also with (3) the structure of the surrounding society, including media structure result in (4) differential combinations of individual problems, being more or less strongly felt, as well as (5) perceived solutions to these problems; the combination of problems and solutions constituting (6) differential motives for attempts at gratifications-seeking or problem-solving behavior, resulting in (7) differential patterns of actual media consumption and (8) differential patterns of other behavior, both behavior categories giving (9) differential patterns of gratifications or non - gratifications and, possibly, affecting (10) the individuals combination of intra-and extra-individual characteristics as well as ultimately, (11) The media structure and other social, political, cultural and economic structures in society” (Rosengren, 1974, p.270). Rosengren model is presented in figure (2-3).

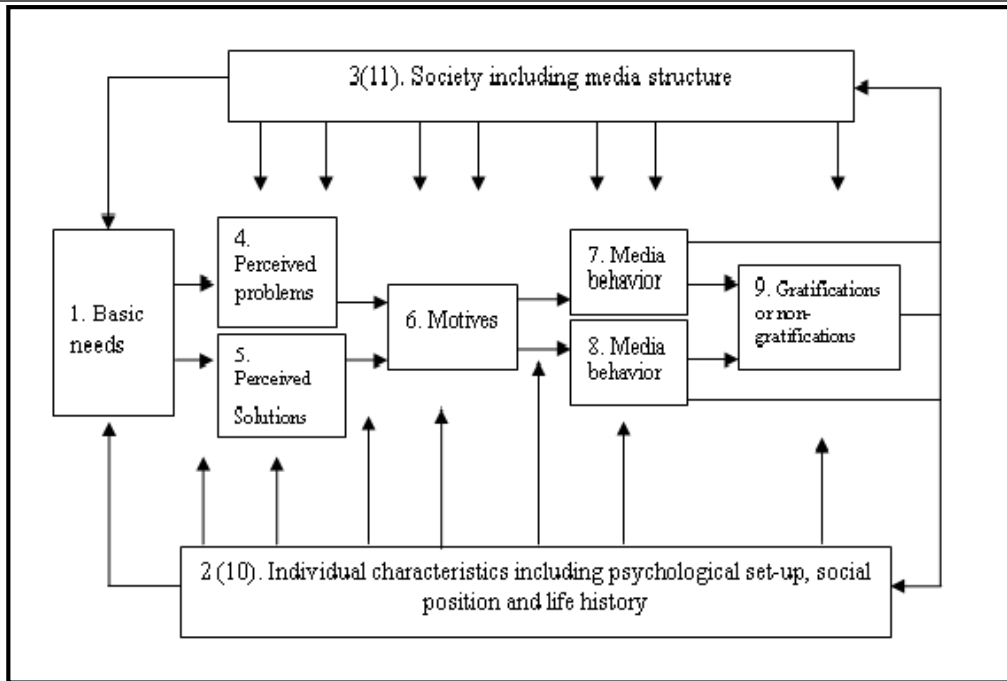


Figure 2-3. Rosengren's paradigm for uses and gratifications (Rosengren, 1974, p.271)

(3) Expectancy-Value Model

Rayburn and Palmgreen (1984) have been exploring the interrelationships among beliefs, evaluations, gratifications sought, and media exposure. They have expressed gratifications sought as a function of both belief and evaluations:

$$(1) \text{GS}_i = b_i e_i$$

Where:

- GS_i = the gratification sought from some media object, X (some medium, program, content type, etc);
- b_i = the belief (subjective probability) that X possesses some attribute or that a behaviour related to X will have a particular outcome; and
- e_i = the effective evaluation of the particular attribute or outcome.

A parallel formulation which predicts a generalized orientation to seek various gratifications from particular source is:

$$(2) \sum_{i=1}^n \text{GS}_i = \sum_{i=1}^n b_i e_i$$

Both models successfully predicted gratifications sought from television news, indicating that expectations about the characteristics of television news and evaluations of these characteristics are important antecedents of motives to seek associated gratifications” (Rayburn and Palmgreen, 1984, pp. 539-540). They expressed about the relations among beliefs, evaluations, gratification sought, and media exposure by presenting the following model (see figure, 2- 4).

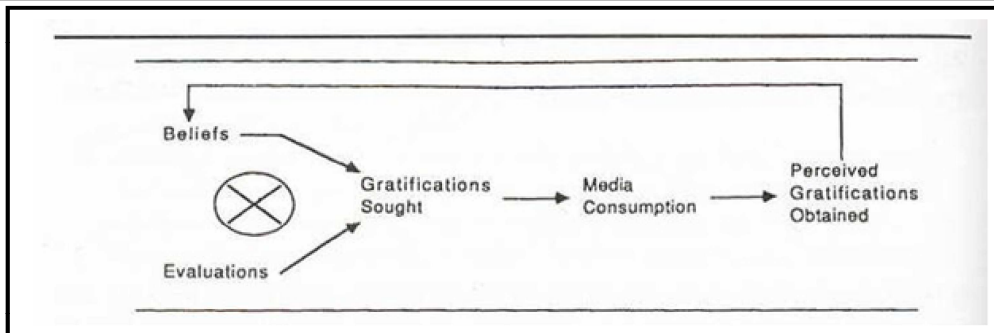


Figure 2-4. Expectancy-value model of GS and GO (Rayburn & Palmgreen 1984, p.540)

This model is “a process one which states that products of beliefs (expectations) and evaluations influence the seeking of gratifications, which influence media consumption. Such consumption results in the perception of certain gratifications obtained which then feedback to reinforce or alter an individual’s perceptions of the gratification-related attributes of a particular newspaper, program, program genre, etc. For example, if a person values "information about current issues and events" positively and believes (expects) that television news possesses such information, he will be motivated to seek such information from television news. Assuming that television news is available to the audience member, exposure to television news programming should result. If he obtains the expected information, then this outcome (GO) will feed back to reinforce the initial beliefs about this program attribute. If he obtains the information at a lower or higher level than expected, then his associated beliefs should be altered, with consequent change in motivation to seek information about current issues from television news” (Palmgreen, 1983, pp.27-28). The current study has utilized from this model to investigate the relationships between users’ GS and Go from commercial websites.

2.1.5 Cultural differences in uses and gratifications

“The uses and gratifications researchers shifted the impact of mass media from the effects of producers’ intentions to the effects audiences’ intentions, which are understood to depend upon sociological context and active psychological process” (Carey & Kreiling, 1974, p.227). This means the social and cultural taste of audience affects on their media uses, needs, and gratifications from them. For this reason, Katz (1979) confirmed that there is a need to link between gratifications studies and cultural studies. McQuail and Windahl (1997) introduced one model to link between gratifications studies and cultural studies and to clarify the relationships between them. A "culturalist" model of media use has to recognize two meanings of culture:

1. “The set of cultural texts, products and practice which comprise the media culture.
2. The different tastes and preferences which guide individual choice amongst what the media make available. Cultural taste refers to an individual attribute which is shaped by family, social class milieu, education and cultural background

available to an individual. The personal cultural taste guides media content preferences and choices and leads to various kinds of affective and emotional satisfactions” (McQuail and Windahl, 1997, p. 139), see figure (2-5).

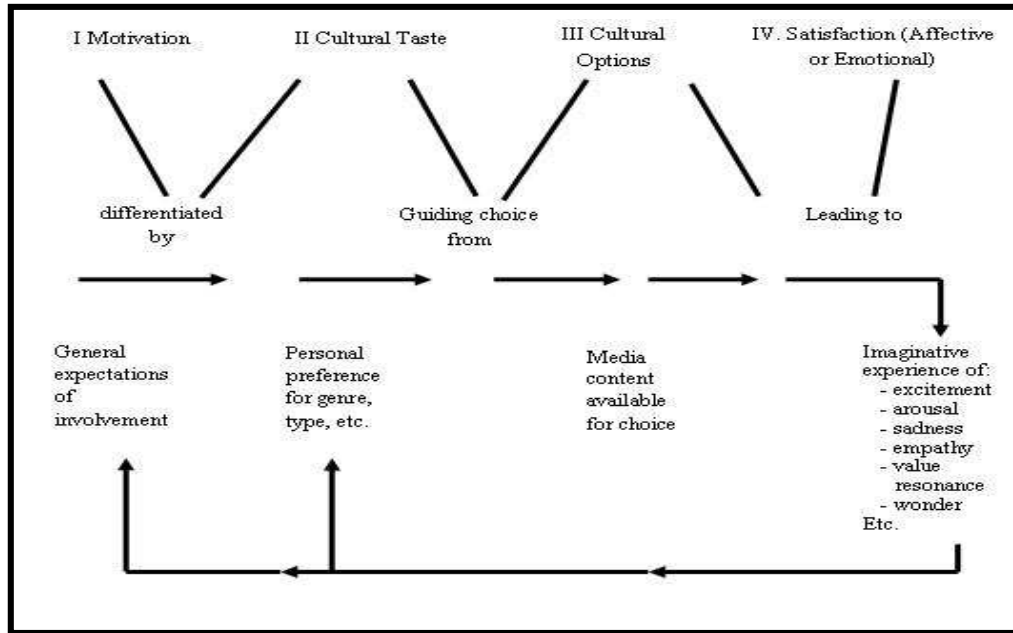


Figure 2-5. A model of ‘cultural’ media use (McQuail & Windahl, 1997, p. 139)

This model clarifies the importance of examining the media beside the audience behavior. In this context, the current study attempts to link between uses and gratifications theory and cultural differences through studying the uses and gratifications of commercial websites in two different cultures (German and Egyptian cultures) as well as a comparative study of commercial websites that were visited by German and Egyptian users; it attempts to clarify the role of cultural effects on media exposure as well as the fact of media content and design in different cultures.

2.1.6 The basic elements of uses and gratifications theory

There are four major elements of uses and gratifications theory, these elements are:

1) Active audience

“One of the fundamental assumptions of the uses and gratifications approach has been that an active audience member makes conscious decisions about the consumption of media content” (Rayburn, 1996, p.156), so the process of perception is one of the most important features of active audiences; “human perception is not a passive registering process but an active organizing and structuring process” (Carey & Kreiling, 1974, p. 227). “Perception is ultimately the key element in the uses and gratifications position. Audiences’ perceptions of goals and expectations of media sources of gratification are thought by many to determine differential patterns of media consumption. Correlatively, the manner in which particular messages are used and whether they prove gratifying is assumed to be determined, at least in part, by how those messages are interpreted or given meaning” (Swanson, 1979, p.46).

There are five basic modes of audience activity: selectivity, utilitarianism, intentionality, resistance to influence, involvement (McQuail, 1998). Levy and Windahl (1984) summarized the typology of audience activity through the qualitative orientation of audience and the temporal dimension: “The qualitative orientation of audience may be considered as having three nominal values: (1) audience selectivity, (2) audience involvement (3) audience use. The temporal dimension can be divided into three values or times: (1) before exposure (2) during exposure (3) after exposure. This formulation of activity carries with it both a notion about the qualitative interaction of audiences with communications and a time consideration, namely that different types and degrees of activity may be associated with particular phases of the communication process” (Levy & Windahl, 1984, p 53). The figure (2-6) describes the typology of audience activity.

AUDIENCE ORIENTATION	COMMUNICATION SEQUENCES		
	Before Exposure	During Exposure	After Exposure
Selective	Selective Exposure Seeking		
Involved		Decoding and Interpreting	
Using			Social Utilities

Figure 2-6. The typology of audience activity (Levy& Windahl, 1984, p.54)

2) The social and psychological origins

“Members of mass audiences do not experience the media as anonymous and isolated individuals, but rather, as members of organized social groups and as participants in a cultural milieu” (Johnstone, 1974, p.35), so “The causes of media use are held to lie in social or psychological circumstances which are experienced as problems, and the media are used for problem resolution (the meeting of needs) in matters such as information seeking, social content, diversion, social learning and development” (McQuail, 1998, p.319).

Blumler (1979) identified three major social origins of media gratifications:

1. **“Normative influences** on what individuals aim to get out of media fare.
2. **The socially distributed life-chances** an individual enjoys may have a bearing in two opposed ways.
3. **The subjective reaction or adjustment** of the individual to his situation, whatever it may be, may be relevant to what he seeks to obtain from the media.” (Blumler (1979, p.21)

“Psychological factors may also provide the motivational stimulus or point of origin for much media use” (Palmgreen, 1983, p.10), as well as, the social factors affect

on media use; since social situation produces tensions and conflicts, leading to pressure for their easement via mass media consumption. This social situation creates an awareness of problems that demand attention, information about which may be sought in the media, It offers impoverished real-life opportunities to satisfy certain needs, which are then directed to the mass media for complementary or substitute servicing, and it provides a field of expectations of familiarity with certain media materials, which must then be monitored in order to sustain membership of valued social groupings (Katz, Blumler& Gurevitch, 1974).

3) Motives of media use

This element is related with the audience activity because the audience activity is central to uses and gratification research and these motives are key component of audience activity (Rubin, 2002); “motives are general dispositions that influence people’s actions taken to fulfill need or want” (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000, p.179). There are many classifications for motives of media use such as Greenberg (1974) who divided the reasons for watching television into: (1) to pass time, (2) to forget, as a means of diversion, (3) to learn about things, (4) to learn about myself, (5) for arousal, (6) for relaxation, (7) for companionship, and (8) as a habit (pp.73-74).

Tan (1985) cited a typology of media-related needs that groups specific needs into five:

1. **“Cognitive needs:** needs related to strengthening of information, knowledge, and understanding of our environment. They also satisfy our curiosity and exploratory drives.
2. **Affective needs:** needs related to strengthening aesthetic, pleasurable, and emotional experience. The pursuit of pleasure and entertainment is a common motivation that can be satisfied by media.
3. **Personal integrative needs:** needs related to strengthening credibility, confidence, stability, and status of the individual. They are derived from the individual desire for self-esteem.
4. **Social integrative needs:** needs related to strengthening contact with family, friends, and the world. These are based on an individual’s desire for affiliation.
5. **Escapist needs:** needs related to escape, tension release, and their desire for diversion” (Tan, 1985, pp.235-236).

In his study about why they watch a TV program, McQuail (1987) offered the most popular typology of common reasons for media use:

(1) “Information

- a) Finding out about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the world
- b) Seeking advice on practical matters or opinion and decision choices
- c) Satisfying curiosity and general interest

- d) Learning; self-education; and
- e) Gaining a sense of security through knowledge.

(2) Personal Identity

- a) Finding reinforcement for personal values
- b) Finding models of behavior
- c) Identifying with valued other (in the media); and
- d) Gaining insight into one's self.

(3) Integration and Social interaction

- a) Gaining insight into circumstances of others; social empathy
- b) Identifying with others and gaining a sense of belonging
- c) Finding a basis for conversation and social interaction
- d) Having a substitute for real-life companionship
- e) Helping to carry out social roles; and
- f) Enabling one to connect with family, friends and society.

(4) Entertainment

- a) Escaping, or being diverted, from problems
- b) Relaxing
- c) Getting intrinsic cultural or aesthetic enjoyment
- d) Filling time
- g) Emotional release; and
- h) Sexual arousal” (McQuail 1987, p. 73)

4) Expectancy (Potential gratifications)

A concept central to uses and gratifications theory is that expectancy and it is a key element in all basic models of this theory. This concept indicated that “people behave on the basis of a perceived probability that an action will have a particular consequence and they also value that outcome in varying degrees. However, these two elements are conceptually and analytically distinct; they also providing a way of explaining media use behavior” (McQuail & Windahl, 1997, p.136).

“Indeed, the concept of audience expectations concerning the characteristics of the media and potential gratifications to be obtained is essential to the uses and gratifications assumption of an active audience; if audience members are to select from among various media and no media alternatives according to their needs, they must have some perception of the alternatives most likely to meet those needs” (Rayburn & Palmgreen, 1984, p.538).

In the 1980s, many researchers tied uses and gratifications more directly to expectancy-value theory (e.g., Palmgreen, 1983; Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1982; Rayburn & Palmgreen, 1984). Rayburn and Palmgreen (1984) indicated that gratifications obtained are strongly related to beliefs (expectations) about media attributes and they also indicated that belief and evaluation products are correlated with gratifications

obtained. Expectancy-value model (as shown in figure, 2-4) reflects the important role of expectations in uses and gratifications theory.

5) Gratifications

Mass communication researchers have focused on studying the gratifications derived by people from the media (Swank, 1979); There are two basic types of gratifications: gratifications sought and gratifications obtained; Greenberg (1974) has distinguished between these two types and argued that “one cannot distinguish whether the response obtained from the viewer of the medium, or a fan of some specific content, is an accurate statement of what he wanted, or what he thinks he got.... no approach has so far dealt with the parallelism or discrepancy between what was sought and what was obtained” (p. 89).

There is strong relationship between gratifications sought (GS) and gratifications obtained (GO).The researchers confirmed that each GS correlated moderately to strongly with its corresponding GO for the audience (Palmgreen, Wenner & Rayburn, 1980), and they expressed about this relationship by the figure (2-7).

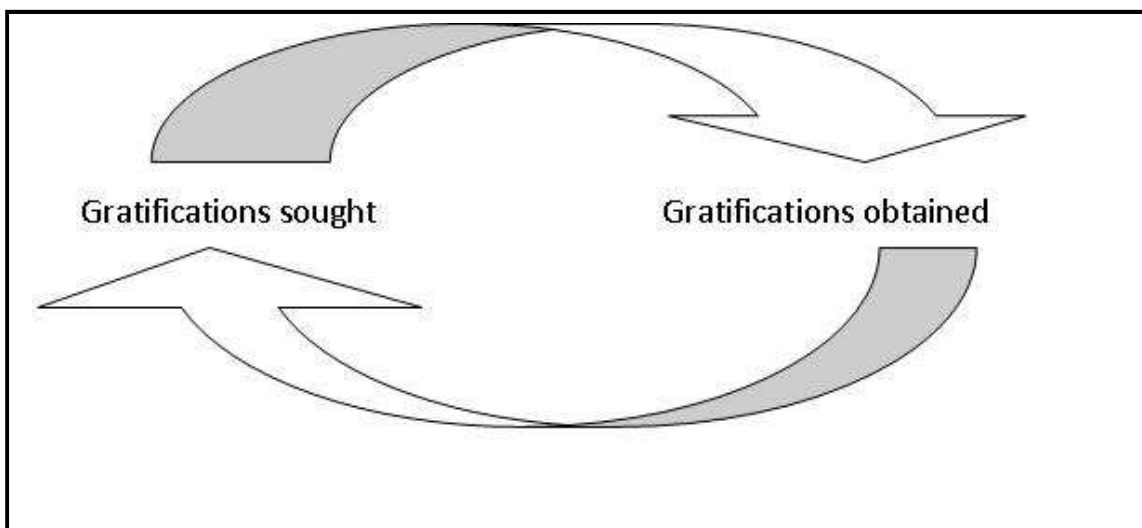


Figure 2-7. The relation between gratifications sought and gratification obtained (Palmgreen, Wenner & Rayburn, 1980, p. 165)

2.1.7 The perspective of uses and gratifications in Internet use

Several studies (e.g. Birnie & Horvath, 2002; Chang, Lee, & Kim, 2006; Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004; Dimmick et al., 2007; Ebersole, 2000; Johnson & Kaye, 2003; Kaye, 1998; Ko, 2000; Ko, Cho & Roberts, 2005; LaRose, & Eastin, 2004; LaRose, Mastro & Eastin, 2001; Luo, 2002; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Rayburn, 1996; Ruggiero, 2000; Stafford & Stafford, 1998; Stafford & Stafford, 2000; Yoo, 1996; Zviran, Glezer & Avni, 2005) have applied uses and gratifications to explain different Internet usages. In an early attempt at Internet uses and gratifications research, Rafaeli (1986) discussed that people using university computer bulletin boards to satisfy the following needs: recreation, entertainment, and diversion.

From 1990s, the uses and gratifications approach have been utilized to explore the impact of the new technologies on the audience, and the uses and gratifications theory has been refined, revised and extended accordingly. The uses and gratifications approach has been widely used in CMC studies (Jin, Cropp & Cameron, 2002). The uses and gratifications research has been quite effective to understand motivations and concerns of this new type of communication including the Internet.

■ **Suitability of uses and gratifications for Internet**

The uses and gratifications theory is well suited for studying the Internet as a whole and for examining specific types of websites (Kaye & Johnson, 2001). This suitability due to many factors:

a) Active audience and interactivity

The rapid growth of the Internet has strengthened the potency of the uses and gratifications theory because this medium requires that its users to be more active, as compared to other traditional media (Ruggiero, 2000), because “the medium embodies the principle of active audience” (Johnson & Kaye, 2003, p.305); since audience are exposed to television or radio in a relatively passive way, but Internet users more actively engage in using the medium by searching out information or exchanging messages (Kaye & Johnson, 2001).

b) Mutability

Newhagen and Rafaeli (1996) have suggested that uses and gratifications theory may be especially useful because of the "mutability" of the Internet; the diversity of content is much greater for the Internet than for traditional media (TV, radio, newspapers). Ebersole (2000) also indicated that this range of material is available on the web, would suggest that potential uses for the Internet may far exceed those provided by other traditional media.

c) The Internet is intentionally consumed

Rayburn 1996 also suggested that the Internet is "intentionally" consumed, as audiences must make purposive choices about which site to visit (Rayburn, 1996), “the web users are aware of their needs and goal directed” (Johnson & Kaye, 2003, p.306), and this meets one of the fundamental hypotheses of the theory which is “Communication behavior is largely goal directed and purposive” (Rubin, 2002, p.528).

d) The wide range of material available online

“The Internet is able to satisfy a wide variety of needs” (Johnson & Kaye, 2003, p.306); the Internet is able to satisfy the audience’s needs not only like traditional media, but also more than these media.

For these reasons, the uses and gratifications theory is well suited for the Internet. Concerning the application of uses and gratifications theory in the field of online

marketing, the contributions of applying uses and gratifications theory in this field, particularly online advertising and commercial websites, are still limited and weak (e.g., Eighmey & McCord, 1998; Eighmey, 1997; Maignan & Lukas 1997). So, the current study attempts to depict: how users view commercial websites, as online advertising, how their attitudes and opinions affect their uses of this new medium in a marketing context, which reasons push them to use online commercial websites and how they interact with the advertisements on commercial websites.

2.1.8 Criticism of uses and gratifications theory

Although uses and gratifications theory has captured the interests of many mass communication researchers, the theory has come under some criticism from a number of researchers; “it is basically a very theoretical approach; on occasion its protagonists are inclined to turn this into a virtue, taking the line that if it can be measured it exists, and if it can be associated it is significant” (Elliott, 1974, p.256). The most important criticisms of this theory are:

(1) Vague conceptual framework

Uses and gratifications approach could be pursued from any of three different theoretic positions: functionalism, a cultural position, or a motivation position (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974), so “the nature of the conceptual framework underlying uses and gratifications research is not totally clear” (Swanson, 1977, p.216).

(2) Lack of precision major concepts

“The lack of clarity of central constructs and how researchers attached different meanings to concepts such as motives, uses, gratifications, and functional alternatives” (Rubin, 2002. p.531); there is “confusion and equivalence in the meaning of major concepts and terms employed in uses and gratifications studies” (Swanson, 1977, p.216).

(3) The methodological reliance on "self-report" data

The use of introspective "self-report" has several limitations. For example: readers may not know why they chose content to read, what they did or may not be able to explain fully (Rubin, 2002).

(4) Confused explanatory apparatus

A fourth conceptual difficulty is considerable confusion over the explanation of uses and gratifications theory; “it is not clear: (1) what are the necessary components of a uses and gratifications explanation, (2) how those components serve to provide a satisfactory account or explanation, or (3) how a uses and gratifications explanation differs from other accounts which might be offered to explain the same behavior. While the issues involved here are complex, analysis of a few key problems will suffice to identify the difficulty with which we are faced” (Swanson, 1977, p.218).

(5) Failure to view perception as an active process

The nature of audiences and whether the audiences were treated as being active or rational in their behavior (Rubin, 2002), “Perhaps the most basic tenet of the uses and gratifications approach is that persons are active in, say, forming intentions (“uses” understood as goals), creating expectations of mass media, and constructing lines of action to achieve gratifications, this sort of cognitive activity is thus an important, perhaps a definitive, part of the study of what people do with the media” (Swanson, 1977, p.219). “It overemphasizes the “activity” of the audience, in the face of evidence showing that much television at least is viewed with little selectivity” (McQuail & Windahl, 1997, p.141).

(6) It ignores the media content

It rather insensitive to media content itself, largely ignoring the textual and cultural specifics of media content. “Uses and gratifications research fails to link the functions of mass media consumption with the symbolic content of the mass-communicated materials or with the actual experience of consuming them” (Carey & Kreiling, 1974, p. 232). The researchers become aware that they were studying content without audience, uses and gratifications researchers came to realize that they were studying audience without content (Watson, 1998).

To get rid of this criticism, the researcher analyzed commercial websites that were visited by German and Egyptian users, besides studying uses and gratifications of these websites among German and Egyptian users.

2.2 Interactive nature of CMC

The several last decades have witnessed a huge revolution in the field of mass media. This revolution has been created by new media such as computers, phone networks, communications networks, Internet, and multimedia technology. These "new media" reflect many different configurations of communications; their varied forms reveal the connection between the characteristics of interpersonal communication (e.g., interactivity, demassification, and synchronization) and the characteristics of mass communication (e.g., massification, usage of new technology). New media have many advantages that distinguish them from traditional mass media such as: interactivity, demassification, selectivity, synchronization, immediacy, inexpensiveness, pro-democracy forums, marketing tool, speed...etc. However, interactivity is generally considered to be the central characteristic of new media. As such, many researchers in communication technology have attempted to not only explore the level of interactivity that new media involve but also define the dimensions, features, and characteristics of interactive communication within the realm of new media (e.g., Downes & McMillan, 2000; Goertz, 1995; McMillan & Hwang, 2002; Rafaeli, 1988; Rafaeli & Sudweeks, 1997; Schultz, 1999, 2000; Zack, 1993).

“The contemporary era of person-to-person telecommunication centers on two - way media and this is made possible by computers” (Rogers, 1986, p.30). Thus it is appropriate that the researcher starts this section by reviewing the conceptual definitions, dimensions, types, and features of interactive communication. As well as, CMC will be examined as an interactive communication type.

2.2.1 The concept of interactivity

One of the fundamental assumptions of the uses and gratifications theory is that members of audience are active (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974). This assumption refers to interactivity. As well as, most of the communication models (e.g., magic bullet theory, two-step flow model, and selective attention & perception model) have focused on the importance of interactivity in mass communication process.

At the end of the last century, and with the appearance of interactive new media, the receiver gained recognition as an active participant. Users seek or select information more than they "receive" information sent by senders. On some websites, online users can do more than actively select information and they can also add information, therefore the distinction between source and receiver is dissolving (Kenney, Gorelik & Mwangi, 2000). Interactivity is the most important characteristic of new technologies and paving the way for a considerable reassessment of communication research (e.g., Ha & James, 1998; Heeter, 1989; Morris & Ogan, 1996; Pavlik, 1998; Rafaeli & Sudweeks, 1997).

1) The complexity of the definition

Although interactivity has long been a concept of mass communication and a core concept of CMC, there has been a lack of consensus to determine the meaning of the term (e.g., Ha & James, 1998; Heeter, 1989, 2000; Rafaeli & Sudweeks, 1997; Steuer, 1992), because “Interactivity is a widely used term with an intuitive appeal” (Rafaeli 1988, p.110); since many researchers from a multitude of disciplines ranging from instructional technology, CMC, computer science, and information science, to advertising and marketing define interactivity differently (Wu, 2005), and these vast implicit and explicit definitions prepared by researchers from many different academic and professional perspectives have led to the lack of consensus for the definition of interactivity (Kiouisis, 2002).

2) Classification of the definitions

Kiouisis (2002) divided the concepts of interactivity into three areas: structure of technology (medium), communication context (setting), and user perception. McMillan & Hwang (2002) also categorized these definitions based on process, features, perception, and or combined approaches. These definitions can also be divided into four categories: the medium, user perception, process, and the combined approaches.

Definitions that focus on medium features

The features of CMC media are represented in hyperlinks, chats, downloads, uploads, email, search engines, multimedia, etc. Some researchers consider interactivity as the functional feature of the medium (e.g., Durlak, 1987; Kenney, Gorelik & Mwangi, 2000; Lombard & Snyder-Dutch, 2001; Massey & Levy 1999; Schultz, 1999). These conceptual definitions focused on the types of channels involved in the communication exchange for example; Jensen (1998) defined interactivity as: “A measure of a media’s potential ability to let the user exert an influence on the content and/or form of the mediated communication” (p.201).

Lombard and Snyder-Dutch (2001) identified also interactivity as “a characteristic of a medium in which the user can influence the form and/or content of the mediated presentation or experience” (p.10). They described interactivity as a characteristic of a medium and they focused on the features that enable user control.

Definitions that focus on users perception

A second team of researchers (e.g., Day, 1998; Kiouisis, 1999; Newhagen, Cordes, & Levy 1995; Schumann, Artis & Rivera, 2001, Wu, 1999) focused on the user’s perception in their interactivity definitions; Day, 1998 indicated that the essence of interactive communication is the use of information from the user rather than about the user. Kiouisis (1999) identified interactivity as “the ability of users to perceive the experience to be a simulation of interpersonal communication and increase their awareness of telepresence” (p.18). As well as, Wu (1999) focused on the perceived interactivity as type of interactivity and defined it as “a two-component construct

consisting of navigation and responsiveness” (p.6). Schumann, Artis and Rivera (2001) described interactivity as “a characteristic of the consumer, and not a characteristic of the medium. The medium simply serves to facilitate the interaction.” They focused on the user’s choice to interact as a core term in defining interactivity.

Definitions that focus on process

From the process perspective, researchers focused on activities such as interchange, responsiveness, action and reaction, and participation as key dimensions of interactivity (e.g., Cho & Leckenby, 1999; Haeckel, 1998; Pavlik, 1998; Rafaeli, 1988; Steuer, 1992). For example, Rafaeli (1988) also defined interactivity as “an expression of the extent that in a given series of communication exchanges, any third (or later) transmission (or message) is related to the degree to which previous exchanges referred to even earlier transmissions” (p.111). He indicated that interactivity is a one-dimensional concept, and that this dimension is responsiveness. But Steuer (1992) focused on defining interactivity based on real-time participation: “interactivity is the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time” (p.84).

According to Pavlik (1998), interactivity means “two-way communication between source and receiver, or, more broadly multidirectional communication between any number of sources and receivers” (p.137). This definition reflects the importance of two-way communication.

Haeckel (1998) observed that “marketing interactivity is a person-to-person or person-to-technology exchange designed to effect a change in the knowledge or behavior of at least one person” (p.66); from this perspective, interactivity can be defined as “the degree to which a person actively engages in advertising processing by interacting with advertising messages and advertisers” (Cho & Leckenby, 1999, p.163). This definition shed some light on the interchange between users and senders.

In order to characterize the communication process, the preceding definitions focus on the process of communication and express variations of the concept using different terms such as: exchange, interchange between users and senders, responsiveness, real-time participation, two - way communication, actions and reactions.

Definitions that combine, medium, perception, and/or process

The fourth team of researchers (e.g., Ha & James, 1998; Hanssen, Jankowski, & Etienne, 1996; Heeter, 1989; Kiouisis, 2002) attempted to combine the terms *medium, perception and/or process* with their definition of interactivity as follows:

According to Heeter (1989), interactivity is a multi-dimensional concept that includes: the complexity of available choices, the amount of effort users expend, user responsiveness, information monitoring, the ease with which information can be added, and the facilitation of interpersonal communication. Heeter combines the three

aforementioned terms - medium (complexity of choice available, and ease of adding information), perception (effort users must exert, and monitoring information use) and/or process (responsiveness to the user, and facilitation of interpersonal communication) – in her definition of interactivity.

“Aspects of interactivity were clustered around three terms: equality (containing aspects such as participants, mutual activity, role exchange, control), responsiveness (e.g. mutual discourse, nature of feedback, response time) and functional communicative environment (e.g. bandwidth, transparency, social presence, artificial intelligence)” (Hanssen, Jankowski, & Etienne, 1996, p.71). This definition focused on equality (medium), responsiveness (process), and functional environment (process).

“Interactivity should be defined in terms of the extent to which the communicator and the audience respond to, or are willing to facilitate, each other’s communication needs” (Ha & James, 1998, p.461).

Kiouis (2002) defined interactivity as “the degree to which a communication technology can create a mediated environment in which participants can communicate (one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many), both synchronously and asynchronously, and participate in reciprocal message exchanges (third-order dependency), with regard to human users, additionally, it (interactivity) refers to their (users) ability to perceive the experience as a simulation of interpersonal communication and to increase their awareness of telepresence” (p.371).

Points of consensus

Downes and McMillan (2000) confirmed that interactivity increases as:

- Two-way communication enables all participants to actively communicate;
- The timing of communication is flexible to meet the time demands of participants;
- The communication environment creates a sense of place;
- Participants perceive that they have greater control of the communication environment;
- Participants find the communication to be responsive; and
- Individuals perceive that the goal of communication is more oriented to exchanging information than to attempting to persuade.

Some consensus can also be reached concerning the chief ingredients of an interactive experience (Kiouis, 2002):

- Two-way communication should exist, usually through a mediated channel,
- The roles of message sender and receiver should be interchangeable among participants,
- In addition, some third-order dependency among participants is usually necessary;
- For the most part, communicators can be human or machine, often contingent upon whether they can function as both senders and receivers;
- Individuals should be able to manipulate the content, form, and pace of a mediated environment in some way; and

- Users should be able to perceive differences in levels of interactive experiences.

The literature suggested that the examination of interactivity should pay attention to: “user effort, sender and receiver roles, timeliness, the characteristics of the medium and the communicator, control, activity tracking, advantages, disadvantages, and potential threats” (Downes & McMillan, 2000, p.161).

Suggested definition of interactivity

Based on the different definitions of interactivity and the points of consensus among these definitions, the researcher defines interactivity as a characteristic of the communication process wherein its elements (user, medium, and message) emerge in unique communication settings where time is flexible enough to meet the demands of participants based on their sense of place.

2.2.2 Dimensions of interactivity

Jensen (1998) classified the dimensions of interactivity according to the numbers of dimensions that were presented for defining this term. The researchers have adopted Jensen’s method in reviewing the dimensions of interactivity. Table (2-1) contains classifications to the most important dimensions of interactivity.

Nr	Authors	The Dimensions
1	Rafaeli (1988)	Responsiveness
	Rogress (1986)	Selected communication technologies
2	Szuprowicz (1995)	1. Information flow 2. Interactive multimedia
3	Coyle & Thorson (2001)	1. Mapping 2. Speed 3. User control
	Kiousis (1999)	1. The structure of the medium 2. The context of communication setting 3. The perception of users
	McMillan & Hwang (2002)	1. Direction of communication 2. User control 3. Time
	Steuer (1992)	1. Speed: speed of responsiveness 2. Range: range of choice available 3. Mapping: mapping capabilities of medium
4	Goertz (1995)	1. The degree of choice available 2. The degree of modifiability 3. Available selections and modifications 4. The degree of linearity & non linearity
	Jensen (1998)	1. Transmissionen interactivity 2. Consultational interactivity 3. Conversational interactivity 4. Registrational interactivity

	Zack (1993)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The simultaneous and continuous exchange of information; 2. The use of multiple nonverbal cues; 3. The potentially spontaneous, unpredictable, and emergent progression of remarks 4. The ability to interrupt or preempt; mutuality; patterns of turn-taking; and the use of adjacency pairs.
5	Downes & McMillan (2000)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direction of communication 2. Timing flexibility 3. Sense of place 4. Level of control 5. Responsiveness and the perceived purpose of communication
	Ha & James (1998)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Playfulness 2. Choice 3. Connectedness 4. Information collection 5. Reciprocal communication
6	Heeter (1989)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complexity of choice available 2. Efforts users must exert 3. Responsiveness to the user 4. Facilitation of interpersonal communication 5. Ease of adding information 6. Monitor system use

Table 2-1. The dimensions of interactivity

I. One-dimensional concepts of interactivity

One relatively simple model of interactivity which operates from only one dimension can be found in the writing of Everett M. Rogers (1986) and Sheizaf Rafaeli (1988).

Rogers (1986) defined "interactivity" as "the capability of new communication systems (usually containing a computer as one component) to "talk back" to the user, almost like an individual participating in a conversation" (p.34), and he confirmed that interactivity is a variable; the mass media (newspapers, radio, television and film) are relatively low in their degree of interactivity.

Based on this definition, Rogers has created a scale, reprinted in figure (2- 8), in which he lists the 'degrees of interactivity' for a number of selected communication technologies on a continuum from 'low' to 'high'.

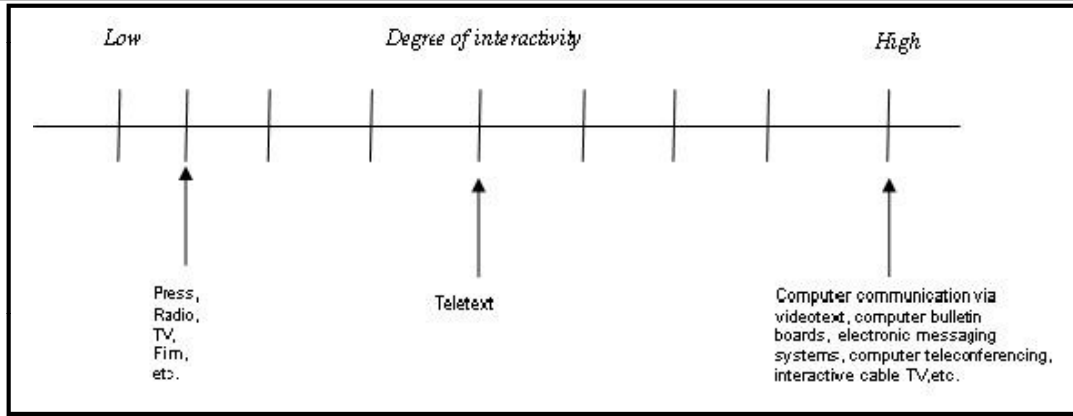


Figure 2-8. Rogers' 1-dimensional Scale of "selected communication technologies on interactivity continuum" (1986: p.34)

Sheizaf Rafaeli (1988), one of the most frequently cited scholars on the subject of interactive communication, has also presented a one dimensional concept of interactivity, but with a different accent. Rafaeli (1988) focused on the concept of "responsiveness", arguing that interactivity is "an expression of the extent that, in a given series of communication changes, any third (or later) transmission (or message) is related to the degree to which previous exchanges referred to event earlier transmissions" (p. 111). In this conceptual construction, responsiveness plays a central role. A Rafaeli's model is shown in figure (2-9).

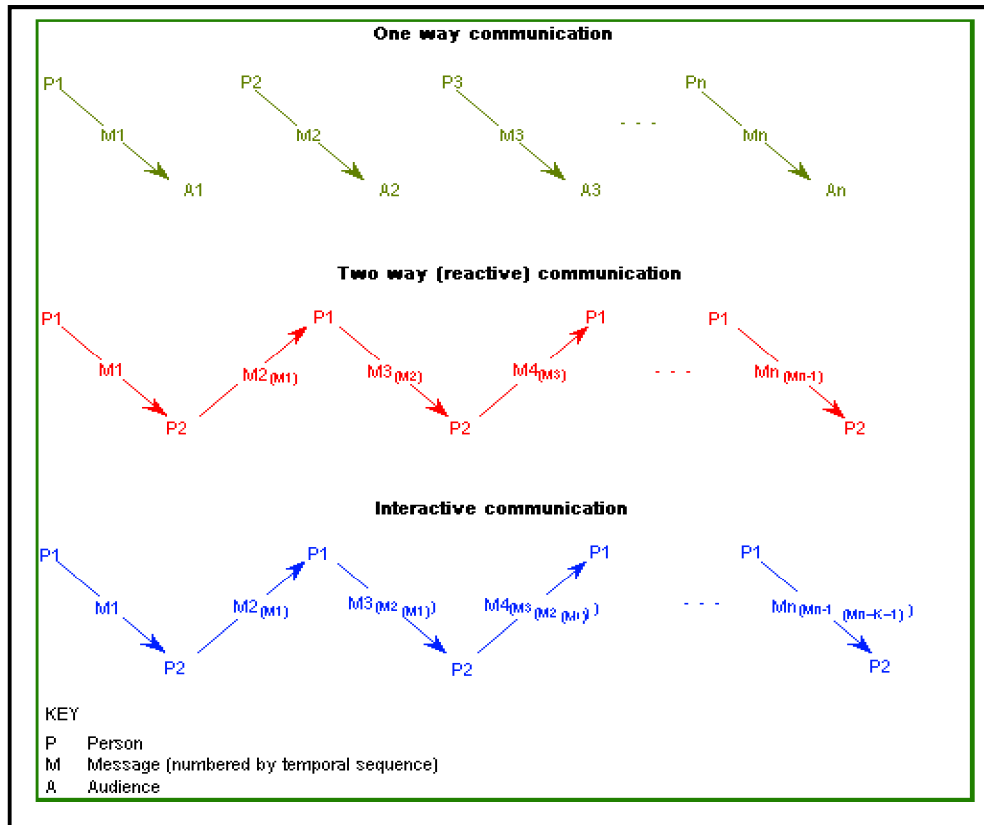


Figure 2-9. Rafaeli's 1-dimensional concept of interactivity (Rafaeli, 1988, p.120)

Rafaeli (1988) identified several central premises that may be derived from this model:

- 1) “First, not all communication is interactive, and even non interactive communication may contain coherent responses.
- 2) Second, we are made aware that interactivity is not a medium characteristic. Media and channels may set upper bounds, remove barriers, or provide necessary conditions for interactivity levels. But potential does not compel actuality.
- 3) Following from this is the realization that much of the use of new communication technologies is non-interactive. Potential interactivity is a quality of the situation or setting.
- 4) Last, this model distinguishes between interactivity and the feedback of which it is a subset. Interactivity is the feedback that relates both to the previous messages related to those preceding them” (Rafaeli, 1988, pp.119-120).

II. Two-dimensional concepts of interactivity

Szuprowicz (1995) presented a two-dimensional concept of interactivity, saying that: “in order to understand all issues and problems associated with interactive multimedia networking and communications it is necessary to define and classify the various levels and categories of interactivity that come into play. Interactivity is best defined by the type of multimedia information flows” (P.14). The figure (2-10) clarifies the components of this model:

1. “Information flow: is one of the two dimensions and he divided the information flows into three main categories:
 - a. User-to-documents interactivity: is a traditional transaction between a user and specific documents.
 - b. User-to-computer interactivity: is explained as more exploratory interactions between a user and various delivery platforms.
 - c. User-to-user interactivity: is explained as collaborative transactions between two or more users.

Within each of these categories multimedia information flows depend on interactive access interfaces, broadcasting facilities, or object-oriented manipulation of unstructured multimedia elements.

2. Interactive Multimedia elements:
 - a. Object- oriented manipulation.
 - b. Distribution (Broadcasting).
 - c. Interactive access (links).” (Szuprowicz, 1995, pp.14-15).

Object-oriented manipulation	Mail	Database	Groupware
Broadcast	Newsletter	Information Kiosk	Presentation
Interactive access	Hypermedia	Graphical user Interface	Conferencing training
	User-to-documents	User-to-computer	User-to-user

Figure 2-10. Interactive multimedia information flows (Szuprowicz, 1995, p.15)

III. Three-dimensional concepts of interactivity

Some researchers (e.g., Coyle & Thorson, 2001, Kiouisis, 2002; Steuer, 1992) indicated that there are three dimensions of interactivity.

Steuer (1992) conceptualized interactivity based on three elements—speed, range, and mapping, which aid in facilitating users' manipulation of contents based on the functional approach:

1. Speed: speed of responsiveness
2. Range: range of choice available
3. Mapping: mapping capabilities of medium

Coyle and Thorson (2001) also identified mapping, speed, and user control as three important dimensions of website interactivity; emphasizing the perceptual rather than functional aspect of interactivity.

Kiouisis (2002) focused on the elements of communication to explore the dimensions of interactivity; Kiouisis pointed to three factors as being the main dimensions of interactivity, these factors are: the technological structure of the medium used (objective speed, range, and sensory complexity), the characteristics of the communication settings (third-order dependency and social presence), and individuals' perceptions (proximity, perceived speed, sensory activation and telepresence). The graphic illustration shown in figure (2-11) clarifies the factors of interactivity.

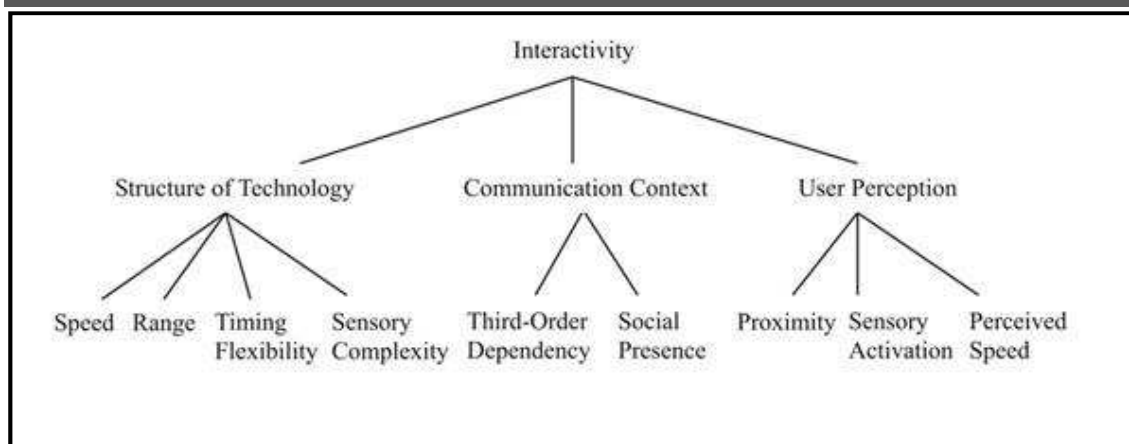


Figure 2-11. Operationalization of interactivity (Kiousis, 2002, p 378)

IV. Four-dimensional concepts of interactivity

An example of a four-dimensional concept of interactivity, where four dimensions of interactivity can be found in the writing of Goertz, 1995; Jensen, 1998; and Zack, 1993. For example, Zack (1993) suggests that the following key factors emerge from the literature as elements of interactivity: the simultaneous and continuous exchange of information; the use of multiple nonverbal cues; the potentially spontaneous, unpredictable, and emergent progression of remarks; the ability to interrupt or preempt; mutuality; patterns of turn-taking; and the use of adjacency pairs. He explicated the importance of managers' use of electronic messaging for ongoing management groups performing a cooperative task. Zack identified four interactivity dimensions:

1. Simultaneous and continuous exchange of information
2. Use of multiple, non-verbal cues
3. Potentially spontaneous, unpredictable and emergent progression of remarks
4. Ability to interrupt or preempt

V. Five-dimensional concepts of interactivity

Ha and James (1998) pointed out the invalid assumptions of "exchange" and "mutuality" as the key elements of interactivity when applied to CMC context. They propose that interactivity is "the extent to which the communicator and the audience respond to, or are willing to facilitate, each other's communication needs" (p. 8). They suggest playfulness, choice, connectedness, information collection and reciprocal communication as the five dimensions of interactivity in CMC. Downes and McMillan (2000) provided also a five-dimensional definition of interactivity comprised of: direction of communication, timing flexibility, sense of place, level of control, and responsiveness and the perceived purpose of communication.

VI. Six-dimensional concepts of interactivity

Heeter (1989) adopted Rafaeli's one-dimensional interactivity concept and included responsiveness as one of her six dimensions of interactivity which includes the following:

- (1) “Complexity of choice available: This dimension referred to selectivity and concerns the extent to which users are provided with a choice of available information (information in this context includes any sort of media content, be it entertaining, persuasive or educational).
- (2) Effort that users must exert: It is the amount of efforts users must exert to access information.
- (3) Responsiveness to the user: The third dimension of interactivity is the degree to which a medium can react responsively to a user. (Media systems can also interpose a human who responds to user queries, for example, the telephone operator. Thus media system can be technologically or humanly responsive to users).
- (4) Monitoring of information use (when a system can track users for example). New technologies are changing the nature of feedback. With traditional media such as television, radio and newspaper feedback refers primarily to media users calling or writing to the station management or editors. And with some of new technologies, user selection of information can be a continuous monitoring of system use such as videotext central computers, and interactive cable television. The potential for continuous monitoring of system use has implications for billing and for programming system content to meet user interests.
- (5) Ease of adding information: With some new technologies, users actually act as an information source, providing information that is carried on a media system to other users. Broadcasting television carries virtually no user- programmed content (with the occasional exception of an editorial comment). Electronic bulletin boards, on the other hand, are computer-based system that link users by telephone to public message databases comprised almost entirely of user-generated content. A fifth dimension of interactivity is the degree to which users can add information to the system that a mass, undifferentiated audience can access.
- (6) Facilitation of interpersonal communication: This dimension means the degree to which a media system facilitates interpersonal communication between specific users. (Many technologies such as broadcast television allow for no interpersonal communication)” (Heeter, 1989, pp.221-224).

VII. Factors of interactive communication

In light of the previous review of the dimensions of interactivity and based on the suggested definition of interactivity, the communication should contain four types of conditions to be interactive; these conditions are related with sender/receiver, medium, message and communications settings.

1. Users (sender/receiver)

In interactive communication, one cannot differentiate between sender and receiver because their roles are interchangeable, so:

- a) Users should perceive that they have greater control of the communication environment and they should be able to control the communication process.
- b) Users should find the communication to be responsive.

- c) Users should perceive that the goal of communication is more oriented to exchanging information than attempting to persuade. (Downes & McMillan, 2000).
- d) The roles of sender and receiver should be interchangeable among participants.
- e) Exchange and activity among users is usually necessary.
- f) For the most part, communicators can be human or machine, often contingent upon whether they can function as both senders and receivers.
- g) They should be able to perceive the differences in levels of interactive experiences.

2. Medium

The characteristics of an interactive medium could be summarized in the following points:

- h) An interactive medium enables all participants (users) to actively communicate. For example Internet enables the users to communicate actively through its tools such as email or chat.
- i) It provides alternatives of communication time to meet the time demands of users. Regarding this point, CMC is more interactive than interpersonal communication because the interaction of CMC can be done synchronously or asynchronously since chat enables users to communicate synchronously, but e-mail enables them to communicate asynchronously.
- j) Speed – an interactive medium should transmit the messages among the users speedily.
- k) Giving the sense of place through the use of multimedia applications such as photos, video, and audio.
- l) Having an interactive environment and tools (such as: email, chat, electronic bulletin board, newsgroups, search engine, and capacity of adding comment or feedback).

3. Message

- m) The interactive message should be not only sent from sender, but also selected from receiver.
- n) The message should be updated
- o) It should be personal, interconnected and exchangeable.
- p) It should be related to the interests of the users.

4. Communication settings

- q) Timing of communication is flexible enough to meet the time demands of participants.
- r) The communication environment creates a sense of place.

2.2.3 Types of interactivity

There are many classifications of interactivity; the table (2-2) highlights the most popular classifications of interactivity.

Perspectives of Classification	Kinds of interactivity			
Communication type	Interactivity of Interpersonal communication	Interactivity of Mass communication	Interactivity of Computer-mediated communication	
Communication elements	User-to-documents interactivity	User-to-computer interactivity	User-to-user	
Communication direction	Monologue	Feedback	Responsive Dialogue	Mutual Discourse
Communication periods	Expected Interactivity	Actual Interactivity	Perceived Interactivity	
Interaction tools	Navigational Interactivity	Functional Interactivity	Adaptive Interactivity	

Table 2-2. Types of Interactivity

I. Dividing Interactivity according to communication type

Based on the communication type, Interactivity is divided into three main communication types:

(1) Interactivity of interpersonal communication

Interpersonal communication is defined as “one-to-one or one-to-few, face-to-face, and direct without any equipment or technology intervening between the sender and the receiver” (Norman & Russell, 2006, p.7). Many researchers in the field of interactive communication have confirmed that interpersonal communication and especially face-to-face communication is the ideal type of interactive communication: “face-to-face communication is held up as the model because the sender and receiver use all their senses, the reply is immediate, the communication is generally closed circuit, and the content is primarily informal or adlib” (Durlak, 1987, p.744). The model in figure (2- 12) clarifies the interactivity of interpersonal communication.

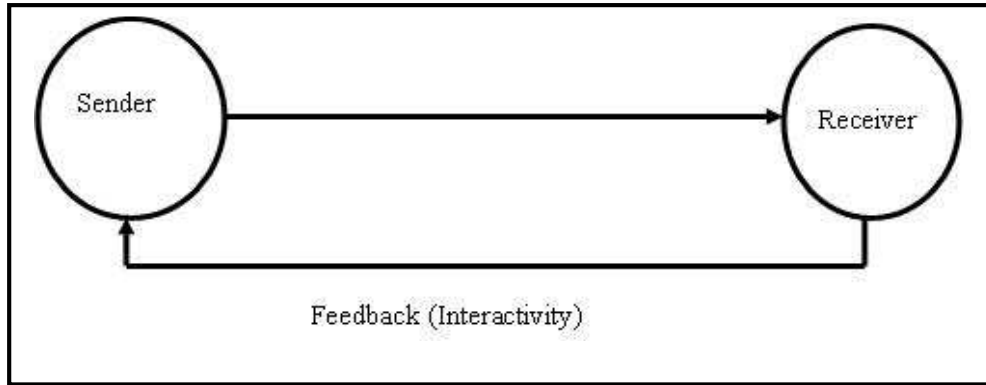


Figure 2-12. Interactivity of interpersonal communication

(2) Interactivity of mass communication

The degree of interactivity in mass media (e.g. newspaper, radio, television) is so weak, since “there is a long tradition of dissatisfaction regarding the limited one-way communication of mass media. Lack of interactivity was a concern for media critics long before the term "interactive" became an inflated buzzword in the age of the Internet” (Schultz, 1999, p.2). Rafaeli (1988) ignored the feedback of mass media audience and they considered it non interactive, see figure (2- 13).

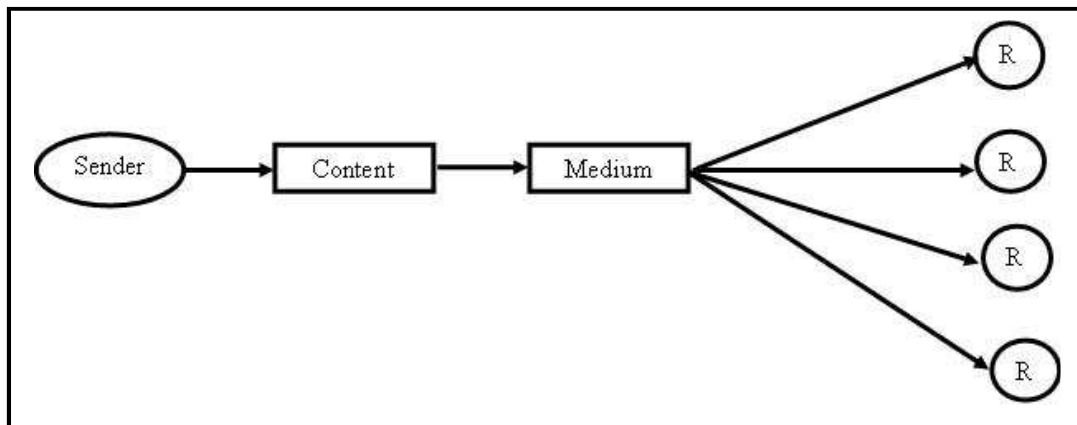


Figure 2-13. Interactivity of mass communication (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee, 1995)

Figure (2-13) presents a simplified model which typifies many models of mass communication. The primary feature of this figure is a one-to-many communications process, whereby the Sender transmits through a medium to receivers (R). Depending upon the medium (broadcast, print, billboards), either static (text, image and graphics) and/or dynamic (audio, full motion video and animation) content can be incorporated. No interaction between audience and senders is present in this model. Virtually all contemporary models of mass media effects are based on this traditional model of the communication process (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee, 1995).

(3) Interactivity of CMC

CMC is an interactive communication process that is presented through new media, particularly the Internet. It has a high degree of interactivity, see figure (2- 14).

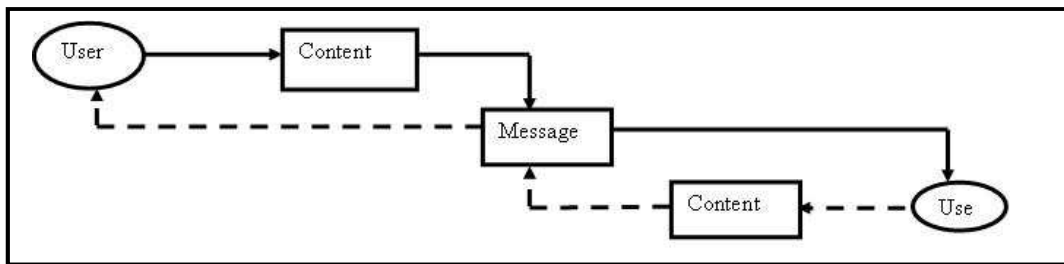


Figure 2-14. Interactivity of CMC (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee, 1995)

II. Dividing interactivity according to communication elements

Interactivity could be divided into three basic communication elements, which are as follows: 1) the user-to-user; 2) user-to-documents; and 3) user-to-system traditions of interactivity that have been evolving for decades. However, distinctions among these traditions are arbitrary. For example, the user-to-user tradition focuses on human communication but issues such as how readers respond to newspaper editors, while clearly part of the human communication tradition, also cross over into the user-to-documents literature that addresses how people interact with content and content creators. Yet, despite the relatively arbitrary nature of the distinctions, these three research traditions provide a basic framework for investigation of the past, present, and future of interactivity. While each tradition is treated separately, areas of overlap among these traditions will also be probed (McMillan, 2006).

III. Dividing interactivity according the direction of communication

McMillan (2002) has divided interactivity according to the direction of communication, as follows:

1. **“Monologue:** involves primarily one-way communication and relatively little receiver control over the communication process. It resembles both allocation and press gentry. Senders create and disseminate content to attract an audience, promote a product or service, build a brand, or perform some other persuasive communication function. Most commercial websites provide an example of monologue.
2. **Feedback:** still primarily one-way communication but it allows receivers to have limited participation in the communication process. Feedback tools such as e-mail links allow the receiver to communicate with the sender. However, in this model, the sender and receiver roles are still very distinct. Even though the receiver may communicate with the sender, there is no guarantee that the sender will respond to the Feedback that has been received.
3. **Responsive dialogue:** enables two-way communication but the sender retains primary control over communication. Responsive dialogue may take place in environments such as e-commerce in which the sender makes goods and services available, the receiver selects and orders desired goods/services, and the

sender acknowledges receipt of the order. Online customer support sites, and sites that solicit volunteer participation in non-profit organizations, may also utilize Responsive dialogue.

4. **Mutual discourse:** enables two-way communication and gives receivers a great deal of control over the communication experience. This strongly resembles the conversation and two-way symmetric models. The sender and receiver roles become virtually indistinguishable in environments such as chat rooms, bulletin boards, etc.” (McMillan, 2002, pp. 275-277). A key to mutual discourse is that all participants have the opportunity to send and receive messages, see figure (2-15).

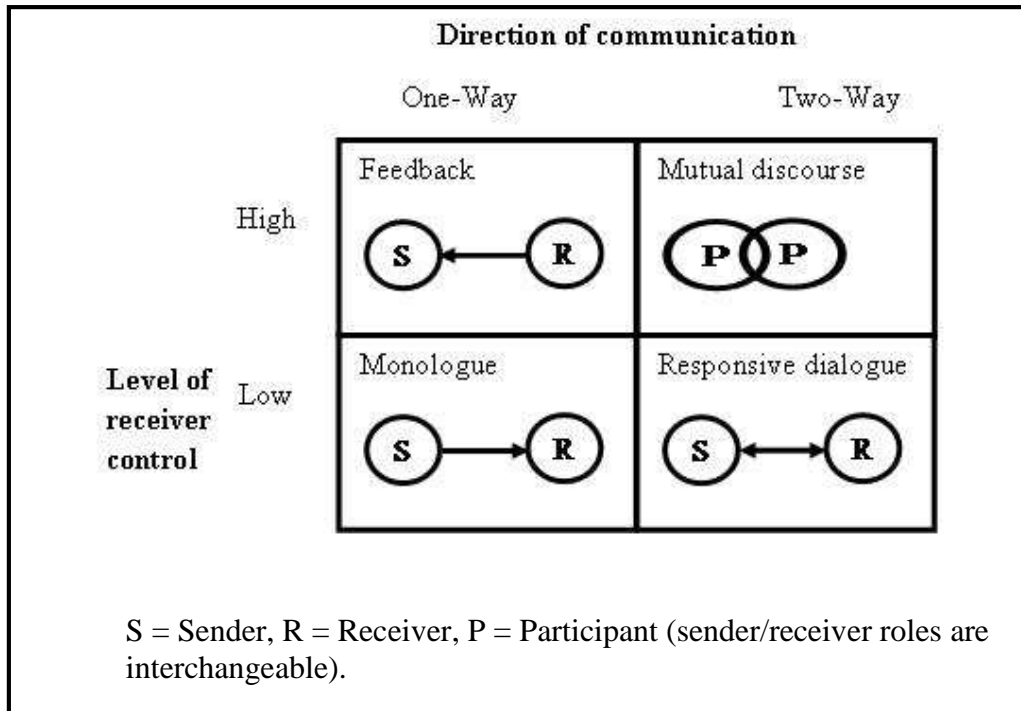


Figure 2-15. Four models of user-to-user interactivity (McMillan, 2002. p. 276)

IV. Dividing interactivity according to periods of the communication process

Interactivity could be divided according to these communication elements:

1. “Expected interactivity can be defined as the extent of interactivity that a person expects to experience during a prospective interaction with a medium” (Sohn, Leckenby & Lee, 2003, p.119).
2. “Actual interactivity could be defined by focusing on the features of a medium or capabilities of creating interactive content or messages” (Wu, 2005, p.6).
3. “Perceived interactivity of websites by site-visitors is defined as the psychological state experienced by a site-visitor during the interaction process” (Wu, 2005, p.10).

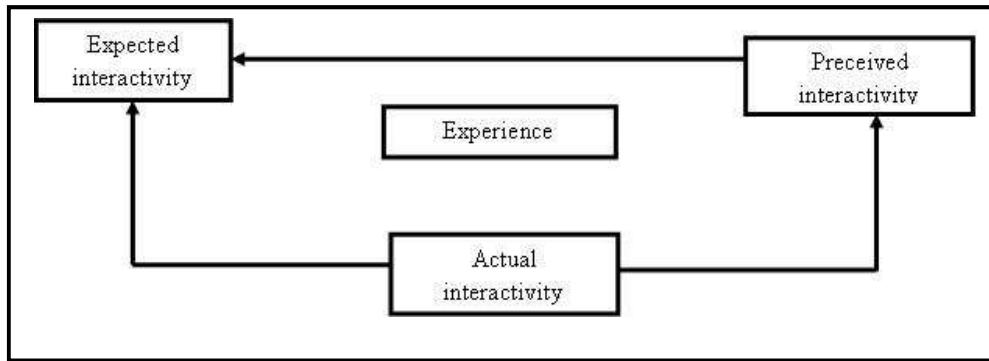


Figure 2-16. Types of interactivity according to periods of communication process (Sohn, Leckenby & Jee, 2003, p.118)

Figure (2-16) illustrates “the circular process of the interactivity perception formation based on the interplay between prior-expectation, interaction, and post-evaluation. For example, a consumer may have a certain level of subjective expectancy about an interaction with the web in general before he or she experiences an actual interaction with a website. His or her evaluation of the website’s interactivity may be made based upon his or her prior expectancy of interactivity after having an actual interaction experience. In turn, this post-evaluation of website’s interactivity makes him or her modify his or her expectation of interactivity toward the web” (Sohn, Leckenby& Jee, 2003, p.118).

V. Dividing Interactivity according to interaction tools

Interactive options on websites can be subdivided into three types or forms: 1) navigational interactivity (through "Next Page" and "Back to Top" buttons or scrolling menu bars), 2) functional interactivity (through direct mailto: links, Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) and moderated discussion lists, and 3) adaptive interactivity (offering chat rooms and personal customization through "smart web design") (Deuze, 2003).

Because of the importance of CMC as interactive communication, the researchers allocate the following part of this section to explore the concept of CMC, its characteristics and online communication as the most important type of CMC.

2.2.4 CMC as interactive communication

New media technologies (e.g. Internet, cable television, home computer, video cassette recorder (VCRs), satellite transmission, electronic delivery of information (videotext and teletext), hypermedia (a new medium that combines publishing, video, audio, and computers), CD-ROMs, high definition television (HDTV) (Severin & Tankard, 1992) have created a new type of communication and “have led to strikingly different communication behaviors that require a high degree of individual involvement”(Rogers, 1986, p.31). This new type of communication, or what has been called computer-mediated communication (CMC), has unique characteristics that distinguish it from other types of communication (interpersonal communication, group communication, and mass communication) and it contains many different

configurations of communication; its varied forms show the connection between interpersonal and mass communication.

I. Concept of CMC

CMC is not only “communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers” (Herring, 1996, p.1), but also “it is an umbrella term for a range of computerized information and communication technologies of which the most notable is electronic mail, but which also includes electronic discussion groups, electronic bulletin boards, computer conferencing systems, groupware and more recent Internet applications such as the world wide web” (McMurdo& Meadows, 1996, p.348).

“It has become a truism that CMC systems, as compared with previous communication technologies, are cheap, fast, and democratic; as such, their popularity continues to grow. Every year, it seems, a new type of CMC enters the scene: ICQ (“I Seek You”), instant messaging (IM), short-messaging service (SMS, also known as text messaging or “texting”), and web logs (blogs)” (Herring, 2004, p.26). Terms like digital convergence, online media, new media and virtual community began to spread both in practice and also in scientific research. As a consequence, the question of the impact of the Internet on traditional mass media has developed into a number of fruitful empirical studies and theoretical discussions (Oblak, 2005).

II. Characteristics of CMC

CMC is fundamentally different from other modes of informational exchange (Greenberg, 2008). Its technology has made communication much easier and less expensive. New media have many advantages that distinguish it from traditional mass media such as: interactivity, multimedia, demassification, selectivity, synchronization, asynchronization, immediacy, inexpensiveness, pro-democratic forums, speedetc. CMC represents more than a mere technological advance over what has gone before. “It can’t be accurately assessed by only measuring the speed and efficiency with which it is capable of communicating messages or the diverse array of modes that it can employ in reaching its audience. CMC is capable of bridging huge geographical distances, and creating communities of persons where there had before been only groups of isolated individuals. But it has also fundamentally altered the nature of communication by permitting communicators to create their own identity and reality” (Greenberg, 2008, p.230).

1. Interactivity

Interactivity is generally assumed to be a natural attribute of face-to-face conversation, but it has been proposed to occur in CMC settings as well. For example, interactivity is one characteristics of two-way cable systems, electronic text systems, and some programming work as in interactive video games. Interactivity is present in the operation of traditional media, as well. The phenomena of letters to the editor, talk

shows on radio and television, listener participation in programs, are all characterized by interactivity (McMillan, 2006).

2. Two-way communication

Interactive communication (CMC and interpersonal communication) is two-way communication. In interactive communication, both sides (sender and receiver) exchange messages. Two-way or multi-way communication is present as soon as messages flow bilaterally (Schultz, 1999).

3. Synchronization & Asynchronization

Interactive communication (particularly CMC) can be done synchronously or asynchronously; chat rooms are an example of this type of information exchange that often occurs synchronously. On the other hand, some site producers welcome the use of message boards and used them actively to create a public space for users of the website. The message boards, or forums, allow the audience to communicate asynchronously with other users, sometimes publicly and sometimes privately, one-on-one. Message boards thus exist outside the traditional journalistic sphere of mass communication in which the roles of senders and receivers are distinct. In the online message board environment, the audience can become both senders and receivers of information in an open environment (Chung, 2007). CMC is “synchronous or asynchronous electronic mail and computer conferencing” (Walther, 1992, p.52).

4. User control

Rogers and Allbritton (1995) defined control as “the degree to which an individual can choose the timing, content, and sequence of a communication act, search for alternatives, enter message content into storage, etc., the two or more participants in the interactive communication usually share control over their exchange of information” (p.180). For this reason, they prefer to call the individuals involved in interactive communication ‘participants’ rather than sources and receivers.

5. Telepresence

Telepresence means a moment-by-moment feeling; it also indicates that the sense of presence is limited to one environment (Kim & Bisco, 1997). Internet gives its users the sense of presence through its interactive services such as Internet Relay Chat (IRC), online conferences and mailing lists.

6. Massification & demassification

More recent theories of CMC emphasized the effects of its 'massification', the interactive forms of CMC, such as UseNet conferences, IRC or mailing lists, searching for information, do not require the kind of active personal involvement which is associated with engagement in specialized discussion groups (Oblak, 2003). And the convergence of communication technologies has set off this fear of demassification, as audiences become more and more fragmented (Morris & Ogan, 1996).

7. Selectivity

Selectivity in interactive communication is the extent to which users are provided choices of available information. So, the more choices the user has or the more choices the medium provides mean the higher interactivity of the user or the medium (Chung & Zhao, 2004).

8. Communication technology

“CMC is used to refer to a wide range of technologies that facilitate both human communication and the interactive sharing of information through computer networks, including e-mail, discussion groups, newsgroups, chat, instant messages, and web pages” (Barnes ,2003, p. 4).

9. Impersonal, interpersonal, hyperpersonal

CMC is impersonal, interpersonal and hyperpersonal communication (Walther, 1996):

- a) “CMC is impersonal in natural or experimental settings where participants have restricted time frames for interaction or when the purpose of the interaction does not include interpersonal goals in the first place, conditions that may be uncommon. Additionally, CMC is impersonal when such an effect is desired and implemented through specific technological aids such as anonymity and thick layers of software imposed interaction structures.
- b) CMC is interpersonal when users have time to exchange information, to build impressions, and to compare values.
- c) CMC is hyper-personal when can users create impressions and manage relationships” (pp. 32-33).

These characteristics of CMC are interconnected and related with interactivity; for example selectivity is related with user control and all the characteristics (e.g., speed involved with using communication technology, massification and demassification, telepresence, synchronization and asynchronization) lead to interactivity.

III. Online communication

Online communication is considered the most important format of CMC and it is practiced on the Internet. Consequently, online communication technology contains emails, bulletin boards, user groups, chat rooms, and webpages. It has applications such as online journalism, online advertising, e-commerc, etc, and it emerged as a pervasive and significant medium of communication in the late 1980s (Soukup, 2000). Figure (2-17) clarifies the relationship between CMC and online communication.

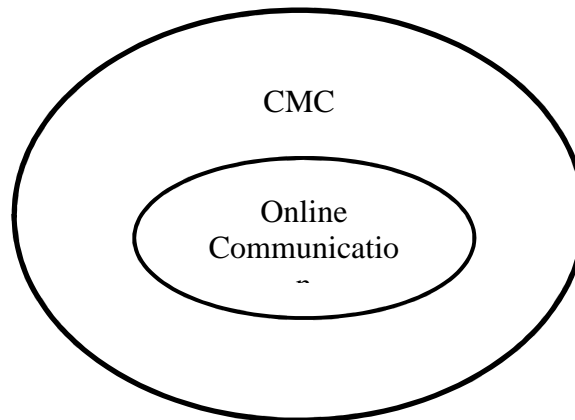


Figure 2-17. Relationship between CMC and online

“When the Internet began to emerge in the public consciousness around 1995 or 1996, no one really believed that it would diffuse through the global economy as quickly as it has. Consumers were generally indifferent and business executives thought they had ample time to understand and adapt to the requirements of the new medium. To the surprise of all, it has diffused throughout the global economy more quickly than any other medium. The radio took over seven times as long to reach 50 million users, even cable television took twice as long” (Roberts, 2003, p. 6). The Internet has a number of characteristics those differentiate it from any other medium or channel in history and that have contributed to its rapid diffusion. The unique characteristics of the Internet or online communication could be identified in the following:

1. “It provides a single, common platform for communications and transactions throughout the world.
2. Consumer and business can obtain information from any web-enabled organization quickly and a little or no cost.
3. The interactive nature of communications in this medium; since the Internet has many interactive tools such as: IRC, Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs), e-mail, search engines, Electronic Bulletin Board, Newsgroups.
4. It is global in scope. Assuming that the necessary infrastructure is available, any individual, business or nonprofit organization in the world can connect to the Internet and access its functions in exactly the same way as other users.
5. It offers the opportunity for organizations to compete on a level playing field regardless of the size or distance.
6. The Internet is an always-on communication network. It allows consumers and businesses alike to access information, entertainment, and businesses services.
7. It is a many-to-many communications network, as compared to one-to-one networks like telephone or one-to-many systems like television or radio broadcast.” (Roberts, 2003 p. 7-8).

There are many areas of online communications:

(1) Online Marketing

Online communication allows millions of people to surf the net in search of entertainment, information, sense of community, and commercial exchange (Roehm & Haugtvedt, 1999). “The tremendous growth of the Internet, and particularly the web, has led to a critical mass of consumers and companies participating in a global online marketplace. The rapid adoption of the Internet as a commercial medium has caused companies to experiment with innovative ways of marketing to consumers in computer-mediated environments. These developments on the Internet are expanding beyond the utilization of the Internet as a communication medium to an important view of the Internet as a new market” (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee, 1995, p.1).

(2) Political medium

The interactive nature of the new media, particularly the Internet, “has opened up a space of much greater democratic possibility” (McChesney, 1996, p.2). “Proponents of online communication promise that online discussions will increase political participation and pave the way for a democratic participation” (Papacharissi, 2004, p.10).

(3) Social interaction

“The proliferation of chat rooms on the Internet has created opportunities for individuals to engage in social influence attempts 24 hours a day, 7days a week, and 365 a year. Owing to the unique properties cyberspace affords its users, social influence attempts over this new medium may not be similar to that of face-to-face interaction” (Okdie & Guadagno, 2008, p.478).

(4) E -learning

The Internet has become an important medium for teaching and learning, such as course outlines and lectures notes posted on a website, email, assignment submissions, class mail lists, online references, and online contacts with researchers or teachers (Amundsen & Sohbat, 2008).

Aside from the aforementioned areas, there are many fields (e.g. Health, lifespan, instructional, virtual organizations, online journalism, online TV, and radio stations) that use the Internet for many purposes (Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic, 2004).

2.3 Online advertising

Advertising is changing, much more deeply than it seems, and the new media, especially the Internet, are undoubtedly the silent motor driving these changes. A simple glance at the online advertising scenario and its development is sufficient to see that we are dealing with a fundamentally different form of communication to advertising as than previously understood. It is also developing and transforming at a much faster pace, so fast indeed that we are unable to assimilate the changes (Solana, 2006).

The Internet is considered the most important medium of CMC because it has all advantages of CMC that distinguish it from traditional media (e.g., interactivity, synchronous and asynchronous communication, ftp service, web, multimedia, etc), and it contains many different configurations of communication, its varied forms show the connection between interpersonal and mass communication. These advantages help marketers and advertisers to present their advertisements by interactive and effective way. Blattberg & Deighton (1991) reported that any advertiser's dream is to increase communications with customers and build positive interactive relationships with them, and this dream has become a reality with the development of new technology, especially the Internet.

There are an endless number of quotations concerning the importance of the Internet as advertising medium like:

“The Internet no longer is being treated as the stepchild of media. Advertisers are beginning to see the Internet as a medium they can integrate and plan for in the same fashion they plan for TV” (Shaw, 2000, cited in: Schumann, Artis & Rivera, 2001, p.7).

“The world wide web is becoming a significant communications tool for businesses and organizations. Websites are used to keep stakeholders up-to-date, provide information to the media, gather information about publics, strengthen commercial identity, and a host of other public relations functions” (Hill & White, 2000, p.31).

“The Internet has become a mass communication medium used by corporations for marketing, advertising, and public relations purposes. It has created a new type of public that seeks information more actively than those reached through traditional mass media such as television” (Peng, 2001, p1).

2.3.1 Concept of online advertising

Online advertising has been defined as the “convergence of branding, information dissemination, and sales transactions all in one place” (Zeff & Aronson, 1999, p.12). It could be viewed as any selling message on the Internet (Cho & Leckenby, 1999).

The interactive advertising includes ads on videogames, home shopping/ infomercials, CD-ROMs, commercial online services, Internet, Kiosks, virtual reality but the online advertising becomes the dominant interactive medium (McMillan, 2007), so online advertising is considered one form of interactive advertising, or “intermercial”

(Garrand, 1997). Leckenby and Li (2000) defined interactive advertising as “the paid and unpaid presentation and promotion of products, services and ideas by an identified sponsor through mediated means involving mutual action between consumers and producers” (p.23).

2.3.2 Birth and Development

On October 27, 1994, HotWired (www.hotwired.com) brought paid advertising into the web (Sterne, 1997). “In the 1990s the first websites were presented on the commercial sites or information platforms. Most of them were more or less one-to-one realizations of printed counterparts. But currently, different forms of one-, two-, and multi-way communication are realized on the Internet” (Janoschka, 2004, pp. 47-48). Since that date, online advertising is growing day by day; the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) announced that revenues exceeded \$5.7 billion for the second quarter of 2008, the results are nearly (12.8 percent) higher than the second quarter of 2007 (IAB, 2009). “The continued growth of online ad revenues clearly illustrates marketers' increased comfort with the extraordinary vitality and accountability of this medium; it reaches consumers with an unprecedented level of efficiency and measurability that provides marketers with actionable data. And the ever-changing landscape of new platforms and technologies that enrich interactive guarantees that this growth trend will continue” (IAB, 2007, p.2). This rapid growth in online advertising revenues refers to the viability of online advertising as an alternative to traditional advertising (Choi & Rifon, 2002). The online advertising revenue from 2003 to 2008 is shown in figure (2-18).

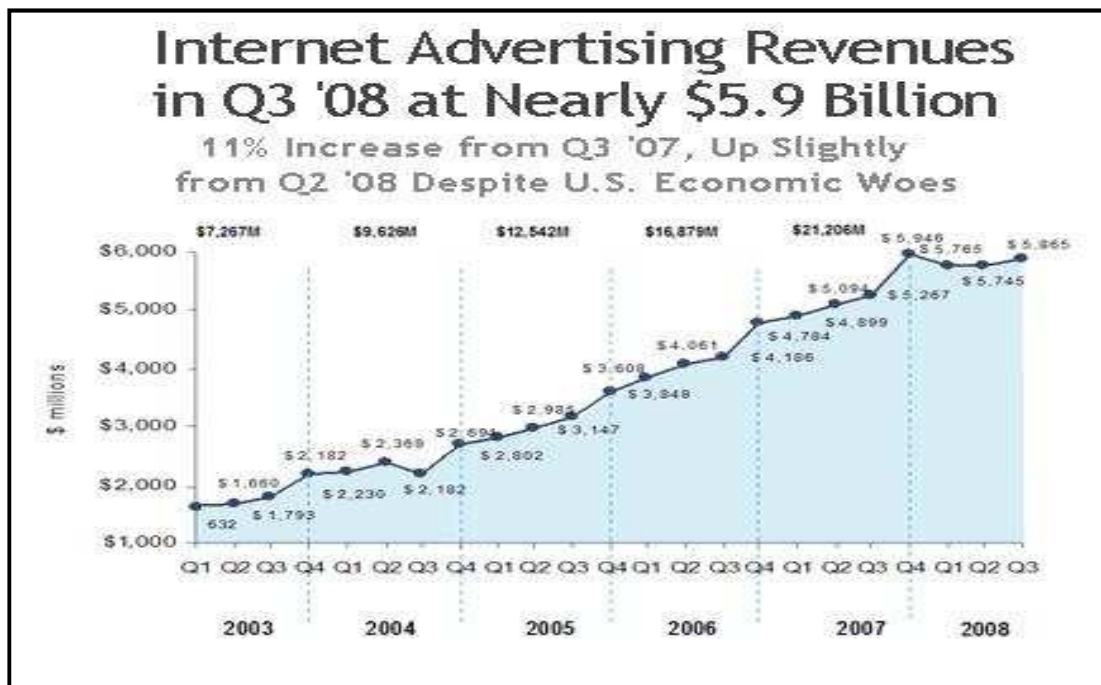


Figure 2-18. Online advertising revenue (2003-2008) From IAB, 2009

2.3.3 The differences between online advertising and other forms of advertising

Online advertising is new type of advertising and advertising generally “is a paid form of non-personal communication about an organization and its products that is transmitted to a target audience through a mass medium such as television, radio, newspaper, magazines, direct email, public transport, outdoor display, or catalogues” (Janoschka, 2004, p.16). So there are different types of advertising according to the used medium, these types are shown in figure (2-19).

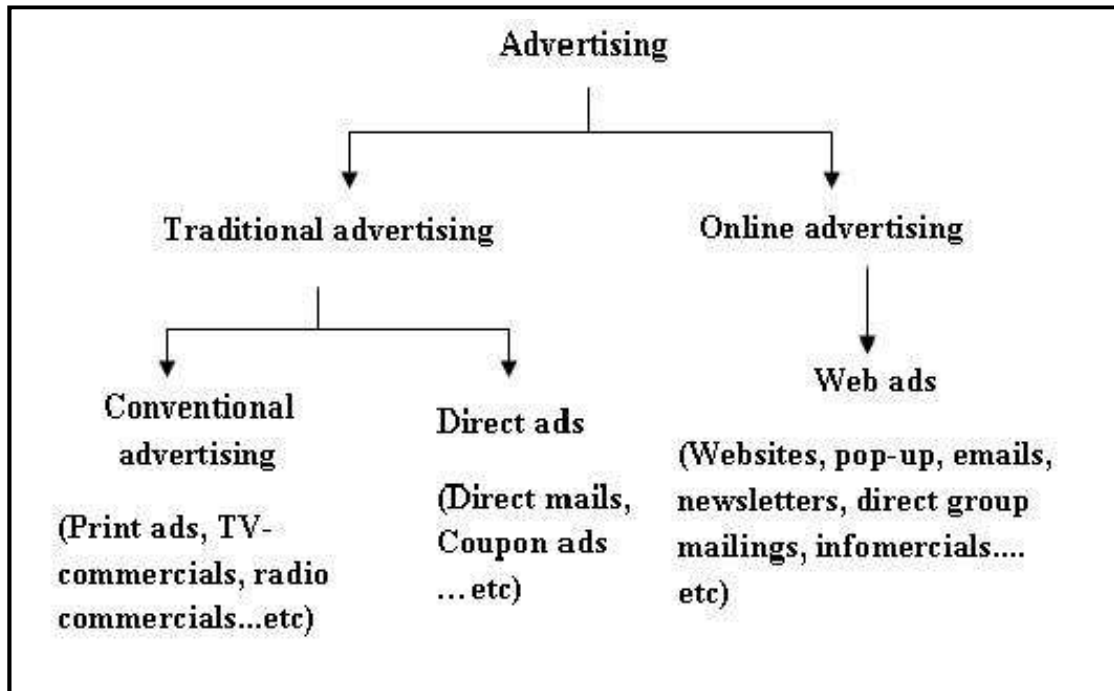


Figure 2-19. Categorization of advertising (Janoschka, 2004, p.16)

Online advertising, like other types of advertising, attempts to present information in order to affect a buyer-seller transaction. But it differs from other media by the following characteristics:

1. Interactivity

Online advertising differs from other types of advertising by enabling consumers to interact with the advertisement; “consumers can click on the ad for more information, or take the next step and purchase the product in the same online session as well as consumer can even purchase products from within online advertisements” (Zeff & Aronson, 1999, p.9).

2. It “compresses” the hierarchy of effects.

“Advertising traditionally took place in the media while the retail environment was the place to focus on changing behaviors.....But on the Internet all the lines blur and compress. Banner ads might build awareness of a brand, but they are most often

also designed to encourage “click-through” to a website that often sells the products or services presented on the banner” (McMillan, 2007, p.19).

3. Intrusiveness

Researchers have also examined intrusiveness, or lack thereof, as a unique characteristic of Internet advertising. For example, “most ads appear during the breaks of television watching or as an intrusion into the reading flow of a magazine. But online ads are positioned at least one click away from the banner, hyperlink, or other Internet ads. In essence, the consumer has to request the ad rather than having it intrude upon his or her life. But online advertisers have become clever at making their ads intrusive with tools such as pop-up ads that appear on top of a message, pop-under ads that stay on a screen after the target website is closed, interstitial ads that “take over” the screen and so forth” (McMillan, 2007, p.20).

4. Personalization

“In the context of advertising communication, the term advertising media has traditionally been applied to mass communication media in order to distinguish advertising from personal selling, direct advertising, and individualized sales promotions. However, the power of information technology to transform mass communication into personalized messages may eventually shift the focus of traditional mass advertising to more concentrated and focused audiences” (Pavlou & Stewart, 2000, p.32).

5. Availability and cost

“Online advertising is available 24 hours a day and up to 365 days a year at very low cost, compared to traditional media communication” (Janoschka, 2004, p 47); “It is much cheaper to let the customer find information on a website than it is to hire a salesperson. A download or viewable sample costs the advertiser nothing” (Garrand, 1997, p.149); since there is no comparison between the cost of online ad and the cost of an expensive broadcast or print ad.

6. Online shopping

Online shopping is the most important online benefits; it can incorporate new interactive features to catalog shopping, such as email inquiries to sales representatives, discussion forums for customers or voice and video applications (Spiller & Lohse, 1998); consumers now can buy or sell products through online shopping stores (e.g., e-bay, Amazon, Conrad, etc).

7. Unlimited space

The advertiser can get a user to a website, and then the advertiser can use as much spaces needed to present the products. A website can have links to dozens of pages and images within the advertiser’s site and links to related sites that might help the user understand the product. This is far cry from the severe space limitation of broadcast or print ad (Garrand, 1997).

Online advertising is also different from other advertising types in that, since, it is able to engage people in round-the-clock, direct, and simultaneous communication. It also provides corporations with more control over the information content and its dissemination. The Internet has changed the way corporations communicate and presents great opportunities, as well as new challenges, to advertisers and corporations. In short, the Internet rewrites the rules of marketing communication (Weber, 1996).

2.3.4 Functions of online ads

Online ads need to achieve at least three important functions in order to be effective: they should attract the user's attention; they aim to motivate users to click; and online ads should meet user's expectations (Janoschka, 2004). The function of online advertising "comes from its vertical integration of three marketing channel capacities: communication-the exchange of information between the seller and the buyer; transaction- the buyer pays for the title of good; and distribution- the move of the purchased good from the seller to the buyer. The expanded function also comes from the horizontal integration of all forms of marketing communication, including advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and direct marketing" (Li & Leckenby, 2007, pp. 203-204). As a marketing medium, the Internet presents many advantages over traditional media. With the Internet capability to target customers, advertising it's more efficient; with its flexibility in interacting with customers, the web combines many functions of marketing in an organizationally superior process (Mangani, 2000). For business, online advertising offers potential benefits that are not available through traditional advertising medium; Schlosser and Kanfer (1999) identified the benefits of online advertising in: Information richness, ease of updating, brand information, data collection global exposure, customization, enhance customer-company relations, role playing, and purchase facilitation:

- **Information richness**

"The nature of television, radio, billboard, and print constrain a traditional advertisement to one short, memorable message. But online advertising message is no longer so constrained. The Internet allows for communicating to consumers substantially more content – rich product information" (Schlosser & Kanfer 1999, p.42).

- **Ease of updating**

"Maintaining an online ad is less costly than maintaining traditional ads; furthermore, online information can be quickly and easily changed and updated" (Schlosser & Kanfer 1999, p.42).

- **Brand information**

"The good online ad contains more brand-relevant information important for building brand image, for example the commercial website can provide detailed information about the company and its products and services"(Schlosser & Kanfer,1999, p.42).

- **Data collection**

In exchange for this information and/or other product incentives, the company can easily collect detailed data about their Internet market. As well as obtain precise measures of which pages in their sites were visited, for how long, how the individuals came to the site, and where the visitors originated. The Internet also has the capabilities to gather consumer reactions to current products and ads (Schlosser & Kanfer, 1999).

- **Global exposure**

“The Internet expands the company’s market to include global markets, allowing those from around the world to visit the website. Online advertising is aimed to promote and sell products and services of various companies in the global market through Internet” (Mittal et al, 2006, p.222).

- **Customization**

“The interactive nature of Internet allows for greater flexibility than traditional media in type of information transmitted and the method of transmission” (Schlosser & Kanfer 1999, p.43).

- **Enhance customer-company relations**

Internet ads can also be used as a customer service vehicle. For instance, relationships can be enhanced through being available upon demand all day, every day, reducing purchase uncertainty through online products trials or demonstrations, and providing online, up-to-date, accurate technical support (Schlosser & Kanfer 1999).

- **Role playing**

The Internet has capabilities in creating more persuasive engaging ads. Through role-playing, the consumer generates arguments in favor of the product, which is often more persuasive to individual than mass arguments (Schlosser & Kanfer 1999).

- **Purchase facilitation**

The Internet can facilitate purchase decision by providing detailed products, purchase details, giving consumers the option of buying at that moment from their own homes (Schlosser & Kanfer 1999).

- **Integration with conventional advertising**

“The real power of Internet advertising lies in its integration with conventional advertising to maximize its impact” (Li & Leckenby 2007, p.218).

2.3.5 Types of online advertisements

According to Thorson (1996), advertisements can be classified into five basic categories: product/service, public service announcement, issue, company and political. This classification can be applied to any medium, including the Internet. For example, online ad for a product (e.g., Palm IV), service (e.g., free e-mail), corporation (e.g., hp.com) or health issue (e.g., give blood to the American Red Cross). “Online

advertisements can also be classified according to historical development and technical improvement, from statistic to animated and later to interactive ones.” (Janoschka, 2004, p. 50). This classification is shown in figure (2-20).

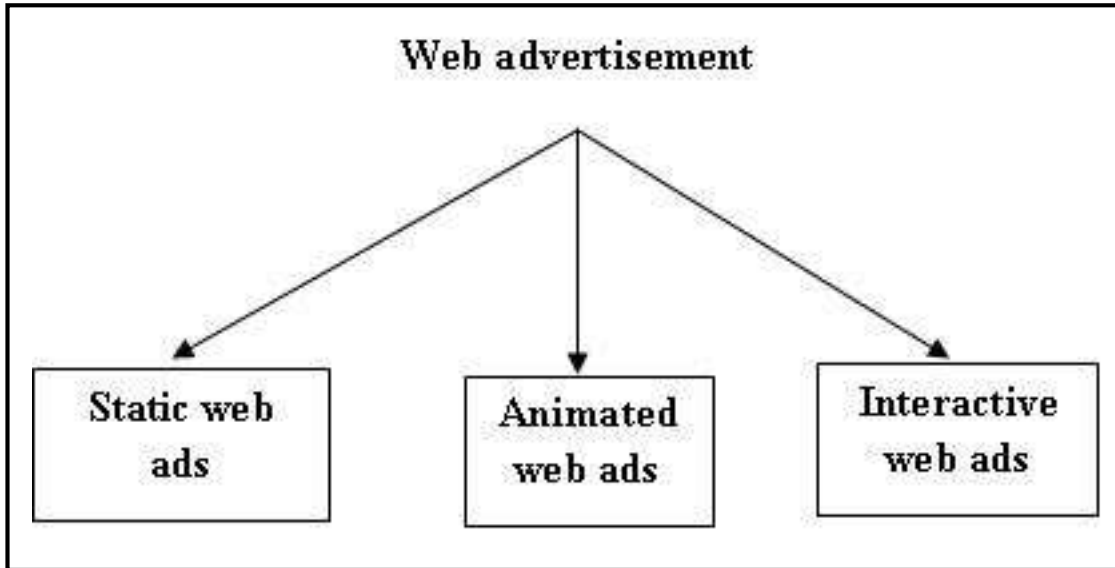


Figure 2-20. Classification of web ads (Janoschka, 2004, p.49)

This classification divided web advertisements into following three types (Janoschka, 2004, pp.52-59):

1. Static web ads

“The first – stage web ads are called static; since they cannot implement animated graphics, but are fixed images. This means there is only one possible visual appearance of the web ads. Static web ads attract users’ attention only through their textual information and static graphic design. Due to the limited space, only the most necessary information can be given” (Janoschka, 2004, p.52). Figure (2-21) illustrates this type.



Figure 2-21. Static web ads

2. Animated web ads

“The second-stage web ads are called animated; these web ads are online images that use the graphic format GIF. This format enables the presentation of a sequence of pictures which creates the impression of movement. The element of animated web ads can be repetitive, changing or can stop at a certain point. Having more than one static image at their disposal, animated web ads can enlarge their advertising message by exploiting additional space. In other words, they can provide more information than static web ads” (Janoschka, 2004, p.56). Animated web ad is illustrated in figure (2-22).

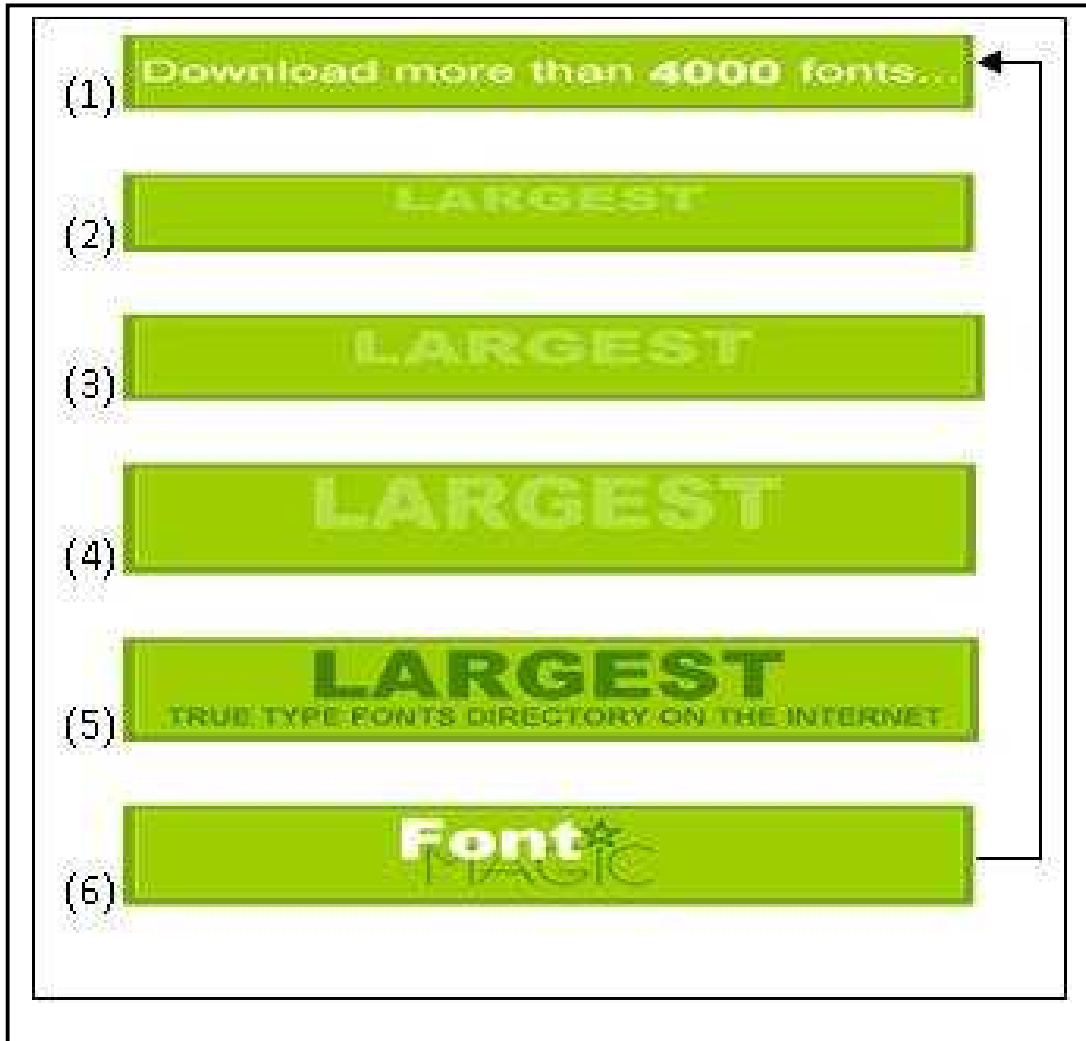


Figure 2-22. Animated advertisement

3. Interactive web ads

“The third - stage web ads are called interactive; these web ads seek interaction with users, but this is more than a mere click; they employ another communication strategy. They persuade users to click by offering an individual information search based on the users decision” (Janoschka, 2004, p.59).

Interactive web ads implement elements which enable users to type in data, e.g., keyword search in figure (2-23), or to select predetermined issues, e.g., interactive interstitial in the same figure (Janoschka, 2004).



Figure 2-23. Interactive advertisement

2.3.6 Online advertising formats

The format of the ad simply refers to the manner in which it appears. Rodgers and Thorson (2000) identified five formats of ads found on the websites. These were banners, interstitials and pop ups, sponsorships, rich media hypertext links, and keyword searches. It is important to note that many options are available. “Advertisers and publishers are not limited to these choices, however. They can choose a variety of hybrid-sponsorship formats such as tabs” (Ha, 2003, p.22). Other researchers have created similar, but somewhat different categories, including advergames and email ads. For example, Li and Leckenby (2007) divided online advertisements into: banner ads, sponsorships, interstitials, email, classifieds, rich media, keyword search, referrals, slotting fees, advergames, and 3-D visualization.

IAB (2005) has established unit definitions for the online advertising industry in the United States. According to their latest standards, online ad units can be categorized into one or more of the following overlapping groups: search, classifieds, referrals/lead generation, email, rich media, ad banners, sponsorships, and slotting fees. A few additional formats have begun to emerge and others are likely in the future.

While there are a variety of formats to describe online advertising, some of the most commonly recognized are banners, sponsorships, interstitials, pop-ups, rich media, keyword searches, classifieds, hyperlinks and website itself. These are defined below.

1. Banner ads and buttons

“In the early days of advertising on the Internet, banner was the only vehicle for delivering advertising messages” (Silk, Klein& Berndt, 2001, p.137). Banner ads have been defined as “paid communication (via text, graphics, video and /or audio) of information about an organization and/or its products and services by an identified sponsor embedded within, and visually distinct from information provided by an online service with hypermedia links to sponsor’s website” (Gallagher & Parsons, 1997, p.266). There are many types of banner ads including: static, animated, transactive, HTML, Nano site, audio, skyscraper, and button (Roddewig, 2003). While most banner ads are large and generally are placed at the top or bottom of a page, buttons represent a smaller format of the banner style and can be placed anywhere on a page. Like most banner ads, they are linked via clicking to the sponsor's site. “Buttons were embraced by consumer and advertisers throughout the web faster than banner advertisements- probably because they always led to free downloadable software” (Zeff & Aronson, 1999, p.46).

IAB (2005) has identified the sizes of banners and buttons to: 468 x 60 - (Full Banner), 234 x 60 IMU - (Half Banner), 88 x 31 IMU - (Micro Bar), 120 x 240 IMU - (Vertical Banner), 120 x 90 IMU - (Button 1), 120 x 60 IMU - (Button 2), 125 x 125 IMU - (Square Button), 728 x 90 IMU - (Leader board). These sizes are shown in figure (2-24).

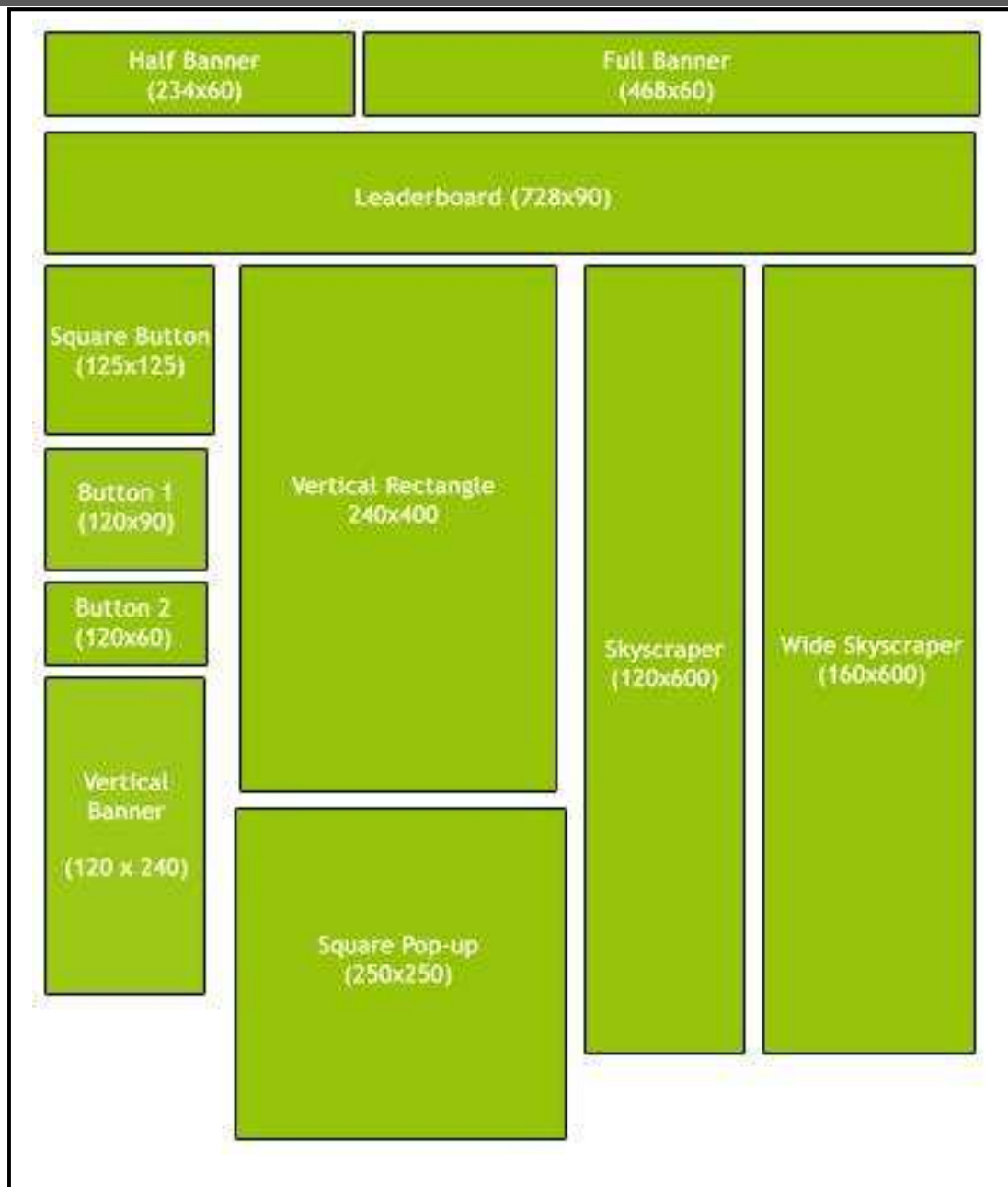


Figure 2-24. The sizes of banner and button

2. Sponsorships

A sponsorship in an online context can be defined as “an indirect form of persuasion that allows companies to carry out marketing objectives by associating with key content” (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000, p.57). As opposed to other formats of online advertising, online sponsorship consists of making the sponsor's identifying logo or brand name clearly visible, but not necessarily to promote a specific product or service. “Online sponsorship involves placements of the sponsor’s identify (company logo or brand name) in sponsored websites to build good-will” (Li & Leckenby, 2007, p.212); this means the goal of the sponsorship ad is to promote a feeling of good-will toward the sponsoring company more than to build traffic to the sponsor's site.

Marketers can sponsor existing site content that they believe their target audiences appreciate. Another kind of sponsorship involves the creation and sponsorship of new online content (Coyle & Gould, 2007). Figure (2-25) illustrates online sponsorship.



Figure 2-25. Sponsorship

3. Interstitials and pop-ups

“The terms "interstitial" and "pop-up" are often used interchangeably in trade articles and/or books. Yet, each represents different formats. Interstitials are usually full-screen ads that run in their entirety between two content pages. Pop-ups, on the other hand, appear in a separate window on top of content that is already on the user's screen. This distinction is important for a number of reasons. First, unlike pop-ups, interstitials do not interrupt the user's interactive experience because they tend to run while the user waits for a page to download. Users, however, have less control over interstitials because there is no "exit" option to stop or delete an interstitial, which is common among pop-ups. In other words, with interstitials, users have to wait until the entire ad has run” (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000, p.54).

Interstitials are full-screen ads that appear "between clicks". In other words, when a user clicks a hyperlink, the interstitial ad appears before the desired new content is loaded; often, but not always, there is a link within the interstitial ad to allow the user to "skip the ad". “Interstitials are animated ads that appear in full screen without any user action to activate them” (Mangani, 2000, p.303). Interstitial ads appear between

two content pages. Also known as transition ads, intercommercial ads, splash pages and flash pages (IAB, 2005), see figure (2-26).



Figure 2-26. Interstitial

Pop-up ads, on the other hand, open up in a new browser window as a result of clicking on a content link. Some ads are designed to pop up if the user chooses to click on an advertisement informational link, while others are the undesired result of clicking on a link unrelated to the pop up ads, see figure (2-27).



Figure 2-27. Pop up

4. Rich media

“Rich media is a generic term for a broad range of Internet ads that feature dynamic motion, which occurs either automatically or in direct response to the user interaction. with vector-based graphics that use geometrical formulas to represent images, Java powered or flash-enabled interactivity, streaming audio and video, rich media ads can deliver enhanced impact and result in improved user response” (Li & Leckenby, 2007, p.214). Figure (2-28) shows this type of ads.

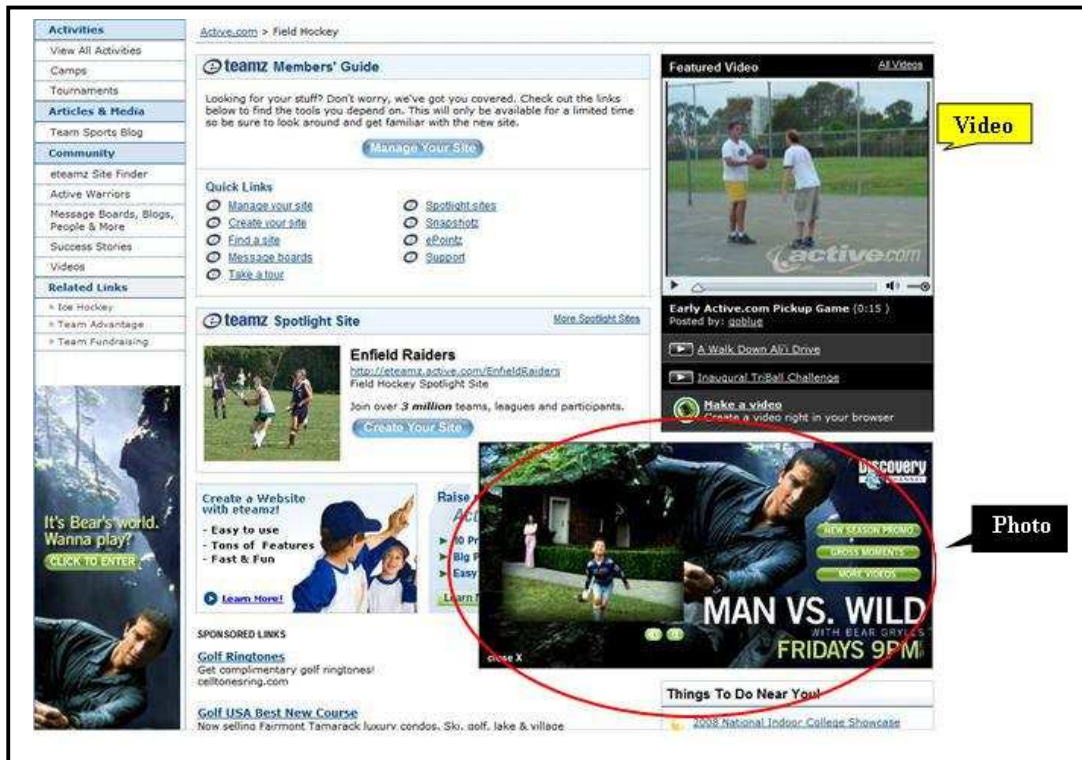


Figure 2-28. Rich media ads

5. Keyword search

This advertising technique, that resembles but is not identical to an Internet search engine such as Google (see figure, 2-29), has become one of the most popular formats of online advertising. Sites are created that are optimized to redirect consumers to specific businesses that pay for the privilege – rather than perform a general global search of all information that is available. “Some companies now have salaried search machine marketers who frequently maintain 10,000 keywords and listings; in the optimization of paid search campaigns, the texts relating to the keyword, and the thematic context of the search, now also play an increasingly important role” (Hinz, AutoScout24 & ScoutMedia24, 2006, p.470). Search engines play an important role in marketing and advertising (Green, 2003).

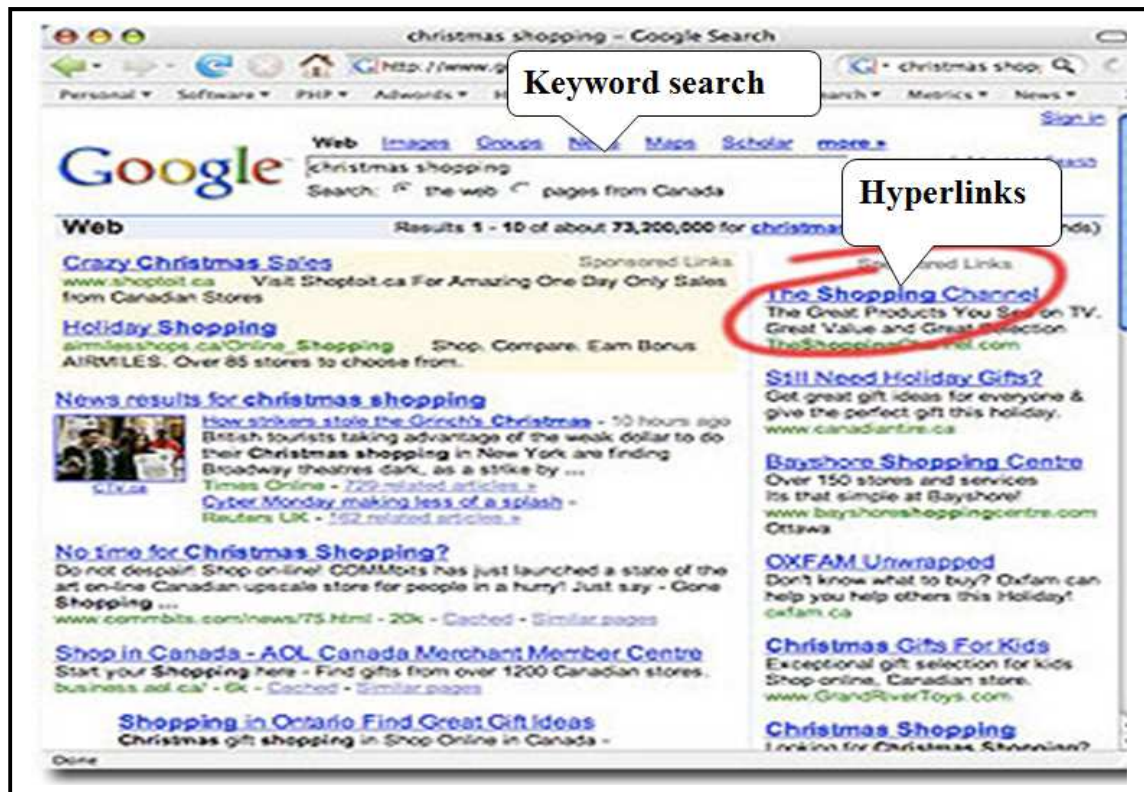


Figure 2-29. Keyword search

6. Classifieds

Classifieds are very small ads that aim to advertise a specific product or service, see figure (2-30). Much like their counterparts in the print media, online classified ads are small, primarily text-based, but also include a picture of the item for sale as well as a price listing. Classifieds are typically managed in a database with large memory capacity, and are viewed primarily by the targeted audience who make a dedicated attempt to seek out the information available in the ad (Hinz, AutoScout24 & ScoutMedia24, 2006). As early as 1997 it was becoming recognized that online classified ads could be a good addition to a company's advertising plan (Sterne, 1997). "In the majority of cases, the large market places such as Scout24 and eBay have the biggest respective available offer of (B2C) and private (C2C) adverts on a national and regional basis. As with the daily newspaper, the most important category markets are cars, houses, contacts, travel, and jobs" (Hinz, AutoScout24 & ScoutMedia24, 2006, p.470).

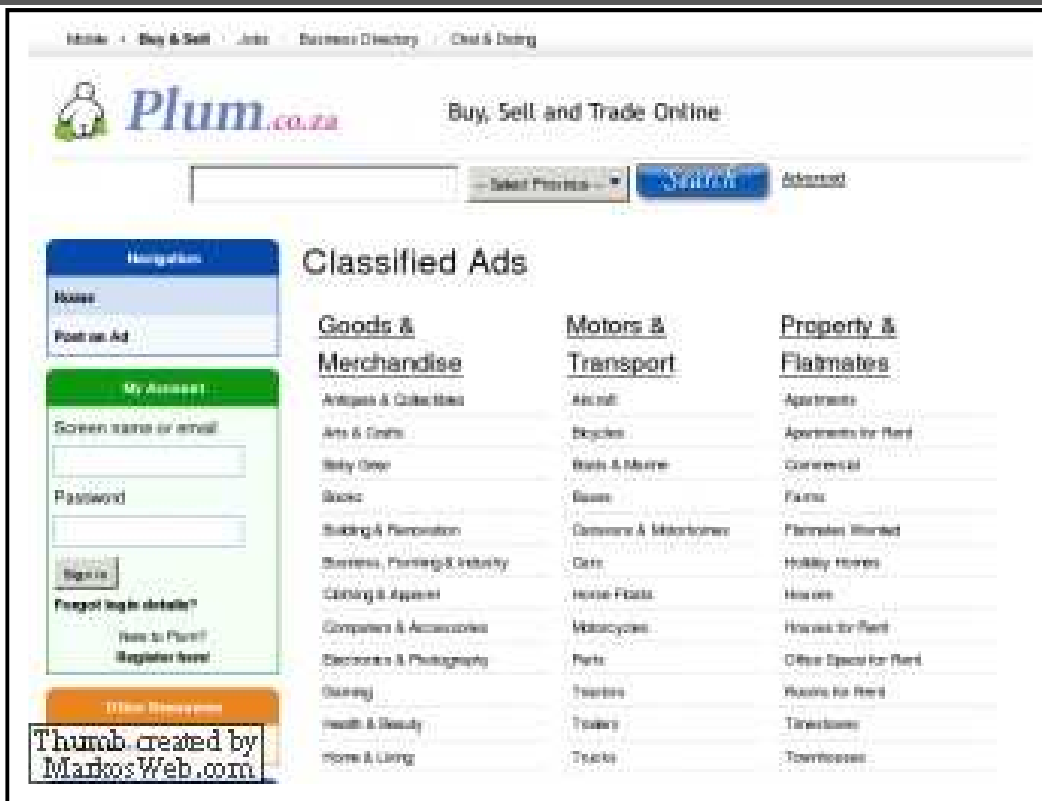


Figure 2-30. Classifieds

7. Hyperlinks

A hyperlink ad takes advantage of the basic nonlinear hypertextual structure of the Internet; a hyperlink ad is simply text or graphics that when anyone click on, it takes the user to a new webpage that either opens in the same window or in a new window. Hypertext link ads, like sponsorships, tend to take up less space than other advertising formats and are often embedded in the text of news, entertainment, and informational stories as individual words or phrases in the story that are highlighted (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000).

8. Online advergames

Online Advergaming is the delivery of advertising messages through online games. This technique aims to build brand awareness, to offer product information, and to provide a means to compare similar products (Hernandez et al, 2004). But the degree to which a brand is integrated into a game varies; since there are three levels of integration:

Associative integration is the lowest level, where a brand can be placed in the background of an activity or event. Illustrative integration places a brand in a prominent position in a game. Demonstrative integration represents the highest level of brand integration (Li & Leckenby, 2007). Figure (2-31) illustrates the online advergaming.



Figure 2-31. Two samples of online advergaming

Advertising formats are not mutually exclusive, as for instance a banner ad could include hyperlinks or even rich media. In addition to the various formats of online advertising, these ads can also be described by the different features they include.

9. Electronic mail (e-mail)

E-mail is also used as an advertising medium. Silk, Klein & Berndt (2001) divided e-mail into two types:

- a) “Direct e-mail which is distributed directly by marketers, and
- b) Sponsored e-mail where advertiser pays for text within a “newsletter” sent to subscribers.” (p.139).

10. Commercial website

A website itself can also be considered a form of advertising. A commercial website may be its principal point of contact with Internet audiences (Silk, Klein& Berndt, 2001); since commercial websites are advertising media that carry advertisements like web ad, and pop-up windows in different places and sections of their pages. On the other hand they are formats of online advertising; since they advertise products or services and try to sell them, these websites are the linked source of web ads and they may be part of advertising messages (Janoschka, 2004). The researcher devotes the next section to focus on commercial websites as advertising medium and format.

2.3.7 Features of online advertising

Online advertising “is a multi-faceted phenomenon. True, the same could be said of many other kinds of advertising. Print advertising comes in many colors, shapes, and sizes; television advertising might range from a simple 10-second message to a long-format infomercial. Internet advertising has all those kinds of variations too, but it also spans time and space (unlike print which is space bound and broadcast which is time bound) and seems different in other fundamental ways as well” (McMillan, 2007.p.16).Online advertising is able to take advantage of the many features of the web itself, including hypertext, digital media, interactivity, etc. Commercial websites and the ads hosted by them utilize these features to present their products and services, to attract consumers, and to interact with them. Features of online advertising have been considered and categorized by a number of researchers that have both looked at the individual ad as well as entire websites.

Rodgers and Thorson (2000) looked at individual ads on websites and divided the features of web advertising into two major types, objective and subjective. Objective features are those that, for the most part, are concrete and will be identified the same way by many people that view the ads. Objective features included color, size, typeface, product class, appeal type (e.g. emotional vs. rational), animations, audio, interactivity, telepresence, vividness, and number of choices. On the other hand, subjective features are aspects of the ad that are less concrete, but that attract emotional appeal and are more likely to be viewed differently by different people. Subjective features include adjective checklists (e.g. exciting, boring, etc.) that addressed the users' feeling that the ads were engrossing, create empathy, flowed, were friendly to navigate, provided current information, etc. (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000).

Dholakia and Rego (1998) looked at the features of entire webpages and developed a list of features that are available on commercial websites. This list includes

pictures (both clickable and non-clickable), links and search indexes, use of color, webpage enhancements (e.g. Java applets, gif animations, etc.), audio clips, humour and emotion in copy, banners, and contact request forms.

For the present study, the researcher elected to consider features that were suitable for reviewing both individual ads and also commercial websites. The selected features for the current study includes: animations, audio, video, hypertext, images and color use, as well as contact and interactive features.

2.4 Commercial websites

“To build market awareness, a company traditionally purchases advertising space in magazines, on billboards, and in other printed media that they hoped would be seen by their target audience; radio ads that might be heard by the right people; and television spots that might be seen by their future customers. On the web, the rules have changed. The funnel is flipped. The "headquarters" have become the single most efficient place to advertise. Instead of a physical building trying to cast a wide net of advertising to procure new business, corporations can purchase laser precise media or write link-worthy content that lures potential customers back to the website, where carefully designed pages make the final sale through a shopping cart or push them into making contact with company” (Potts, 2007, p.4). So the company’s website or what’s called "commercial website" has become an important part of an organization's communication strategy. Even sites that do not sell products or services directly to consumers find them invaluable tools to inform and market – increasing awareness of a company or a brand (Allen, Kania & Yaeckel, 2001); commercial websites are used to promote a wide range of messages from general information about an organization to specifics about available products or services. The company's history, mission, values, organizational structure, and public relations can also promote via this type of websites (Young & Foot, 2005).

From the academic perspective, commercial websites are considered a good environment for studying online advertising; this is because they include a variety of different types and formats of online advertising, located throughout the site, and they are instruments of advertising/promotion themselves (e.g., Hwang, McMillan & Lee, 2003; Janoschka, 2004; Singh & Dalal, 1999; Urgo, 1997). This section presents the theoretical background of commercial websites; since it reviews the concept of the term, commercial websites as online advertising, birth and development, importance, characteristics, types, features, and effectiveness of commercial websites, as well as barriers to commercialization on these websites.

2.4.1 Concept of commercial websites

Commercial websites are one type of websites; since the websites can be categorized into four basic types:

- (1) **Personal.** Created by individuals to provide information about themselves or their interests.
- (2) **Educational.** Created by schools, museums, and other educational institutions to provide information.
- (3) **Governmental.** Created by government agencies or elected officials as a service to their constituents.
- (4) **Commercial.** Created by companies” (Garrand, T. P., 1997, p. 159); these websites were established as business tools and in addition to containing many types of online ads to promote products and services are considered as a whole

to be ads themselves for the company (Dholakia & Rego, 1998); “these sites typically contain information about the respective company such as services offered and economic results” (Gustavsen & Tilley, 2003, p.5).

Commercial “websites provide a relatively easy and financially reasonable method to offer information to a wide audience. Along with increasing private use of computers, more and more companies use websites to present themselves to multiple audiences. These websites often include company profile, activities and financial information, which seem to be primarily for convenience of their stakeholders. So these websites have become an important medium through which companies express themselves” (Bullis & IE, 2007, p.329). And they vary in the extent of the information they provide. “Smaller privately held companies often restrict the material mounted to describing their activities and the products and services they offer ownership or financial performance. Other may add some company history and key facts such as number of employees” (Murphy, 2005, p.121).

There are many definitions of commercial websites such as: “Websites produced by a company to provide general information about that organization, including product/service information, company history, mission and values, organizational structure, key company messages, public relations information, etc.” (Young & Foot, 2005, p.20).

Commercial websites are considered to be "evolutionary path" websites of the company (Dholakia & Rego, 1998). The purpose of this type of website is not only to sell products or services but also to give a good image about the company and its products; these websites are used for promoting a business or service and are among the most common type of website on the Internet. The Internet address often ends with .com. typically; companies' websites in the U.S.A follow a commercial web domain convention: www.name of company.com (Young & Foot, 2005). These websites are an important format of online advertising used not only to market a company's products and services but also to create a public image – a company brand (Urigo, 1997).

According to these definitions and the purposes and questions of this study, commercial websites are an important format of online advertising that are produced by a company to provide general information about that organization, including product/service information, company history, mission and values, organizational structure, key company messages, public relations information, etc.

The basic major online portals and search engines are considered commercial websites because they were established by companies and they aim to advertise, sell or buy products or services online, they also help consumers to find their needs online through their tools (Keyword search, classifications, advertisements, services and products) as well as they are profit websites.

The Internet address often ends with .com especially in US, but in some countries like Egypt, it often ends with (.com.eg) and in Germany, it ends with (.de), so we should

define the commercial websites not only from the Internet address but also from the activity of organization that has established it.

2.4.2 Commercial websites as online advertising

Commercial websites themselves are a form of online advertising. They also often host many types of online ads for their own products and services as well as those of other businesses. These ads come in many formats such as banners, sponsorships, interstitials, pop ups....etc. these websites are considered interactive advertising format; since they can serve various marketing communication in more interactive ways than traditional channels. This is due to that the Internet allows easy access to commercial websites and other consumers' ideas and product evaluations (e.g., bulletin boards, consumers review websites, online discussion forums, etc.). They support the ability of marketers to improve customer relationships by providing detailed interactive and personalized information about their products for consumers who are directly seeking information about the company's products or services (Cho & Cheon, 2005), so marketers should present many interactive tools on their websites to attract and interact with the customers.

2.4.3 Birth and development

"The first commercial use of the Internet did not occur until the late 1980s, and it was not until the mid -1990s when the world wide web grew dramatically that large-scale adoption of email occurred" (Cass, 2007. p2); on October 27, 1994, "wired" magazine launched its website HotWired (<http://www.hotwired.com>) to be the first commercial website and online advertising (Zeff & Aronson, 1999). Since then, marketers, researchers and historians have noticed the remarkable growth of the commercial websites, and they have determined that if anything this is a rapidly growing area, the web's commercial sector (.com) has skyrocketed, outpacing by far the growth rate of nonprofit (.org), educational (.edu), and government (.gov) sites. "Moreover, despite a "dot-com bust" in the early twenty-first century that dashed hyperbolic optimism about web commerce and media ventures, connections between commerce and the web, media companies and the web, advertising and the web, have become natural parts of the business landscape" (McAllister & Turow, 2002, p.506).

"There were 44.2 million .com and .net domain names at the end of the second quarter 2005" (Version, 2005, p.4). After four years the overall base of .com domain names grew to 90.4 million domain names at the end of 2008. This represents a 12 percent increase over the previous year and a one percent increase over the third quarter of 2008. New.com registrations were added at an average of 2.1 million per month in the fourth quarter of 2008 for a total of 6.3 million new registrations in the quarter. This is a 9 percent decline over the third quarter of 2008 and a 16 percent decline over the same quarter last year. New registrations averaged 7.2 million per quarter in 2007 and averaged 7.1 million per quarter in 2008 (Version, 2009).

2.4.4 Importance of commercial websites

Establishing a company presence on the Internet can be a challenge to many businesses and organizations: Generally, company advertising tools, including its website, can perform one or more of four functions (Argenti & Forman, 2002). It can:

1. “Create a new company image or rejuvenate an old one
2. Put forward a company’s position on an issue significant to the company’s welfare
3. Enhance a company’s status through linking the organization to a cause
4. Strengthen a company financially.” (Argenti & Forman, 2002, p.111).

“The increasing presence of both large and small commercial enterprises on the Internet not only potentially increases their own market audience, but increases their visibility to their competition as well, in addition, the age-old task of businesses monitoring the competition has become somewhat easier and more immediate with the increased visibility of commercial enterprises on the ‘Net’” (Volpo & Piggott, 1996, p.39).

The benefits of commercial websites include improvement of company image, presenting a good service to customers, increasing visibility, expansion of the market, cost reduction, and finding new prospects. It allows businesses to perform online transactions and better meet their customers’ expectations. Finally, failure to do so can create the impression that the corporation is out of touch and not up to speed with the rest of the industry or their customers (Sterne, 1997). Commercial websites can also serve various marketing communication functions (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee, 1995). As a commercial medium, the web offers many benefits which can be examined at both the customer and company levels.

I. Consumer benefits

Commercial website presents many benefits to consumer; it shows the product and allows user to try it. For a different type of products or services, the commercial website could be so complex, offering a wide variety of information about the product, services, history of company, free items, and so on (Garrand, 1997). “This type of websites is generally used for marketing company’s products and services as well as to create a public image. In some cases, the company will offer an opportunity to make secure business transactions or will provide customer service solutions. It may also provide information on how a company is structured” (Urgo, 1997, p.155). The most important commercial websites’ benefits to consumers are:

1. Getting greater amounts of information: “Consumer considers information a major benefit of being exposed to this type of websites. Information is one of the need-satisfying functions derived from media communication according to uses and gratifications theory” (Gao, 2003, p.1062); since these websites are

considered “the primary source of information for a variety of stakeholders, including customers” (Preece, Moodley & Brown, 2006, p.164), and many commercial websites “contain information about their products and services as well as messages that focus on both company image and issues” (Hwang, McMillan, & Lee, 2003, p.11).

2. Getting many offers of the requested products: “The ability of the commercial websites to amass, analyze, and control large quantities of specialized data can enable consumer to find requested services or products, to make comparison among different offers, and to do shopping online. There is also the potential of wider availability of hard-to-find products and wider selection of items due to the width and efficiency of the channel” (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee, 1995, p.11). These websites’ selection ability gives “buyers an online access to other relevant information that allows them to compare different offerings and select a supplier for the pondered input” (Benslimane & Yang, 2006, p.2).
3. Facilitating the trial offers: Commercial websites have become increasingly competitive (Griffith & Gray, 2002); since these websites can enhance the opportunity for trial and actual purchase of products or services (Faber, Lee & Nan, 2004) and they “enable customers to test products online which may stimulate purchase” (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee, 1995, p.13).
4. Getting high - quality products at low or reasonable prices: “Online consumer usage grows exponentially as broadband access prices decline and more and more Internet devices are adopted-fixed and mobile. This increases demands for new online products and leads to increased offerings of high – quality products or services at reasonable prices” (Plunkett, 2008, p.623).
5. They are also an environment that is changing the transactional nature of business and forcing business models to be re-examined. A good illustration of the impact is on booksellers where Amazon has redefined the nature of traditional bookselling (Preece, Moodley & Brown, 2006, p.469).
6. “Recreational uses of the medium can be an important benefit to consumers intrinsically motivated to use the medium” (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee, 1995, p.12).
7. “Many features of these commercial websites reflect the objectives of company advertising. For example, some websites contain menu items for investor information that lead to information targeted to stockholders and other investors. A career menu item often leads to information targeted at prospective employees. These features may satisfy the objective of enhancing relationships with various stakeholders. Other parts of the website provide information and/or branding for the company and its products” (Hwang, McMillan & Lee, 2003, p.12).
8. Websites, including commercial sites, are available on demand to consumers 24 hours a day, seven day a week (Metzger, 2004).

II. Benefits to the company

- 1) Marketing medium: “Marketers face several challenges as they seek to determine the best way of establishing their company’s presence on the web, mainly because of several unique characteristics of this medium. First, the web represents a relatively easy and extremely in expensive way to advertise, lowering the barriers to entry for small businesses. Second, the web overturns the traditional hierarchical system of distribution channels, making former channel partners competitors in the global marketplace. Because of lower entry barriers and more widespread exposure, manufacturers, distributors and retailers can all set up s selling essentially the same products and services” (Dholakia & Rego, 1998, pp. 724-725).
- 2) Advertising medium: This is because they carry ads like banners and pop – up in different places and sections of their pages and they are advertising themselves (Janoschka, 2004).
- 3) Public relations channels: marketers uses commercial websites for not only advertising and marketing activities but also to obtain feedback and improve public relations; since such websites can serve public relations functions by (White & Raman, 1999):
 - a) Posting and disseminating news releases, source reporter relations.
 - b) Setting up media centers for crisis communication
 - c) Measuring, posting, and monitoring public opinion
 - d) Announcing public affairs; since these website are perfect channel for educating, informing, and persuading organization diverse audiences.
- 4) Interactive medium: Unlike traditional marketing media such as newspapers or television, in the case of the commercial websites, the customer has greater control of choosing and processing information about the company. In other words, it is entirely in the customer’s power to decide which webpages to browse, for how long, and how much information to obtain (Dholakia & Rego, 1998, p.724); “the interactive nature of this medium can be used by marketers to hold the attention of the consumer by engaging the consumer in an asynchronous "dialogue" that occurs at both parties' convenience. This capability of the medium offers unprecedented opportunities to tailor communications precisely to individual customers, allowing individual consumers to request as much information as desired. Further, it allows the marketer to obtain relevant information from customers for the purpose of serving them more effectively in the future” (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee, 1995, p.18).

2.4.5 Types of commercial websites

There are several different classifications of commercial websites that vary primarily based on their goals and objectives – as well as the type of businesses they are representing. The sites themselves have been categorized into six distinct types based on the objectives of the site: online storefront, company presence, content provider, mall, incentive site, and search agent site; these types are (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee, 1995):

(1) Online storefront

“These websites offer direct sales through an electronic channel via an electronic catalog or other, more innovative format. Consumers order products or services via fill-out form, registration, or surface mail” (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee1995, p.50).

(2) Internet presence sites- Flat Ads, image, and Information

“Internet presence sites provide a virtual "presence" for a company and its offerings. They may also serve to signal to current and prospective customers and competitors; there are three types of Internet Presence sites: flat ad, image, and information. Flat Ads are single page electronic flyers with no hypermedia links. They could just as easily appear in a newspaper or magazine, though a flat ad is decidedly less sophisticated than its print counterparts. In Internet Presence Image sites, the consumer appeal is emotional rather than rational. Information about the product, if any, is provided in the context in which the product is consumed, or has meaning to the consumer. Information sites provide detailed and rational information about the company and/or its offerings” (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee1995, p.53).

(3) Content - Fee-Based, Sponsored, and Searchable Database

“In Fee-Based content sites, the provider supplies and/or pays for content which the consumer pays to access. Fee-based content sites are expected to proliferate as secure payment mechanisms are implemented. Sponsored content sites sell advertising space to reduce or eliminate the necessity of charging fees to visitors. In the third type of content model, advertisers pay a provider for information placement in an organized listing in a searchable database” (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee1995, p.54).

(4) The Mall site

“It constitutes a collection of online storefronts, each of which may contain many different categories of goods for sale. The provider charges rent in exchange for the virtual real-estate and may offer a variety of services to the storefront .Some malls also accept advertising” (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee1995, p.55).

(5) The Incentive Site

“It represents a unique form of advertising that attracts a potential customer to a site. The objective is to attract the user to the commercial site behind it, thus helping marketers generate traffic to their websites” (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee1995, p. 56).

(6) The Search Agent sites

“They aim to identify other websites through keyword search of a database that extends throughout the web. Software agents are used to generate and/or assist the search through the database” (Hoffman, Novak & Chatterjee 1995, p.57).

A different way of categorizing the sites is based on the industries that they represent. In 1997, Ho suggested 40 business categories: “accounting, advertising, aerospace, airline, apparel, automobile, banks, beverage, brokerage, chemicals, computers, construction (materials) , construction (services), cosmetics, data services, electronics, food, furniture, healthcare, hotel/resorts, insurance, Internet services, Jewelry, newspaper/magazines, mining/exploration, movie/TV, music, office supplies, oil and gas, paper products, pharmaceuticals, publishing, real estate, software, sports, telecommunication, textile, travel, trucking/shipping, wine/spirits” (Ho, 1997, p. 16). Companies create websites for various purposes:

- a) “Transactional site: the primary purpose is to perform transactions, all the content in the site revolves around setting up that function such as online bank, virtual vineyards, PayPal, and ticket master.
- b) Consumer site: This type of sites is promotional. It’s fun and highly visible but does not usually offer much information such as Zima.com.
- c) Marcom site (marketing communications): it has lots of information about the company, including material on the company’s products and how to contact the company. Such as Chrysler technology center.
- d) Content site: There is limited information about the company. Its primary goal is to provide content to audiences. A content site differs from a Marcom site in that a content site is much bigger, has much more content offered to users, and there is less emphasis on marketing and more on information. This is not to say it can’t be used for marketing purposes. It is also possible to transform a content site into a transactional site, such as buying or selling mutual funds, but much of the information would have to be repositioned and redesigned. A content site is financially supported by transforming part of it into a transactional site or through online advertising” (Garrand, 1997, p. 159).

The current study differentiates among three types of commercial websites according to the relationship between the company and the web:

(1) Websites of traditional companies

These companies had offline traditional industries such as: “accounting, advertising, aerospace, airline, apparel, automobile, banks, beverage, brokerage, chemicals, computers, construction (materials), construction (services), cosmetics, data services, electronics, food, furniture, healthcare, hotel/resorts, insurance, Internet services, Jewelry, newspaper/magazines, mining/exploration, movie/TV, music, office supplies, oil and gas, paper products, pharmaceuticals, publishing, real estate, software, sports, telecommunication, textile, travel, trucking/shipping, wine/spirits” (Ho, 1997, p.

16), and the companies used commercial websites as online advertising and public relations tool, for example, the websites of Toshiba, Acer, BMW, Bosch companies are websites of traditional companies.

(2) Websites of online companies

The services of these companies are offered online only and online companies portals, “such as AOL, MSN, Google and Yahoo, present a myriad of consumer services, marketing, public communication and privatized practices, encouraging participants to perform as private, strategic actors” (Dahlberg, 2005, p. 170).

(3) Online shopping stores

The objective of these websites is online shopping; since, the consumer can buy and sell many products through these websites. For example, eBay, amazon, quelle, and overstock are online stores.

2.4.6 Constructions of commercial websites

Successful commercial websites have essential elements that need to be implemented with professionalism and skill in order to give the user the best possible experience. These elements are homepage, basic company information, clear and easy to use, easily downloaded information, customer focus or feedback, FAQs (frequently asked questions), building a web presence (Cowie, 2008). Press release, newsletters and reports on a commercial websites are often simply meant to make information available about the organization to its stakeholder (Cornelissen, 2008). “The design of a commercial website also plays an important role in attracting, sustaining and retaining the interest of a customer at a website” (Ranganathan & Ganapathy, 2002, p.460); “Successful design gives high accessibility to anyone who visits the website with web browsers” (Huang & Liaw, 2004, p.1).

There are three essential dimensions to website design and management: content, formats, and access. The web access has to be part of an overall marketing strategy and one of the most important areas is the domain name (Preece, Moodley & Brown, 2006, p.469). The researcher differentiates between two basic categories of commercial websites elements; these categories are information content and interactive features:

I. Information content of commercial websites

“There are areas of the company site that do not directly sell or support products and services while they might help promote the company in peripheral ways, comparing information is fairly neutral when it comes to customer relation. A well-written blog post might bring ambient search engine traffic and well – organized “about us” section might help candidate find and apply for open positions” (Potts, 2007, p.7). “Commercial website information can be used to identify the competition, observe changes in structure of the competition, determine pricing, keep updated on new product

announcements, keep informed on announced mergers and acquisitions, and executive appointments and other changes” (Volpo & Piggott, 1996, p.39).

“Commercial website information is constantly changing and offers insight into companies and how they do business. This kind of information can be used to compliment or replace the traditional sources of information. Many small and medium-sized companies that had never been accessible through traditional online sources are now accessible over the Internet. Professionals need to understand the kind of information they offer and apply sophisticated techniques for mining the wealth of information on these companies” (Urgo, 1997, p.157). Advertisers or designers of commercial sites should present on these sites contact information, news and press releases, information about the company products and services to attract users and enable them to interact with company’s administration.

a) Contact information

It is important for any company to provide sufficient content information. This includes the following:

- “The mailing address, even if it’s a PO Box.
- All public phone numbers (main line, support, sales, and so on).
- A contact for fielding online inquires. This preferred over a plain email address, although those can be important as well.
- Additional content information for key personal or departments, such as company principles account executives, the public relations department and so forth.

A company without clear contact information is difficult to trust. If a business provides only a simple contact form and no phone number or address, users might assume they are obfuscating for a reason and that is near a good way to start a dialog with potential consumers” (Potts, 2007, p7).

b) News and press releases

Press releases are one of the best ways the advertiser can make when promoting products or services. The purpose of a press release is to generate an editorial mention. Unlike advertising, there is no charge for these mentions; therefore they are often referred to as free publicity (Loeffler, 1993). “Press releases have been used to officially inform media of significant, newsworthy events. Sometimes it is centered on the company itself- like the grand opening of a new office – and sometimes, it is tied to the company’s offerings, like the launch of a new products or the acquisition of a key competitor. Companies can now achieve news on their own website, building a public library of documents that researchers and investors can use for research. In addition, press releases are now distributed to both online and offline media. Besides submitting

to regular avenues, a PR department can cast their net wider with a host of (mostly free) press release websites” (Potts, 2007, p.7).

In addition, information content of commercial websites should include all types of marketing information such as: price or value; components or contents; performance; quality; availability; product variations; directions for use; special offers, premiums or contests; packaging or shape; guarantees or warranties; safety features; values; independent research; specific advantage (s) over competing brands; approval of product/service from certifying agencies; approval of website from certifying agencies; new concept development ideas (Dholakia & Rego, 1998).

II. Interactive futures of commercial websites

“Many features of these companies’ websites reflect the objectives of company advertising policy. For example, some websites contain menu items for investor information that lead to information targeted to stockholders and other investors. A career menu item often leads to information targeted at prospective employees. Features such as these may satisfy the objective of enhancing relationships with various stakeholders. Other parts of the website provide information and/or branding for the company and its products” (Hwang, McMillan, & Lee, 2003, p.12).

Commercial websites respond to customers in various ways. For example, Amazon greets customers at its online store by statistical analysis of the customer’s past buying patterns. Clothing retailer J. Crew’s website guides customers through a set of questions to select the best pair of chino slacks: his or hers, plain or pleated, a dozen types of fit, and multiple colors. Customers can compare detailed photos, fabric, and price. Companies transmit more information through these websites by increasing the degree of interactive communication with customers (Spulber, 2004).

Cho & Cheon (2005) categorized 23 interactive features of commercial websites, according to the type of interactivity, into three main types:

1. Consumer – message interaction (C-Ms) features: Keyword search, personal choice helper, virtual reality display, Dealer locator, multimedia shows, software downloading, games, electronic coupon, sweepstakes/prize, interactive newsletter, and choice of speed.
2. Consumer – marketer interaction (C-Mk): Site survey, online order, order status tracking, online problem diagnostics, electronic-form inquiries, comment, feedback, product survey, new-products proposal, interactive job placement, online discussion with sales representatives.
3. Consumer – consumer interaction (C-C): Surfer positions, user groups, cyber community, electronic postcards, online chatting with other consumer.

“The domain name is essentially the Internet brand, and where possible should tie closely to the name of the company. For example, Virgin.com is the unmistakable domain of the Virgin group companies. The domain name is critical in directing the commercial website, as a domain name that is not associated with the company can

often lead to misdirection. A close relationship between the domain name and brand name is therefore desirable” (Preece, Moodley & Brown, 2006, p.164). “Web designers often attempt to make their websites fancy and attractive with the use of various technologically supported design tools such as flash, Java script, and colors; web design elements are closely interwoven with elements of interactivity, making it hard to separate the two. For instance, clicking on a hypertext link changes the color of the text. Since the color changes as a result of users' action, it can be considered as an interactive function” (Lee et al, 2004, p14). Commercial website should be:

1. “Constructed in carefully planned stages, avoiding the need to redo screens or reconfigure the structure of the site” (Walker, 2001, p.51).
2. “Built on a strong base of information sharing and knowledge management, adding features and functionality to create ongoing interest in the site (Walker, 2001, p.51).
3. “Structures to serve as a cohesive source of information about all the plans offered to an organization’s various constituencies” (Walker, 2001, p.51).
4. “Designed to minimize administrative costs and hassles while maximizing communication” (Walker, 2001, p.51).
5. “Tied to the business and the impact of its success on employee rewards” (Walker, 2001, p.51).
6. “An accessible and useful resource for general information, as well as it should be dynamic and updated, which can some-times pose problems as their content changes regularly and they are constantly being upgraded with new information” (Urigo, 1997, p.55).
7. Interactive; it should be used interactive features such as keyword search, personal choice helper, virtual reality display, multimedia shows, software downloading, games, interactive newsletter, and choice of speed. site survey, online order, online problem diagnostics, electronic-form inquiries, comment, feedback, product survey, new-products proposal, interactive job placement, online discussion with sales representative, surfer positions, user groups, cyber community, electronic postcards, online chatting with other consumer (Cho & Cheon, 2005).

2.4.7 Problems of commercial websites

Kanayama, Ogasawara and Kimijima, 2002 confirmed that following problems impede effective utilization of commercial websites (p.54):

I. Problems of content

“It is unclear what information a commercial website should contain. For example, an investor, financial information is required. Moreover for a job or careers information is indispensable. But it is unclear what kind of information is required for a

commercial website to support the various types of users. The content of websites varies within the same industry, making it difficult for users to use this website efficiently” (Kanayama, Ogasawara & Kimijima, 2002, p.54).

II. Problems of usability

“The usability of websites is a significant element in the context of efforts to increase the number of users who repeatedly access websites. However, in many cases, usability is not considered from the viewpoint of users. For example, many websites have deficiencies in term of font size or color scheme. Moreover some websites are deficient in terms of operability, i.e., it is difficult for users to reach the content they want” (Kanayama, Ogasawara & Kimijima, 2002, p.54).

III. Problem of security

The security of personal and banking information transmitted over the web affects on consumer willingness to buy or sell products (Aiken & Boush, 2006). So, building consumer trust in online environments becomes one of the most basic challenges to commercial websites particularly online shopping stores. Raamat et al. (2008) pointed the security and perceived risk issue as central to consumers’ relation to online shopping. And they said that “Although people who have made an online purchase transaction rarely report any problems, the inexperienced ones are often suspicious and find online buying complicated” (Raamat et al., 2008, p.308).

2.4.8 The fact of online advertising and commercial sites in Germany and Egypt

Concerning the number of Internet users, Germany occupies the first place among the European countries with 54.2 million users (representing 65.9% of German population). Although Egypt occupies the same place among the African countries, the gap between the number of German and Egyptian users is so big; since the Egyptian Internet users are about 12.7 million (representing 15.9% of Egyptian population) (Internet World States, 2009). For more information about the numbers of Internet users, see figure (2-32).

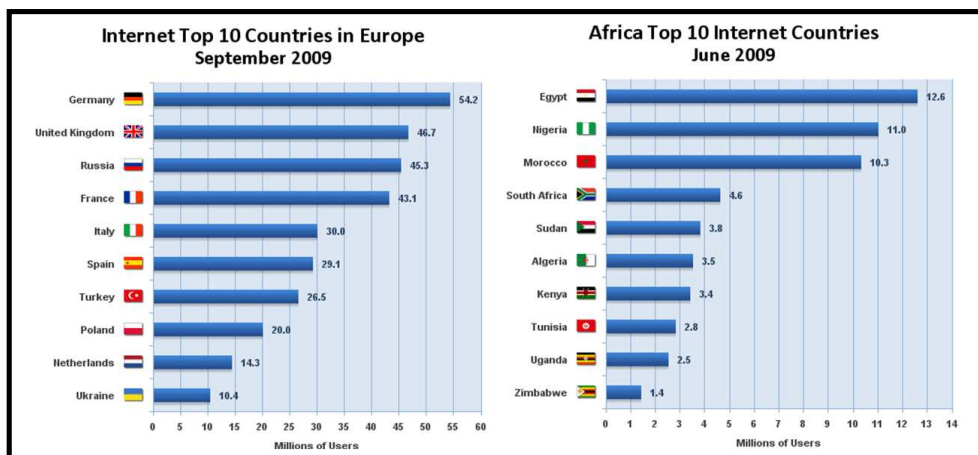


Figure 2-32. Number of German and Egyptian users (Internet World States, 2009)

The gap between German and Egyptian online advertising and commercial websites also is so big; since German companies are the highest than all European companies that present themselves online, around 78 percent of German companies have their own online websites (Hallerberg, 2008). In 2004, there were more than 8 million.de domains; this means they were the second common top-level-domains after the .com domains. In addition, the third of the German domains are located in the business sector where most sales are done through online shops (Bundesverband DigitaleWirtschaft, 2004). “The country code top level domain (ccTLD) for Germany passed the 13 million registration milestone on 18 August 2009 cementing its position for now as the ccTLD with the most registrations worldwide” (Domainnews.com, 2009, p.1). German online Advertising grows year by year; the German advertising turnover for online advertising in 2008 was 1.3 billion euro. Despite of the commercial crisis, the German online advertising sector is still growing (Hallerberg, 2009).

On other hand, Egypt is one of four countries (Brazil, Ecuador, Egypt and Spain.) that a private person cannot register a domain; only institutions or businesses can register, whether or not they are constituted inside the country. So it is impossible to know who many Egyptian websites are found (Marcaria.com, 2009). But Germany occupies the first online presence on the Internet domains among the world countries (Domainnews.com, 2009). “Egypt has become one of the leading Internet markets in Africa in terms of users, international bandwidth and services offered. The country is well connected by several international submarine fiber optic cables in combination with a national fiber backbone infrastructure, and the international bandwidth market has been liberalized. The entire sector is highly competitive with more than 200 Internet and data service providers, which has led to some of the lowest prices for ADSL services on the continent and broadband packages with up to 24Mb/s delivered to residential households. VoIP Internet telephony has been liberalized, and several companies are rolling out next-generation networks to provide converged IP-based voice and data services. The country’s three mobile network operators are entering the market with third generation mobile broadband systems, and each of them holds a controlling stake in a leading data and Internet service provider: Orascom/Mobinil (LINKdotNET), Vodafone (Raya Telecom) and Etisalat (EgyNet)” (Budde Com, 2009, p.1).

But there are many challenges that face online shopping in Egypt such as: most of the users have no visa cart or online account to buy, they don’t trust in the products and services that are offered online, and most of online shopping companies or stores (e.g., e-bay, Amazon) are outside Egypt and the prices of these products or services will be so expensive because of transportation and customs charges (Mahmoud, Klimsa, & Auter, 2008).

Chapter 3

Research questions and hypotheses

This chapter contains the previous models of online advertising including commercial websites, the suggested uses and gratifications model of commercial websites as online advertising format as well as the questions and hypotheses of the present study.

2.1 Models of online advertising

In order to better understand the effectiveness of online advertising including commercial websites, the researcher specified the following part of this chapter to review the major models of online advertising including commercial websites.

3.1.1 Davis' model

Judy Foster Davis (1999) identified five elements that may essential to effective online advertising as shown in figure (3-1).

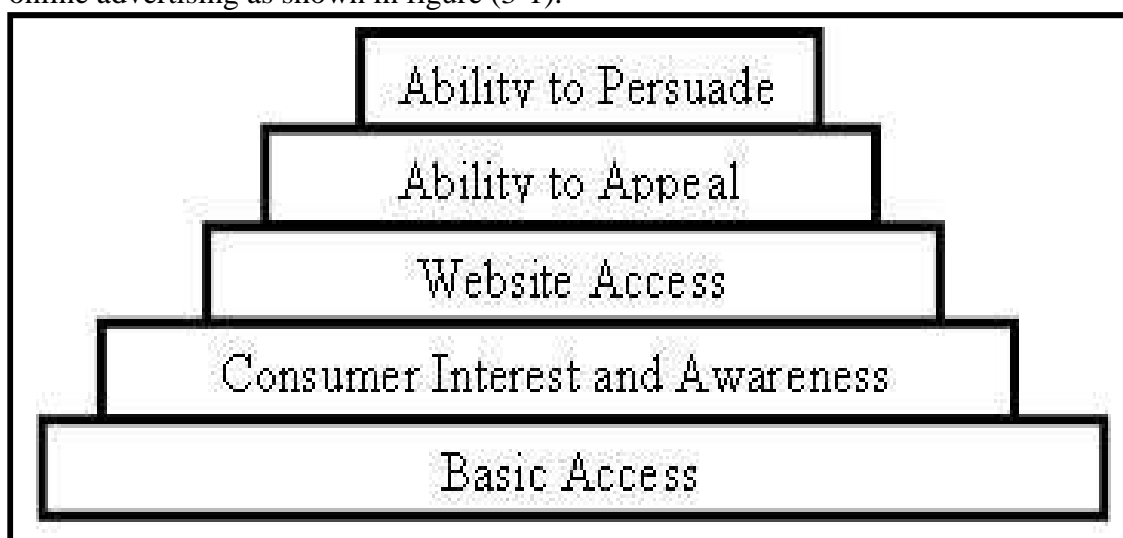


Figure 3-1. Elements essential to effective online advertising (Davis, 1999, p. 82)

Basic access: In order for online advertising to be effective, at the most fundamental level consumers must have access to hardware and software permitting Internet entry (Davis, 1999).

Consumer interest and awareness: Other elements likely related to the effectiveness of online advertising are consumer interests related to the Internet usage and awareness of specific websites. Thus, encouraging consumers to visit specific advertising or commercial websites is a great challenge to marketers (Davis, 1999).

Websites access: Digital access to specific websites can be problematic for two reasons. First many online addresses are arcane and unwieldy, meaning that they are difficult for consumer to remember and may be lost forever. Another problem is that some websites appear to be ephemeral – there one day and seemingly gone another-creating consumer puzzlement and frustration (Davis, 1999).

Ability to appeal: “In order for online advertising to be effective is the ability to appeal to consumer once they have encountered the website. The design of online advertising should be attractive and appealing to consumer” (Davis, 1999, p84).

Ability to persuade: “all types of advertising including online advertising should have the ability to persuade” (Davis, 1999, p.85).

This model describes only the most important elements of accessing online advertising from advertiser or designer perspective, but it ignores studying users or receivers of it.

3.1.2 Pavlou & Stewart model

Pavlou & Stewart (2000) distinguished between two types of Interactive Advertising measures, these types are (a) Control process measures, and (b) Outcomes measures:

First: Control process measures

These measures focus on media choice, information search, attention to and processing of information. This set of measures treats interactive media as dependent variables and focuses on the factors that affect on the use of media and advertising. These measures focus on when and with what consequences consumers and marketers choose to use particular interactive advertising media and advertising content. Control process measures contain personalization, participation, comprehension, and feedback (Pavlou & Stewart 2000).

Second: Outcome measures

The second set of measures focuses on the effects of consumers' using interactive media. This set of variables includes such traditional measures of advertising response as awareness, attitude, and product choice. Within an interactive context measures such as awareness, attitude, and product choice among others, are not simply the result of exposure to advertising. These outcome measures are the joint product, or interaction, of the consumer and the advertising. This set of measures contains satisfaction trust, persuasion, quality of decisions and brand equity (Pavlou & Stewart 2000).

3.1.3 The interactive advertising model (IAM)

Rodgers & Thorson (2000) distinguished between aspects of the Internet that are consumer-controlled and those that are advertiser-controlled. In traditional advertising, advertisers have controlled which ads consumers see, when and how, consumers always have the option of not paying attention to, becoming involved with or ignoring the ads. In the case of the online advertising, the control has switched (for the most part) from advertiser to consumer, see figure (3-2).

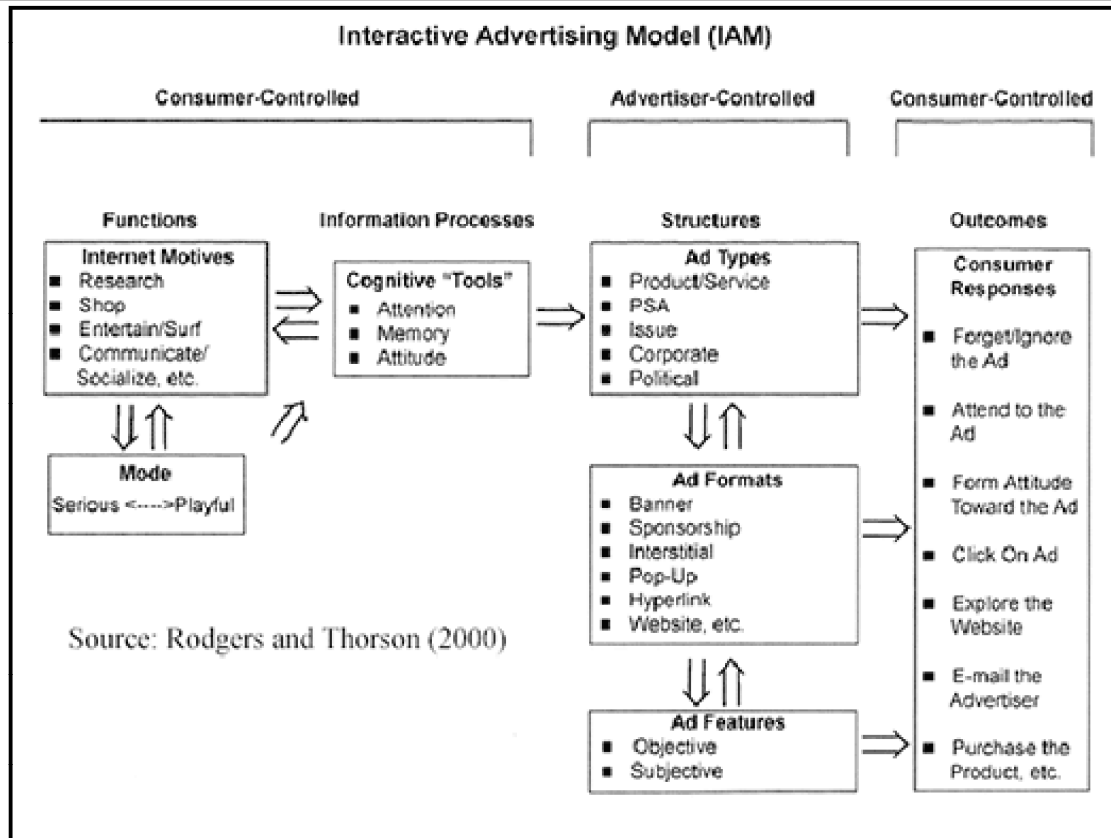


Figure 3-2. The interactive advertising model (IAM) (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000)

First: Consumer-controlled aspects of the Internet

Rodgers & Thorson (2000) confirmed that consumers have more control on the Internet than do advertisers, consumer-controlled aspects contain functions (Internet motives and mode), information process (cognitive tools):

(1) Functions

Functional paradigm focused on why and how consumers use the Internet as well as the gratifications from this usage. Functionalism helps explain the motivational basis of Internet user's goals, as well as plans and actions that are set and carried out in pursuit of those goals. This model begins with web motives, as demonstrated by the beginning component of the model. These motives influence the mode in which users enter the Internet. Thus, these two components work conjointly to influence whether and which types of ads are attended to, as well as the extent of processing. Internet motives and modes influence information processing of interactive ads (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000).

(2) Information processes

Information processing was developed in psychology and it has its roots in functionalism. Like functionalism, this approach assumes that there are inputs to and outputs from humans (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000).

Second: Advertiser-Controlled aspects of the Internet (Structures of web ad)

These aspects focus on the controlling on types, formats and features of online advertising environment. Three basic structural components have been conceptualized as part of the IAM, which include ad types, formats and features. This set of aspects identifies either objective or subjective features of online ads are to enable predictions of potential responses to these features (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000).

Third: Outcomes (Consumer- controlled aspects of the Internet)

The responses that people make to traditional advertising remain relevant to the interactive advertising, but there are new sets of responses that must be defined and included; there are additional alternatives for this new medium such as: The time spent at a website, "click," which is a mouse response to a location on the Internet screen, or the "click-through," which is a series of mouse selection responses to the pages in online ad or website. Attention can also be indexed by "hits" to a website or other interactive format. A "hit" is a visit by an individual to that particular site; since many advertising websites are programmed with ways to automatically track who visits that site (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000).

This model (IAM) is so important to the present study because it meets the suggested model of this study in examining consumers' behaviors and motives besides studying the structure of online advertising. But it ignored the demographical and cultural factors of using online advertising (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000).

3.2 The suggested uses and gratifications model of online advertising

In current study, the researcher presents new model to clarify the uses and gratifications of commercial websites (as the most important format of online advertising) with respecting the cultural differences, see figure (3-3). This model links between uses and gratifications theory and cultural studies through studying the uses and gratifications of commercial websites in two different cultures (German and Egyptian cultures); the current study introduced model of uses and gratifications theory to explain its sequence elements that contain: 1) motives (sought gratifications), 2) attitudes, 3) obtained gratifications, 4) time spent on using commercial websites, and 5) Demographic and cultural characteristics of users. This model highlights the interference these five basic elements:

3.2.1 Motivations of commercial websites

Motives are considered one of the most important elements of uses and gratifications theory; since Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch (1974) confirmed that the audience used mass media, including the Internet, to gratify their motives. Dimmick, Kline & Stafford (2000) indicated that the Internet may gratify the same needs that are gratified by using of traditional media. On the other hand, there are several researchers

have argued that the Internet is able to satisfy a wide variety of needs much more than traditional media do (e.g., Eighmey, 1997; Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000) and they have identified some motives as a major motivations for using the Internet.

Kaye (1998) has identified six motivational categories that motivate web use: “entertainment, social interactions, passing the time, escape, information, and website preference” (p. 34). Korgaonkar and Wolin (1999) divided Internet users’ motivations into seven factors: Social escapism, privacy in financial transactions, information motivation, interactive control motivations, Socialization, non-solicited privacy motivations; and economic motivations.

Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) also developed a scale of Internet usage motivations that consists of five primary motives of using the Internet: interpersonal utility, pastime, information seeking, convenience, and entertainment. Luo (2002) explored effects of information, entertainment, and irritation on various online consumer behaviors such as attitude toward the site, Internet usage and satisfaction.

The motives of using online advertising including commercial websites were measured by using the scale of McQuail (1987) which was also used by Ko, Cho and Roberts (2005) in their study about Internet uses and gratifications, but the researcher rewrote and developed this measurement to be suitable to the current study; the researcher used 23 items to tap into respondents’ gratifications sought (motives) from commercial website use. These motives would be the desires they hope to fulfill – a motivation for going to this type of sites. Items included measured the following gratifications:

- a) **“Information gathering:** Audiences of mass media including online users use mass media in order to satisfying curiosity and general interest; learning; and getting information.
- b) **Convenience:** Consumers may use commercial websites to get what he or she needs in much easier and convenient way.
- c) **Social interaction:** Consumers may use commercial websites to meet people online, to interact with the source of products and services directly and to keep up what is going in.
- d) **Entertainment:** Some consumers use commercial websites for escaping from problems; relaxing; getting enjoyment; filling time; and sexual arousal”. (McQuail, 1987, p. 73)

The current study is interested in examining the users’ motives of commercial websites and describing the relationships between these motives and the uses and gratifications of these sites (see, RQ4, H1, H2, H3, H5 of survey questions and hypotheses).

3.2.2 Attitudes toward commercial websites

Attitudes toward the website were defined as a “predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to web content in natural exposure situations” (Chen & Wells, 1999, p. 28). Many researchers indicated that the attitudes toward the website is related to website use (e.g., Ebersole, 2000; Rhee & Kim, 2004; Susskind, 2004); since the attitude toward the commercial websites and online advertising is considered as a key determinant of both consumer adoption and usage of these websites and online advertising effectiveness (Luo, 2002), so this study is interested in examining the users attitudes toward commercial websites and describing the relationships between these attitudes and the uses and gratifications of these sites (see, RQ6, H3, H6, H9 of survey questions and hypotheses).

Subjects responded to a series of five positively worded statements about commercial website use with a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The researcher used items from a study performed by Ko, Cho, and Roberts (2005) to tap into respondents’ general attitudes about using commercial websites. Subjects responded to a series of five positively worded statements about commercial website use with a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). These five statements are:

1. “These websites build a relationship with me
2. I would like to visit these websites again
3. I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites
4. I feel comfortable in surfing these websites
5. I would rate these sites as one of the best” (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005, p.63).

The researcher ignored the sixth statement “This site is a good place to spend my time” because it is already mentioned in the measure of motives and gratifications.

3.2.3 Obtained gratifications form using commercial websites

Gratifications obtained from medium (commercial websites) is important element of uses and gratifications approach; and there is strong relationship between motives or gratifications sought (GS) and gratifications obtained (GO) (Palmgreen, Wenner & Rayburn, 1980), the current study is interested in examining the users’ gratifications from using commercial websites and describing the relationships between these gratifications obtained and the other elements of uses and gratifications model: Motives, time spent on using commercial websites and attitudes toward these websites (see, RQ5, H4, H5, H7,H8 of survey questions and hypotheses).

To measure gratifications obtained – or what respondents feel that they actually gained from the experience of using these sites – the researchers used the same scale, but worded somewhat differently. In this case, items were worded to measure the

perceived benefit the respondent gained from the experience of using commercial websites.

3.2.4 Time spent on using commercial websites

The time spent using the online advertising increases more than the other types of advertising. This rapid growth in online advertising revenues indicates the viability of online advertising as an alternative to that of traditional media (Choi & Rifon, 2002). The current study is interested in examining the users' time spent on using commercial websites and describing the relationships between these gratifications obtained and the other elements of uses and gratifications model: motives, gratifications and attitudes toward these websites (see, RQ2, RQ2, H6, H7, H8 of survey questions and hypotheses).

3.2.5 Demographic and cultural characteristics of commercial websites users

Johnstone (1974) observed that members of mass media audiences used the media as members of organized social groups and as participants in a cultural milieu or taste; "the different tastes and preferences which guide individual choice amongst what the media make available. Cultural taste, in this sense, refers to an individual attribute (the particular preference pattern) which is shaped by family, social class milieu, education and cultural capital available to an individual" (McQuail & Windahl, 1997, p.139); since the cultural and demographical characteristics (gender, age, residence, religion, educational level) of the mass media audience may affect on their choice and usage of these media. The current study attempted to describe the relationships among the characteristics of commercial sites' users and their uses and gratifications of these websites (see, RQ 1, RQ 7, RQ 8, RQ 9, of survey questions and hypotheses). The suggested model is shown in figure (3-3).

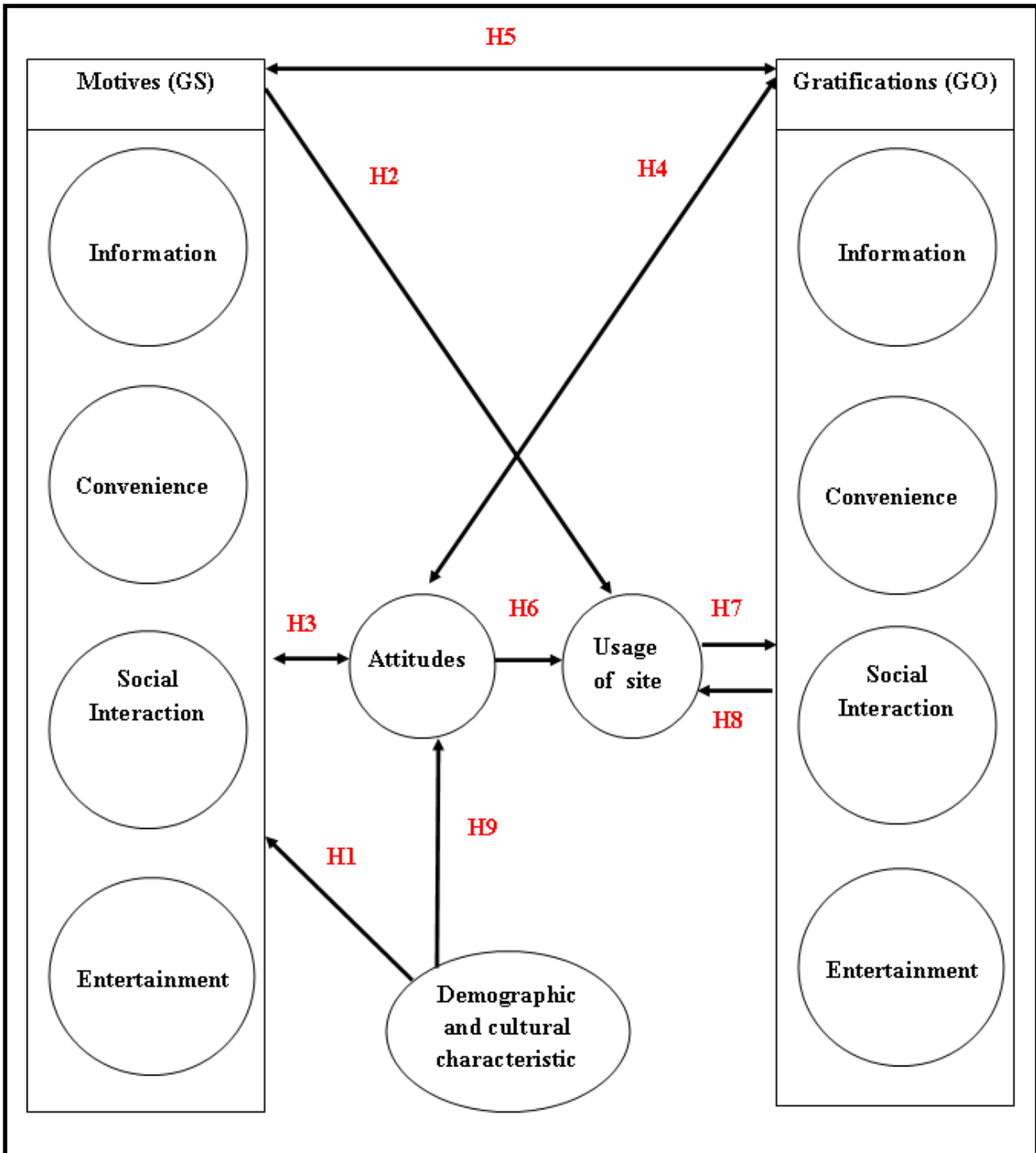


Figure 3-3. Suggested uses and gratifications model of online advertising and commercial websites

3.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses of current study

The researcher divided the questions and hypotheses of this study into survey's questions and hypotheses and the questions of content analysis study.

3.3.1 Questions and hypotheses of survey study

A uses and gratifications approach was used to develop and answer research questions and hypotheses of the current survey study, based on the existing uses and gratifications research of the Internet, and the suggested model and its sequence elements that contain 1) demographic and cultural elements, 2) motives (sought gratifications), 3) attitudes, 4) time spent on using commercial websites, and 5) obtained gratifications. This model highlights the interference these five basic elements and the relationships among them.

I. The questions of survey study

It is so important to explore the demographic characteristics (i.e. age, residence, gender, religion educational level) of medium users because uses and gratifications theory focused on studying the users or audience and their uses of the communication medium and its messages. To have more knowledge about the characteristics of those who use commercial websites and the factors that may explain their using behavior, the researcher proposes the following three research questions:

RQ1. What are the demographic characteristics of the German and Egyptian sample?

RQ2. What are the characteristics of their using the Internet?

RQ3. What are the characteristics of using commercial websites in each country?

“The principal objectives of uses and gratifications inquiry: To explain how people use media to gratify their needs, to understand motives of media behavior, and to identify functions or consequences that follow from needs, motives, and behaviors” (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974, pp.20-21). To explain the uses, attitudes and gratifications of using commercial websites in Germany and Egypt, the researcher proposes the following three research questions:

RQ4. What are the motivations of using commercial websites in each country?

RQ5. What are the obtained gratifications from commercial websites in each country?

RQ6. What are the attitudes of using the commercial websites in each country?

To examine the characteristics of using commercial websites regarding interaction with ads on these websites, shopping utility offered by this type of sites, the researcher proposes the following two research questions:

RQ7. What are the characteristics of using the online ads on commercial websites in each country?

RQ8. To what extent do the users benefit from the shopping utility offered by commercial websites?

The personal cultural taste guides media content preferences and choices and leads to various kinds of affective and emotional satisfactions (McQuail & Windahl, 1997). So the ethical and cultural reasons of avoiding some commercial websites in Germany and Egypt and the users' suggestions to develop this type of websites in each country are offered in following two questions.

RQ9. What are the ethical and cultural reasons of avoiding some commercial websites? And what are the types of these websites?

RQ10. What are the users' proposals (suggestions) to develop commercial websites?

II. Hypotheses of the survey study

Utilizing the suggested measurement of uses and gratifications theory and the existing studies in this area, the following hypotheses were tested in the current study;

H1. There is a significant statistical correlation between demographic variables of users and their usage's motives of commercial websites:

McQuail & Windahl (1997) confirmed that it is important to examine the effects of particular preference pattern, which is shaped by family, educations and cultural capital available to an individual, on the individual uses and gratifications of mass media. Johnson and Kaye (2003) examined the effects of the demographic and cultural characteristics of Internet users (gender, age, income, using the internet) on their motives of their online political activities. And depending on the objectives of the current study and the suggested model, it is also so important to investigate the relationship between the demographic variables of commercial websites users and their usage's motives of commercial websites. This hypothesis contains seven demographic variables (gender, age, place of residence, religion, educational level, job and users' household income); therefore the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a. Gender is a significant factor in determining the usage's motives of commercial websites.

H1b. Age is a significant factor in determining the usage's motives of commercial websites.

H1c. Place of residence is a significant factor in determining the usage's motives of commercial websites.

H1d. The religion of the users is a significant factor in determining their motives of using the commercial websites.

H1e. Educational level of users is a significant factor in determining their motives of using commercial websites.

H1f. Job of users is a significant factor in determining their motives of using commercial websites.

H1g. Users' household income is a significant factor in determining their motives of using commercial websites.

H2. Consumers' motives of using commercial sites have a significant effect on the consumers' time spent on these websites.

The time spent on using mass media and Internet was used to measure and compare the usages of traditional media and Internet (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004), Luo (2002) identified the web usage as the number of hours spent online per week. Likewise, the usage of commercial websites was measured by the number of hours spent per week on commercial websites. This hypothesis has its roots from study of Birnie and Horvath (2002) about psychological predictors of Internet social communication; since they examined the relationship between the social motives and usage of online social communication. Rodgers (2002) also confirmed that motives are one of the driving forces of consumer's media usage.

The current study aims to investigate the effects of usage's motives of commercial websites on this usage or the number of hours spent per week on commercial websites. So this hypothesis referred to the relationship between the motives and usage of commercial websites. The researcher expected that those having strong motivation of using commercial websites would spend more time on using commercial websites.

H3. Motivations of using commercial websites are positively associated with the attitudes toward using these websites.

Rayburn and Palmgreen's (1984) expectancy value model suggested that attitudes influence the gratifications sought, and gratifications sought lead to media activity. And this means that there is positive relationship between usage's motive of mass medium and their attitudes toward this medium.

Daugherty, Eastin, and Bright (2008) found that user's motivations relate positively to his or her attitudes toward new medium including the Internet. Depending on this result, and according to the objectives of the current study, the researcher hypothesizes that there is positive relationships between users' motivations of using commercial websites and their attitudes toward these websites.

This hypothesis contains four variables, therefore the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3a. Information seeking motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with attitudes toward using these websites

H3b. Convenience motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with attitudes toward these websites.

H3c. Social interaction motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with attitude toward these websites.

H4d. Entertainment motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with the attitudes toward using these websites.

H4. Obtained gratifications from commercial websites are positively associated with the attitudes toward these websites.

Luo (2002) links between attitudes toward the web and obtained gratifications of the web, and he proposed that obtained gratifications of the web are positively associated with the attitudes toward the web. Likewise, the current study proposed that there is strong relationship between obtained gratifications from commercial websites and the attitudes toward these websites.

This hypothesis also contains four variables, therefore the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4a. Information gratifications of the commercial websites are positively associated with attitudes toward using these websites.

H4b. Convenience gratifications of the commercial websites are positively associated with attitudes toward using these websites.

H4c. Social interaction gratifications of the commercial websites are positively associated with attitudes toward using these websites.

H4d. Entertainment gratifications of the commercial websites are positively associated with the attitudes toward using these websites.

H5. Motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with obtained gratifications.

The major concept of uses and gratifications theory is that audiences use media, including the Internet, to gratify their motives (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974), this hypothesis has also its roots from study for Palmgreen, Wenner & Rayburn's (1980) study under the title: *Relations between Gratifications Sought and Obtained: a Study of Television News*, since they examined the relationship between gratifications sought (GS) from television news and gratifications obtained (GO) from network evening news programs. So the literature review refers to the importance of examining the relationships between motives (sought gratifications) and obtained gratifications from using the medium content which is commercial websites in the current study. For this reason, this hypothesis was proposed to investigate the relationship between each individual sought gratification and its corresponding obtained measurement; since it contains four variables, therefore the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5a. Information seeking motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with information gathering from these websites.

H5b. Convenience motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with the obtained convenience gratifications from these websites.

H5c. Social interaction motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with the obtained social interaction gratifications from these websites.

H5d. Entertainment motivations of the commercial website are positively associated with the entertainment gratifications from these websites.

H6. Attitudes toward using commercial websites have a significant effect on the time spent on these websites.

Users' attitudes toward the mass medium have a significant effect on their consumption or usage of this medium including the Internet (Daugherty, Eastin, & Bright, 2008; LaRose, Mastro & Eastin, 2001; Luo, 2002). As well as, Rhee and Kim (2004) also found that attitudes toward the Internet affect on Internet use; since perceived credibility and benefit of websites positively affect on these websites' usage, while perceived alienation and negative effects of these websites affect negatively on these websites' usage. Proceeding from the results of existing studies, the researcher hypothesized that attitudes toward using commercial websites have a significant effect on the time spent on these websites.

H7. The consumers' time spent on commercial websites has a significant effect on their gratifications from these websites.

Kaye (1998) found correlation between weekly web usage and obtained gratifications from websites, this is because "people select and use communication sources and messages to satisfy felt needs and desires" (Perry, 2002, p.71). The obtained gratifications from commercial websites are results to these websites usage. Consequently this usage or the consumers' time spent on commercial websites has a significant effect on consumers' gratifications from these websites.

H8. Consumers' gratifications from commercial websites have a significant effect on their time spent on these websites.

Obtained gratifications from mass media including Internet also affect on these media usage (Leung, 2009); For example, usage of convenience interaction and shopping features on websites increases online buying activity and spent time on these commercial websites (Kim & LaRose, 2004). As well as this usage encouraging repeat website visits (Murphy & Hofacker, 2004).

H9. There is a significant difference between German and Egyptian consumers' attitudes toward using commercial websites.

Some researchers found that the attitudes toward using advertising and doing shopping generally are different by country or culture (e.g., Campbell, 2007; Richins & Verhage, 1985). Significant differences also were found in Internet experience, attitudes, and usage, among different cultures (Li & Kirkup, 2007). Proceeding from these results, the current study proposed that there is a significant difference between German and Egyptian consumers' attitudes toward using commercial websites.

3.3.2 Questions of content analysis study

One of the most important objectives of this study is to determine if the commercial websites that were visited by German and Egyptian users differ in their formats, features, presenting information about the company and hosting advertisements. The question that guides this study is to what extent the design of websites differs across cultures.

This study examines the formats and features on these sites as well as the ads that available on these sites -- as well as the comparison between German and Egyptian corporate websites. The following research questions guided this study and enabled a

comparative analysis between the two countries. It's important to understand how a business makes itself available to its customers and other audiences via its commercial website. This inquiry leads to the first research question.

RQ1: What are the general practices of commercial websites regarding the languages that are presented on these commercial websites, type of these websites, also the quantity, advertisers, and locations of ads on these websites?

This question contains the following five hypotheses

H1a There are differences in commercial websites' use of languages based on the users of the site – German or Egyptian. ?

H1b. There are the differences in commercial websites' types based on the users of the site – German or Egyptian.

H1c. There are the differences in commercial websites' hosting of individual ads based on the users of the site – German or Egyptian.

H1d. There are differences between advertisers of individual ads on commercial websites based on the users of the site – German or Egyptian.

H1e. There are differences between locations of individual ads on commercial websites based on the users of the site – German or Egyptian.

RQ2: What are the general practices of organizations regarding posting of corporate contact information and also the facilitations to surf the websites?

This question contains the following three hypotheses

H2a There are differences in commercial websites' use of site basic and contact information based on the users of the site – German or Egyptian.

H2b There are differences in commercial websites' use of site basic and contact information based on the language of the site – German, Arabic, English or more than one language.

H2c There are differences in commercial websites use of these techniques based on the type of these websites analyzed.

RQ3: What are the interactive features of German and Egyptian visited websites?

The question looked for interactive features such as: Keyword search FAQ/help, self- design images, animation, audio, video, interactive newsletter, online order, online transaction, comment, job placement, user groups or community, and online chatting. This question contains the following three hypotheses:

H3a There are differences in commercial websites' use of site interactive features based on the users of the site – German or Egyptian.

H3b There are differences in the amount of features used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the language of the site analyzed – German, Arabic, English or more than one language.

H3c There are differences in the amount of interactive features used on commercial websites based on the types of these sites analyzed.

RQ4: What are the formats of online advertising that are presented on commercial websites?

It would certainly seem to be the case that the formatting of online advertising may also vary by site language, and business region of the commercial website hosting the ads. These sub-questions are explored as well. Finally, the individual features of online ads also come in many variations, which can also affect the interactivity of the ads. This question contains the following three hypotheses:

H4a There are differences in the formats of ads featured on commercial websites based on the users of these websites – German or Egyptian.

H4b There are differences in the amount of formatting used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the advertisers of the ads.

H4c There are differences in the amount of formatting used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the type of the site analyzed.

RQ5: What are the features of online advertising that are presented on commercial websites?

The features of online advertising may also vary by the advertisers, type site, site language, and business region of the commercial website hosting the ads such variations of this question are explored. This question contains the following three hypotheses:

H5a. There are differences in the amount of features used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the users of the commercial website.

H5b. There are differences in the amount of features used in ads featured on commercial websites based the type of advertisers of the ad.

H5c. There are differences in the amount of features used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the type of the site analyzed.

Chapter 4

Methodology

This chapter examines in detail the methodology adopted in carrying out the study. It covers the following aspects; sample and sampling method, procedure for collecting and analyzing data, measurements of uses and gratifications, instruments for collecting data and statistical analysis. The researcher has discussed these aspects by highlighting the reasons why some techniques were selected for the research design.

4.1 Sample of study

A total of 648 people responded to the survey, 352 of them to the German version and 296 to the Arabic version; the sample consisted of 294 male and 354 female, or 45.4% and 54.6% of the sample respectively. Respondents ranged in age between 17 and 50 with the average being 23 years. Most of the sample are from prep and secondary school (N= 415, 64% of the sample). The majority of the survey respondents were either students or working in education field (N=552, 85.2%). The majority of respondents also reported a monthly household income less than € 2000 Euro equivalent (N=348, 53.7%). The respondents reported spending an average of 20.92 hours per week surfing the Internet. And they reported spending an average of 5.98 hours per week surfing commercial websites.

4.2 Procedures for collecting and analyzing data

An online survey was conducted with Egyptian and German users who visited commercial websites. The researchers used a convenience sample of Internet users who are directed to the survey through online announcements and hyperlinks. This is because the Internet poses a unique set of problems in guaranteeing a random sample of respondents. Unlike telephone and mail surveys where samples can be produced through census lists and random digit dialing, the web has no central registry of users, and e-mail addresses are so varied that they are virtually impossible to construct randomly (Johnson & Kaye, 2003). Since there is no mechanism for random sampling the population of web users, nonprobability sampling is more appropriate when posting an online survey. Cyber surveys are commonly defined as volunteer samples because respondents are self-selected (Kaye & Johnson, 1999). Snowball sampling was used to obtain a higher response rate. The survey was administered in Arabic. A total of 648 people responded to the survey, 352 of them to the German version and 296 to the Arabic version. Questionnaire was administered over a two months period (from February, 06, 2009 to April, 06, 2009). The content analysis of sites visited by sample was employed to better understand the nature of the content being consumed. Of the initial 252 visited commercial websites by the sample of German and Egyptian users, a total of 248 were content analyzed over 10 days (April, 27, 2009 to May, 6, 2009). Four websites had to be removed from the study due to technical errors involved in coding the sites. Sixty – seven point three percent (167) websites were visited by the German users, and eighty- one websites (32.7%) were visited by Egyptian users.

4.3 Measurements of uses and gratifications

The researcher used two types of measurements to explore the uses and gratifications of commercial websites, these measurements are:

■ Motives and gratifications measurement

The motives (gratifications sought) of using online advertising including commercial websites were measured by using the scale of McQuail (1987) which was also used by Ko, Cho and Roberts (2005) in their study about Internet uses and gratifications, but the researcher rewrote and developed this measurement to be suitable to the current study; the researcher used 23 items to tap into respondents' motives of commercial website usage. These would be the desires they hope to fulfill – a motivation for going to these sites. Items included measured the following motives: information gathering, convenience, entertainment, and social interaction, see table (4-1). Subjects responded to a series of questions about each motive with a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The items were then factored by principal components analysis with varimax rotation. The factor solution yielded four factors with greater than one eigenvalue and explained (59.03%) of the total variance.

Items	FAC1	FAC2	FAC3	FAC4
Factor 1: Seeking information motives				
It's a good way to do research	.443	.433	.014	.085
To get information for free	.467	.406	.002	.105
To learn how I use the products or services	.597	.277	.171	.051
To see as much products or services before I buy	.606	.326	.217	.060
To compare among the different products or services	.615	.380	.128	.022
I like to be a part of the commercial community	.467	.047	.447	.022
To learn about products or services before they become popular.	.635	.269	.377	.174
To learn about unknown things	.605	.337	.246	.152
To learn about useful things	.590	.391	.239	.186
Factor 2: Convenience motives				
1. It's convenient to use	.366	.697	.082	.116
2. I can get what I want for less effort	.315	.735	.166	.108
3. I can use it anytime, anywhere	.314	.643	.218	.130
4. To decide the service or product should I buy	.432	.650	.308	.131
5. It is an easy way to make shopping	.345	.705	.224	.093
Factor 3: Social interaction motives				
6. To express about myself freely	.301	.291	.707	.181
7. To meet people with my interests	.205	.099	.759	.312
8. To interact with the source of product or service directly	.207	.158	.747	.182
9. To keep with what is going on	.384	.270	.668	.291
Factor 4: Entertainment motives				
10. To pass time	.148	.148	.231	.715
11. I just like to surf the commercial websites	.186	.074	.316	.670
12. It is enjoyable	.181	.128	.261	.834
13. It is intertaining	.226	.134	.247	.804
14. It is habit	.035	.096	.083	.613

Table 4-1. Factor analysis of motives

These are four categories or factors of motives were measured by the following

- (1) Information motives: Respondents were asked nine items to tap their information motives of commercial website usage; this factor is loaded mainly: "It's a good way to do research"(0.433), "To get information for free"(0.467), "To learn how I use the products or services"(0.597),"To see as much products or services before I buy"(0.606),"To compare among the different products or services"(0.616), "I like to be a part of the commercial community"(0.467), "To learn about products or services before they become popular"(0.635), "To learn about unknown things"(0.605), and "To learn about useful things"(0.590).
- (2) Convenience motives: Respondents were asked five items to tap their convenience motives of commercial website usage; these items are: "It's convenient to use"(0.697), "I can get what I want for less effort"(0.735), "I can use it anytime, anywhere"(0.643), "To decide the product or service should I buy"(0.650), and "It is an easy way to make shopping"(0.705).
- (3) Social interaction motives: Respondents were asked four items to tap their convenience motives of commercial website usage; these items are: "To express about myself freely"(0.707), "To meet people with my interests"(0.759), "To interact with the source of product or service directly"(0.747), and "To keep up with what's going on"(0.668).
- (4) Entertainment motives: Respondents were asked five items to tap their convenience motives of commercial website usage; these items are: "To pass time" (0.715), "I just like to surf the commercial websites"(0.670),"It's enjoyable" (0.834), "It's entertaining" (0.804), and "It's a habit"(0.613).

To measure gratifications obtained – or what respondents feel that they actually gained from the experience of using these sites – the researchers used the same scale, but worded somewhat differently. In this case, items were worded to measure the perceived benefit the respondent gained from the experience of using commercial websites. Gratifications obtained were measured similar to Palmgreen, Wenner & Rayburn, (1980); since they attempted to investigate the relationship between the motives and gratifications obtained from networking evening news programs.

The items that were used to measure motives and Go from commercial websites are relating to the uses and motives for using the Internet included those from previous Internet uses and gratifications studies (e.g., Eighmey, 1997; Ko, Cho & Roberts, 2005; Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999; Luo, 2002; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000).

■ Attitudes measurement

Subjects responded to a series of five positively worded statements about commercial website use with a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The researcher used items from a study performed by Ko, Cho, and Roberts (2005) to tap into respondents' general attitudes about using commercial websites. Subjects responded to a series of five positively worded statements about commercial website use with a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). These five statements are (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005, p.63):

1. These websites build a relationship with me
2. I would like to visit these websites again
3. I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites
4. I feel comfortable in surfing these websites
5. I would rate these sites as one of the best.

The researcher ignored the sixth statement "This site is a good place to spend my time" because it is already mentioned in the measure of motives and gratifications.

■ Usage measurement

There are many studies about Internet (e.g., Korgaonkar & Wolin 1999; Luo, 2002; Ko, Cho & Roberts, 2005; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000) that used item or statement "the number of hours per week spent on the week" only to measure the web usage, and the researcher adopted this item to measure commercial websites usage among German and Egyptian users.

4.4 Data collection

The principal data collection tool was online questionnaire. Uses and gratifications researchers came to realize that they were studying audience without content (Watson, 1998), and to get rid of this criticism, the researcher analyzed commercial websites that were visited by German and Egyptian users, besides studying uses and gratifications of these websites among German and Egyptian users, so the second data collection tool is the content analysis of websites accessed by the sample of survey study.

■ Online Questionnaire

An online survey was the main tool of data collection was used to gather data from 648 German and Egyptian users, who visited commercial websites, identified for the study. The researchers used a convenience sample of Internet users who are directed to the survey through online announcements and hyperlinks. This is because the Internet poses a unique set of problems in guaranteeing a random sample of respondents. Unlike telephone and mail surveys where samples can be produced through census lists and random digit dialing, the web has no central registry of users, and e-mail addresses are so varied that they are virtually impossible to construct randomly (Jonson & Kaye, 2003). Since there is no mechanism for random sampling

the population of web users, nonprobability sampling is more appropriate when posting an online survey. Cyber surveys are commonly defined as volunteer samples because respondents are self-selected (Kaye & Johnson, 1999). Snowball sampling was used to obtain a higher response rate. The survey was administered in German and Arabic languages. A total of 648 people responded to the survey, 352 of them to the German version and 296 to the Arabic version.

The questionnaire was divided into six parts. Part one focused on the demographic data of the respondents, second part focused on the use and frequency of use Internet and commercial websites as well as culture differences among users in using commercial websites. The third part contained questions on motivations and gratifications of using commercial websites. Part four of online questionnaire focused on using online advertisements on commercial websites. Part five sought to explore the user's attitudes toward commercial websites, and part six contained questions about online shopping on this type of websites. The online questionnaire is presented on in Appendix I.

■ Content analysis

To compare the advertising presence and practice of commercial websites that were visited by German and Egyptian, a content analysis was conducted because it offers a method for examining manifest content of messages (Hwang, McMillan & Lee, 2003), so it is an ideal tool for the current study that examines commercial websites. The unit of analysis was homepage; since many researchers (e.g., Ha, 2003; Ha & James 1998; Zhou, 2004) selected homepage as the sampling unit because "it is the most visible page of the site with highest traffic. Also by analyzing the homepage only, the researcher could control for the large variation of site sizes in web sites" (Ha, 2003, p.29), "by using the home page as the unit of analysis, websites of varying sizes can be more effectively compared" (Zhou, 2004, p.22), and "most visitors to a website decide whether they will continue to browse a site based on their impressions of its homepage" (Ha & James 1998, p. 467). For these reasons, the researcher used the homepage as the unit of analysis.

Content analysis of sites visited by sample was employed to better understand the nature of the content being consumed. For selecting the sample of visited commercial websites, the researcher used one question (question number 14, see Appendix I) of online questionnaire which is "What are names of major commercial websites do you visit?" and then the researchers collected and analyzed these visited websites. This tool was adopted from Auter and Mahmoud's (2009) study about the characteristics of commercial websites, but it was developed to contain more categories such as online order, online transaction, comment, job placement, user groups or community, online chatting and the relation between company name and it's online address (See Appendix II).

Of the initial 252 visited commercial websites by the sample of German and Egyptian users, a total of 248 websites were content analyzed. Four websites had to be removed from the study due to technical errors involved in coding the sites. Sixty – seven point three percent (167) websites were visited by the German users, and eighty-one websites (32.7%) were visited by Egyptian users.

Two graduate students and two of the researchers reviewed and coded the collected commercial website homepages. Websites homepages were coded for the type and quantity of contact information available, type and quantity of online shopping opportunities offered, number and placement of ads on the page, and type of advertiser sponsoring each ad.

Individual ads were coded for the type and quantify of formatting characteristics as well as the type and quantity of features incorporated in the ad (See Appendix II for content analysis).

4.5 Reliability of questionnaire measurements and content analysis

Evidence of the internal consistence of the constructs was found in this survey study. Cronbach's alpha was (.85) for all motives (23 items); Cronbach's alpha was (.78) for information motives (9 items), also (.78) for in convenience motives (5 items), (.75) for social interaction motives (4 items), and .81 for entertainment motives (5 items).

Attitude toward the commercial websites (5 items) also possessed sufficient reliability, as Cronbach's alphas were (.78). As well as, Cronbach's alpha was (.88) for all gratifications (23 items); Cronbach's alpha was (.82) for information gratifications (9 items), (.78) for in convenience gratifications (5 items), (.76) for social interaction gratifications (4 items), and (.84) for entertainment gratifications (5 items). All of these Cronbach's alpha results refer to the consistency of online questionnaire measurements.

To test the reliability of content analysis tool, two graduate students and two of the researchers reviewed and coded the collected commercial website homepages. Two coders are fluent in both German and English, and two are fluent in both Arabic and English. Two coders analyzed the websites homepages that were visited by German users and the other coders analyzed the websites homepages that were visited by Egyptian counterparts. A random sample of (50.4%) of the websites was examined to measure the reliability of content analysis. Inter – judge reliability was calculated by using percent agreement method; “A conceptual formula for percent agreement could be written as follows:

$$PAo = A/n$$

PAo = stands for proportion agreement observed, A is the number of agreements between two coders, and n is the total number of units the two coders have coded for test...this statistics range from .00 (no agreement) to 1.00 (perfect agreement)” (Neuendorf, 2002, p.149).

Percent agreement for commercial websites that were visited by German users:

$$PA_o = 78/84 = .93$$

Percent agreement for commercial websites that were visited by Egyptian users:

$$PA_o = 39/41 = .95$$

Overall reliability for the websites that were visited by German users was (.93) and overall reliability for the websites that were visited Egyptian counterparts was (.95) and this is an acceptable level of reliability.

4.6 Statistical analysis

All analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The researcher used independent sample t-test to examine the effect of the gender on overall motives of using commercial websites. The researcher used one-way ANOVA test to investigate the effects of the other demographic variables on motives of using these websites, and to examine the effects of motives, attitudes, and gratifications of the respondents on the consumers' time at these websites. One-way ANOVA test was also used to examine the effect of spent time at these websites on the obtained gratifications from them.

Person correlations were used to examine relationships among the motives, attitudes and gratifications of commercial websites. Factor analysis was also conducted to determine the motives of using these websites.

Cronbach's (alpha) was used to the internal consistence of the constructs of online questionnaire, and percent agreement was used to test the reliability of commercial websites that were visited by German and Egyptian users.

Chapter 5

Results of study

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of data on the uses and gratifications of the commercial websites among German and Egyptian users, as well as the content analysis of commercial websites that were visited by the sample of survey; results were aimed at answering a variety of research questions posed by the researcher. Additionally, several hypotheses were studied. This chapter is divided into three sections: first section about findings relating to the various survey questions is reported first, second about findings relating to testing of survey hypotheses, and the third section is relating to content analysis findings.

5.1 Questions of survey study

■ Demographic characteristics of the sample

A total of 648 people responded to the survey, 352 of them to the German version and 296 to the Arabic version.

Gender: The sample consisted of 294 male and 354 female, or 45.4% and 54.6% of the sample respectively. Fifty-three point seven percent (N=189) of the German survey respondents were male and 46.3% (N=163) were female. Thirty-five point five percent (N=105) of the Egyptian respondents were male and 64.5 % (N= 191) female.

Age: Respondents ranged in age between 17 and 50 with the average being 23.06 years. The most frequently reported age of respondents was 21. The average age of the German respondents was 22.74 with the most common response being 21. The mean age of the Egyptian respondents was 23.44 with the most common response 21 also.

Religion: Most of the sample reported being Muslim (N = 277, 42.7%). Twenty-nine point eight percent (N=193) reported having no religion, and Twenty-six point five (N=172) reported being Christian. The remainder stated that they professed other faiths. Fifty-four point eight (N=193) of the German respondents reported that they were not religious and forty-one point five percent (N=146) reported themselves as Christian. The remainder reported having other religions including Islam (N=13, 3.7%). Ninety-one point two percent (N =270) of Egyptian respondents reported their religion as Muslim and eight point eight percent (N = 26) reported themselves as Christian.

Education: Respondents varied in their educational status, ranging from prep and secondary school (N= 415, 64% of the sample) to college with post graduate education (N=233, 36% of the sample). Most of the German respondents reported having an elementary school education (prep or secondary school) (N = 312, 88.7%). Eleven point one percent (N=39) had completed a bachelor's degree, only one (.3%) held a master degree. Forty-nine point seven percent (N=147) of the Egyptian respondents reported having some college education, thirty-four point eight percent (N=103) reported having an elementary school education (Prep or secondary school). Eleven point two percent (N=33) held a master degree and 2% (N=6) had earned a PhD.

Job: The majority of the survey respondents were either students or working in education field (N=552, 85.2%). Four point eight percent (N=31) were workers in Media and Entertainment. Three point seven percent (N=24) were workers in the field of computer and electronics. One point five percent (N=10) of respondents were in governmental and public services. Most of the German respondents were either students or working in education field (N=308, 87.5%). Seventeen respondents (4.8 %) were working in media and entertainment field. three point seven percent (N=13) were working in the field of computer and electronics. Only 2.3% (N=8) were working in marketing, advertising, and public relations field. The remainder held other types of jobs. Most of Egyptian respondents also were either students or working in education field (N=244, 82.4%). fourteen respondents (N=4.7) were working in media and entertainment field. and 3.7% (N=11) were working in marketing, advertising, and public relations field. Only 3.4% (N=10) were working in government, military, and public services field.

Household income: The majority of respondents reported a monthly household income less than € 2000 Euro equivalent (N=348, 53.7%). Ten point two percent (N=66) reported a monthly household income from € 2000 to under €4000 Euro equivalent. Six point three reported a monthly household income more than € 6000 Euro equivalent. Three point two percent (N=21) from € 400 to under €6000 euro equivalent. Twenty six point five percent (N=172) of the respondents chose not to respond.

The majority of German respondents also reported a monthly household income less than € 2000 Euro (N=265, 75.3%).only one point four percent (N = 5) reported a monthly household income from € 2000 to under €4000Euro. Twenty-three percent (N=81) of the respondents chose not to respond. Twenty-eight percent (N=83) of the Egyptian respondents reported a monthly household income less than € 2000 Euro equivalent. Twenty point six percent (N=61) reported a monthly household income from € 2000 to under €4000 Euro equivalent. While forty-one (13.9%) of Egyptian sample earned € 6000 euro or more. Thirty point seven percent (N=91) of the respondents chose not to respond.

■ The characteristics of using the Internet

RQ2a. The time spent on Internet surfing?

Overall respondents reported that they spend an average of 20.92 hours per week surfing the Internet. German respondents were higher at 25.71 hours per week but Egyptian respondents reported that they spend 15.22 hours per week online.

RQ2b. Where do the users access the Internet in each country?

The majority of respondents reported using the Internet at home (N=558, 86.1%), and at work (N=120, 18.5%). Only 15.3% (N=99) used the Internet in free public stations such as libraries. Very few respondents used the Internet at school (N=50, 7.7%), or pay sites such as Internet cafés (N= 43, 6.6%). German respondents used the Internet at home (N=342, 97.2%) as well as at work (N=91, 25.9%). Thirty-seven

(10.5%) used it at school. While 3.4% (N=12) reported using pay locations to access the Internet. Only 1.7 (N= 6) used it at a free public site. The majority of Egyptian respondents used the Internet at home (N=216, 73 %). This was followed by free public sites (N=93, 31.4%), ten point five percent (N=31) used pay sites such as Internet cafes. Nine point eight percent (N=29) used the Internet at work. Only 4.4% (N=13) reported using it at school.

RQ2c. What the maximum speed users access in each country?

How fast people could connect to the Internet varied widely. The majority reported connecting at a high speed using cable modem or DSL (N=445, 68.7%). The next largest number of people were unsure how they were connected (N=134, 20.7%). Some respondents reported connecting the Internet using modem (N= 29, 4.5%) and ISDN (N= 15, 2.3%). The majority of German respondents reported connecting to the Internet at a high speed via DSL and cable modem (N=276, 78.4%). Thirty seven respondents (10.5%) did not know how fast they connected to the Internet. The remainder connected a variety of ways. Fifty-seven percent of the Egyptian sample (N=169) reported connecting to the Internet at a high speed via DSL and cable modem. Ninety seven respondents (32.8%) were unsure how they connected. The remainder connected a variety of ways.

■ The characteristics of using commercial websites in each country

RQ3a. The time spent on surfing commercial websites?

Respondents reported that they spend an average of 5.98 hours per week surfing the commercial websites. German respondents were higher at 6.32 hours per week; since Egyptian respondents reported that they spend an average of 5.58 hours per week surfing this type of websites.

RQ3b. What is the type of the most visited commercial websites?

Respondents were asked how often they visit the major types of commercial websites. Responses ranged from 1 (never use) to 5 (often use). Frequencies results revealed that overall, the top five most visited commercial websites were music (M = 3.48); paper products sites (M = 3.43); movie and TV sites (M = 3.38); Internet services (M = 3.04) and construction websites (M = 2.86). Least visited sites overall were electronics sites (M = 1. 52); insurance websites (M = 1.58); pornographic websites (M = 1.60); accounting (M = 1. 61), and hotels and resorts (M = 1. 93).

German respondents had somewhat different preferences in their choice of commercial websites. Their top choices were: paper products (M = 3.43); music sites (M = 3.32); bank sites (M = 3.28); movie and TV sites (M = 3.04) and Internet services sites (M =2.89).The sites they visited the least were: electronics sites (M = 1.25); accounting sites (M = 1.36) insurance (M = 1.46); advertising sites (M = 1.72) and pornographic sites (M = 1.73). Egyptian respondents to most often visited movie and TV sites (M = 3.78); music sites (M = 3.66); paper products sites (M = 3.42); Internet

services sites ($M = 3.22$); and construction websites ($M = 3.15$). Their least often visited sites were: pornographic websites ($M = 1.45$); banks websites ($M = 1.73$); insurance ($M = 1.74$); electronics ($M = 1.85$) and accounting sites ($M = 1.91$).

■ What are the motivations of using commercial websites in each country?

For overall sample, the greatest motivations from using commercial websites was socialization ($M = 2.90$). This was followed by entertainment ($M = 2.84$), convenience ($M = 2.09$) and information seeking ($M = 2.07$). The total sample's overall level of motivations was 2.38. For the German group, their greatest gratifications sought or motives were socialization ($M = 3.11$). This was followed by entertainment ($M = 2.91$); information seeking ($M = 2.07$) and convenience ($M = 1.94$). Overall, the German sample scored 2.41 on the gratifications sought scale. For Egyptian group, entertainment sought was the greatest motives ($M = 2.75$). This was followed by socialization ($M = 2.66$); convenience ($M = 2.27$); and information ($M = 2.07$). Their overall gratifications sought from commercial website use were 2.35.

Independent samples t-tests revealed a number of significant differences in the motivations by the German and Egyptian respondents. While motivations overall were not significantly different at the $p = .05$ level ($t = -1.212$, $df = 646$, $p = .226$), there were significant differences between the two groups regarding the following motivations: convenience ($t = 5.381$, $df = 646$, $p = .000$), socialization ($t = -6.624$, $df = 646$, $p = .000$), and entertainment ($t = -2.251$, $df = 646$, $p = .025$).

German respondents found socialization or social interaction to be significantly more important motives to use commercial websites than did their Egyptian counterparts. On the other hand, Egyptian respondents found entertainment sought to be most important motives to use these websites.

■ What are obtained gratifications from commercial websites in each country?

To measure gratifications obtained – or what respondents feel that they actually gained from the experience of using these sites – the researcher used the same scale, but worded somewhat differently. In this case, items were worded to measure the perceived benefit the respondent gained from the experience of using commercial websites.

Respondents generally felt that they had obtained social interaction by using commercial websites ($M = 2.72$) followed by entertainment ($M = 2.67$); convenience ($M = 2.19$) as well as information gathering ($M = 2.15$). The overall experience people had from using commercial websites was 2.34. For German respondents, socialization was utmost ($M = 2.84$) followed by entertainment ($M = 2.62$), information gathering ($M = 2.26$) and convenience ($M = 2.14$). Their overall score was 2.36. Egyptian respondents preferred entertainment ($M = 2.72$) over socialization ($M = 2.58$). They also preferred convenience ($M = 2.25$) over information gathering ($M = 2.03$). Their overall score on gratifications obtained from commercial website use was 2.31.

Independent samples t-tests revealed a two significant differences in the obtained gratifications by the German and Egyptian respondents. While gratifications overall were not significantly different at the $p = .05$ level ($t = -1.079$, $df = 646$, $p = .281$), there were significant differences between the two groups regarding the following two gratifications: information gathering ($t = -4.489$, $df = 646$, $p = .000$) and socialization ($t = -4.099$, $df = 646$, $p = .000$).

German respondents found socialization or social interaction to be significantly more important gratifications from using commercial websites than did their Egyptian counterparts. On the other hand, Egyptian respondents found entertainment sought to be most important gratifications from using these websites.

■ What are the attitudes toward using the commercial websites in each country?

Subjects responded to a series of five positively worded statements about commercial website use with a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The researcher used items from a study performed by Ko, Cho, and Roberts (2005) to tap into respondents' general attitudes toward using commercial websites (for more information, see chapter 4).

Respondents generally were positive about their experience of using commercial websites ($N = 648$, $M = 2.54$). Egyptian respondents ($N = 296$, $M = 2.63$) were slightly more positive about the experience of using commercial websites than German counterparts ($N = 352$, $M = 2.47$).

An independent-samples t-test indicated that there was a difference between German and Egyptian respondents in attitudes toward using commercial websites ($t = 2.881$, $df = 646$, $p = .004$), as well as specific differences in "I would like to visit these websites again" ($t = 7.989$, $df = 646$, $p = .000$), and "I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites" ($t = 5.003$, $df = 646$, $p = .000$). Although the German respondents had a somewhat positive attitude about using commercial websites, the Egyptian sample had more positive attitudes toward using the sites.

■ What are the characteristics of using the online ads on commercial websites in each country?

RQ7a. To what extent do the users interact with the advertisements on commercial websites?

To measure the degree of interaction between respondents and the individual ads that found on commercial websites, a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1='Never used' to 5= often use. This scale was worded to measure the benefit that respondents gained from the experience of using individual ads on commercial websites (for more information, see table 5-1).

Forms of interaction	Overall		German		Egyptian	
	Percent	Mean	Percent	Mean	Percent	Mean
Paying attention	59.6	2.17	55.1	1.91	64.9	2.48
Clicking	44.9	1.74	36.1	1.53	55.4	1.99
Purchasing	26.1	1.42	21.3	1.29	31.8	1.56

Table 5-1. Interaction with the individual ads found on commercial websites

Fifty-nine point six percent (N= 386) of overall respondents reported paying attention to ads on commercial websites (M=2.17). Egyptian respondents paid attention to ads on commercial websites (N=192, 64.9%, M=2.48) more than did their German counterparts (N=194, 55.1%, M=1.91).

Forty-four point nine percent (N= 291) of overall respondents reported clicking on ads of commercial websites (M=1.74). Egyptian respondents clicked on ads found on commercial websites (N= 164, 55.4%, M=1.99) more than did their German counterparts (N= 127, 36.1%, M=1.53). Twenty – six point one percent (N=169) of overall respondents reported purchasing items from ads found on commercial websites (M=1.42). Egyptian respondents purchasing items from ads found on commercial websites (N=90, 31.8%, M=1.56) more than did their German counterparts (N= 75, 21.3%, M=1.29). According to these results, the Egyptian respondents were more interactive with online ads on commercial websites than did their German counterparts, see figure (5-1).

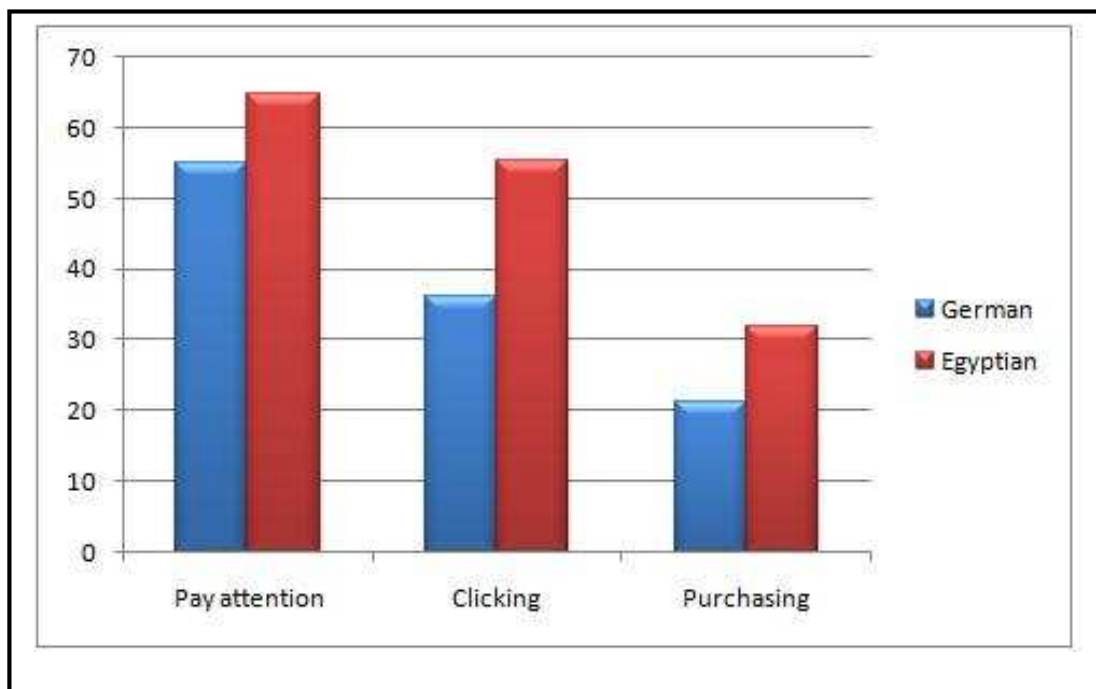


Figure 5-1. The comparison between German and Egyptian users' interaction with individual ads on commercial websites

RQ7b. what are the most frequent types of online ads have the users used on commercial websites?

The most frequent visited advertisements types for overall respondents were: books, information and magazine ads (M=.30), clothes advertisements (M=.29), entertainment (M= .24), business opportunities (M=.22), computer-related products & services (M=.21). For Egyptian respondents, the most frequent advertisements types were: Clothes advertisements (M = 38), books, information and magazine ads (M = .35), arts and sported ads (both M= 32), entertainment (M=.30). The most frequent advertisements types for German respondents were: books, information and magazine ads (M=.25), music and video (M= .24), clothes advertisements (M =.22), business opportunities, computer-related products & services and entertainment (M = .19) for each item.

■ **To what extent do the users benefit from the shopping utility offered by commercial websites?**

RQ8a. Do Egyptian users make a lower level of online purchases than German users do?

For overall respondents, Four hundred thirteen (63.7%) respondents had gained online shopping utility. For German respondents, Ninety-six point three percent (N = 339) of German respondents used shopping utility of commercial websites but only twenty five percent (N=74) of Egyptian respondents reported buying products and service online, see figure (5-2).

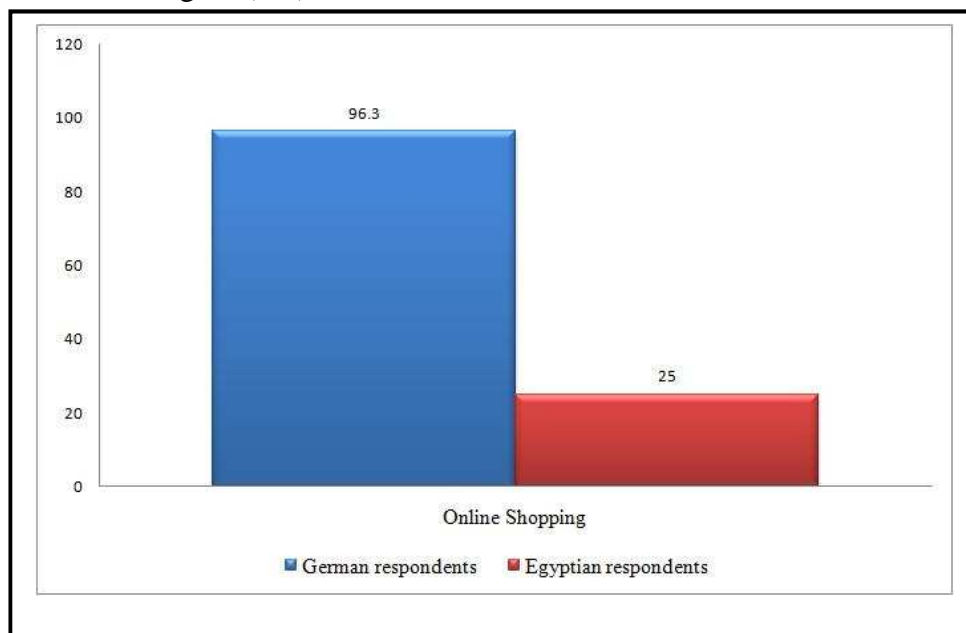


Figure 5-2. The comparison between German and Egyptian users' purchasing online from commercial websites

To measure the degree of online shopping usability, a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 0 ='Never used' to 5 = More than 20 often. This scale was worded to measure the benefit that respondents gained from the experience of online shopping on commercial websites. The overall experience respondents had gained this benefit (N=

648, $M=1.60$), the German respondents ($N=352$, $M=2.68$) were slightly more positive about the experience of using online shopping on commercial websites than Egyptian counterparts ($N = 296$, $M = .32$). An independent-samples t-test has also indicated that there was a significant difference between German and Egyptian respondents in using of online shopping ($t = -23.307$, $df = 646$, $p = .000$).

This result is related with the findings of Ko et al (2004); since they found cross-cultural differences in perceived risk of online shopping, and they found that the perceived risk is higher for non- or less experienced online shoppers than online shopper. For the current study, the Egyptian users are considered non- or less experienced online shoppers and German online shopper are more - experienced online shoppers.

RQ8b. What is the type of products or services that consumers did buy from commercial websites in each country?

Seventy seven respondents (11.9%) have reported that they bought many products and services from the Internet and they cannot remember or they did not mention the type of these products. And 336 respondents (51.85%) have reported that they have bought twenty four types of products and services. The most frequent products and services for overall respondents were: Books, newspaper and magazine ($M= .23$), electronic and electrical products ($M= .22$), clothes ($M=.17$), computer-related products and services ($M=.13$) cosmetics and booking the tickets for different purposes (both $M= .05$). For German sample, the most frequent products and services were: Books, newspaper and magazine ($M= .40$), electronic and electrical products ($M= .35$), clothes ($M=.26$), computer-related products and services ($M=.19$) booking the tickets for different purposes ($M= .08$), the most frequent online purchasing products and services for Egyptian sample were : Electronic and electrical products ($M= .06$), clothes and computer-related products and services (both $M=.05$), telecommunications ($M=.04$), and printed media (Books, newspaper and magazine) and cosmetics (both $M=.03$).

RQ8c. What are the obstacles of online shopping in each country?

Thirty-six point three ($N=235$) of overall respondents reported not purchasing from commercial websites or Internet at all, eighty-seven respondents (13.4%) of them did not mention any reason behind avoiding online purchasing. The rest of them ($N = 148$, 22.84%) have mentioned that the following reasons were behind their avoiding online purchasing:

“I would like to buy what I want from a store directly” ($N=39$, 6% of overall sample), “the prices of online shopping products or services are so expensive” ($N=33$, 5.1%), “I don’t trust the products and services of these websites” ($N=27$, 4.2%), “I don’t have visa cart or online account to buy” ($N=23$, 3.5%), “I want to save the security of my account and I don’t trust of the security of the websites” ($N= 10$, 1.5%), “I don’t trust these commercial websites” ($N=8$, 1.2%). Most of online shopping companies are outside my country and the price will be so expensive because of “transportation and customs” ($N=5$, .8%), “the ads of the products or services don’t clarify the benefits of

these products and services” (N=3, .5%), “the price of transportation is expensive”, “I let someone else buy for me”, “I just prefer to see the product online”, “I can’t test these products or services before I buy”, and “I have bad experiences with online shopping” (N=1, .2%) for each item. For Egyptian respondents, these reasons were more than reasons that were presented by German counterparts; this is because of the obstacles concerning online shopping and commercial websites in Egypt as well as the digital gap between the two countries:

For Egyptian respondents who did not purchase online, the reasons behind avoiding online purchasing were: “I would like to buy what I want from a store directly” (N=37, 12.5%), “the prices of online shopping products or services are so expensive” (N=33, 11.1%), I want to save the security of my account and I don’t trust of the security of the websites” (N= 27, 9.1%), “I don’t have visa card or online account to buy (N=23, 7.8%), “I don’t trust the products and services of these websites”, and “I don’t trust these commercial websites” (both N= 7, 2.4%). Most of online shopping companies are outside my country and the price will be so expensive because of transportation and customs (N=5, 1.7%), the ads of the products or services don’t clarify the benefits of these products and services (N=2, .7%), the price of transportation is expensive, and “I have bad experiences with online shopping” (both N=1, .3%). But for German counterparts, the reasons behind avoiding online purchasing were: “I want to save the security of my account, and I don’t trust of the security of the websites” (N=3, .9%), “I would like to buy what I want from a store directly” (N=2, .6%), “I can’t test these products or services before I buy”, the ads of the products or services don’t clarify the benefits of these products and services, “I let someone else buy for me”, “I just prefer to see the product online”, and “I don’t trust these commercial websites” (N=1, .3%) for each item.

■ What are the ethical and cultural reasons of avoiding some commercial websites? And what are the types of these websites?

Twenty-eight point four percent (N =184) of overall respondents reported avoiding some types of commercial websites because of ethical and cultural values. Egyptian respondents avoided these websites for cultural values (N = 130, 43.9%) more than did their German counterparts (N = 54, 15.3%). Pearson’s correlation revealed a strong relationship between the residence of respondents and avoiding commercial websites for cultural values ($r = .316, p = .000$).

German respondents justified their avoiding some commercial websites for more varied values than did their Egyptian counterparts; they avoided the following types of commercial websites: pornographic sites (N=14, 4.0%) fur clothing (N = 2, .6%) , Military and drugs, violence, Nazi websites, online brokerage, online brokerage, pages of cults, radical right-wing, racist, and rogue websites (N = 1,.3%) for each reason. But Egyptian respondents avoided the following two types of commercial websites only:

pornographic sites, wean sites and anti-Islam websites (N=116, 39.2%) commercial fraud (7, 2.4%) of Egyptian respondents.

■ What are the users' proposals (suggestions) to develop commercial websites?

The greatest respondents' suggestions to develop commercial websites was "offer free services/products (such as free download)" (N=417, 64.4%). This was followed by "present updated information about products/services" (N=406, 62.7%); "offer comparison with other company's products" (N=366, 56.5%); "facilitate online shopping through commercial websites" (N=356, 54.9%); "respect the cultural and ethical values" (N=283, 43.7%); "offer the external and internal links on a topic to explore the issue deeper and to navigate in the same page/document" (N=249, 38.4%); "present information using multimedia such as: video, audio, 3D animations" (N=240, 37.0%); and "offer the interactive features (e.g., email, chat) to contact with other users or/and the company" (N=200, 30.9%).

5.2 Testing of survey hypotheses

■ H1. There is a significant effect for demographic variables of users on their usage's motives of commercial websites.

To test the effect of demographic variables of respondents on their motives of using commercial websites, one t-test and four separate ANOVA tests were run; t-test for gender and four separate ANOVA tests for the other demographic characteristics (age, job, educational level, and householder income).

H1a. Gender is a significant factor in determining the usage's motives of commercial websites.

Although some existing studies (e.g., McMahan, Hovland, & McMillan, 2009; Sweetser & Kaid, 2008; Yoon, Cropp, & Cameron, 2002) found that the motivations of online consumer behavior differ according to gender. The current study did not find any difference between males and females in their overall motives of using commercial websites ($t = -.338, df = 646, p = .736$).

H1b. Age is a significant factor in determining the usage's motives of commercial websites.

Demographically, age is important predictor of online consumer's motivations (Leung, 2009; Rhee & Kim, 2004). One-way ANOVA test did reveal a significant effect for age on motives of using commercial websites [$F(28, 619) = 1.867, P = .005$], as well as a specific effect on social interactions motives [$F(28, 619) = 1.611, p = .025$].

H1c. Place of residence is a significant factor in determining the usage's motives of commercial websites.

In contrast to the findings of Rodgers, et al, 2005; since they found that there were differences in Internet motives among the four qualitatively different countries (United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Korea), the current study didn't find such these

differences between Germany and Egypt concerning the motivations of commercial websites' usage.

T-test did reveal no significant differences between German and Egyptian respondents in their overall motives of commercial websites' usage ($t = -1.212$, $df = 646$, $p = .226$). T-test did also reveal no significant differences between German and Egyptian respondents in their information's motives of using commercial websites ($t = .065$, $df = 646$, $p = .948$). However, a t-test did reveal a significant differences between German and Egyptian respondents in their all of convenience's motives ($t = 5.381$, $df = 646$, $p = .000$), social interaction's motives ($t = -6.624$, $df = 646$, $p = .000$) and entertainment's motives of using commercial websites ($t = -2.251$, $df = 646$, $p = .025$).

H1d. The religion of the users is a significant factor in determining their motives of using the commercial websites.

Results of one-way ANOVAs did reveal no significant effect for respondents' religion on their overall motives of commercial websites' usage [$F(3,644) = 1.324$, $p = .266$]. However, one-way ANOVAs revealed a significant effect of respondents' religion on their convenience motives [$F(3,644) = 7.830$, $p = .000$] and social interaction motives of commercial websites' usage [$F(3,644) = 16.194$, $p = .000$].

H1e. Educational level of users is a significant factor in determining their motives of using commercial websites.

Demographically, better education is important predictor of Internet motivations (Leung, 2009), and educational level is positively related to Internet use (Rhee & Kim, 2004). In this context, results of one-way ANOVAs revealed significant effects for the educational level of respondents on their overall motives of using commercial websites [$F(3,644) = 3.285$, $p = .020$]. The most significant effects of educational level was on convenience [$F(3,644) = 7.521$, $p = .000$], and information gathering motives [$F(3,644) = 3.700$, $p = .012$]. But there was no effects for the educational level of respondents on both of entertainment [$F(3,644) = .442$, $p = .723$], and socialization motives [$F(3,644) = 1.689$, $p = .168$], see table (5-2).

Motivations	Educational level			
	<i>df_{between}</i>	<i>df_{within}</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall motives	3	644	.285	.020*
Information motives	3	644	3.700	.012*
Convenience motives	3	644	7.521	.000*
Social interaction motives	3	644	1.689	.168
Entertainment motives	3	644	.442	.723

*Significant $p = .05$ or less.

Table 5-2. ANOVA results for educational level of respondents on their motives of using commercial websites

Post hoc analysis using the LSD technique indicated that significant differences occurred in overall motives, information motives, and convenience motives. The significant difference in both of overall motives and information motives can be attributed exclusively to the category of "the respondents who have prep school". "Prep

school” category was the highest compared to all other categories with the significant p -value at 0.01. It is followed by “the respondents who have master or PhD”, “the respondents who have high school graduate”, and “the respondents who have secondary school”.

Regarding convenience motives, the significant difference can be also attributed exclusively to the category of “the respondents who have secondary school”: “Secondary school” category was the lowest compared to all other categories with the significant p -value at 0.01. The highest category was “the respondents who have prep school”, It is followed by the “respondents who have master or PhD”, “respondents who have high school graduate”, and “the respondents who have secondary school”. (For a comparison of differences in overall motives, information motives and convenience motives, see table 5-3).

Dependent variable	Educational level (I)	Education level (J)	n	Mean difference (I-J)	Sig.
Overall motives	Prep school	Secondary school	412	.984	.005*
		High school graduate	186	.925	.009*
		Other (master or PhD)	47	.865	.017*
Information	Prep school	Secondary school	412	.968	.009*
		High school graduate	186	.887	.017*
		Other (master or PhD)	47	.787	.038*
Convenience	Secondary	Prep school	3	-1.010	.027*
		High school graduate	186	-.268	.000*
		Other (master or PhD)	47	-.308	.011*

Table 5-3. LSD Post Hoc comparison of the different motives of using commercial websites based on the educational level of respondents

H1f. Job of users is a significant factor in determining their motives of using commercial websites.

Results of one-way ANOVAs did reveal no significant effect for the job of respondents on their overall motives of using commercial websites [F (8,639) =1. 803, p = .074].

H1g. Users’ household income is a significant factor in determining their motives of using commercial websites.

Although Leung (2009) found that a higher monthly household income is important predictors of online consumers’ motivations. The researcher did not find any effect users’ household income on their overall motives of using commercial websites.

Results of one-way ANOVAs did reveal no significant effect for users’ household income on their overall motives of using commercial websites [F (4,643) =1 .970, p = .097]. However, one-way ANOVAs test revealed a significant effect on social interactions motives [F (4,643) =7 .148, p = .000].

In sum, the first hypothesis was partially supported: As predicted, both of age [F (28, 619) = 1.867, $P = .005$] and educational level of respondents [F (3,644) = 3.285, $p = .020$] have a significant effect on their overall motives of using commercial websites. But the gender ($t = -.338$, $df = 646$, $p = .736$), the religion of respondents [F (3,644) = 1.324, $p = .266$], householder income [F (4,643) = 1.970, $p = .097$], jobs [F (8,639) = 1.803, $p = .074$], and the place of residence of the respondents ($t = -1.212$, $df = 646$, $p = .266$) did not have any effect on their overall motives of using commercial websites $p > .05$. The results of this hypothesis meet the results of some existing studies (e.g., Leung, 2009; Rhee & Kim, 2004) concerning the effects of age and educational level on motivations of commercial websites' usage; since the results of this hypothesis found that there are a significant effect for both factors (age and educational level) on motivations of commercial websites' usage. On another hand, these hypothesis results disagreed with the result of other studies (e.g., Leung, 2009; McMahan, Hovland, & McMillan, 2009; Rhee & Kim, 2004; Rodgers, et al, 2005; Sweetser & Kaid, 2008; Yoon, Cropp, & Cameron, 2002) regarding the effects of gender, place of residence and the household income on motivations of commercial websites' usage; since the researcher did not find any significant effect for these demographic factors (gender, place of residence and the household income as well as religion and job) on motivations of commercial websites' usage.

■ H2. Consumers' motives of using commercial sites have a significant effect on the consumers' time spent on these websites.

To test the effects for respondents' motives of using commercial websites on their time spent on these websites, five separated ANOVA tests were run; one for general average of motives and four for each type of motives. The dependent variable was the average time spent on these websites and independent variables were overall motives average and the four measures of motives items.

As expected, a one-way ANOVA found overall motives to have a significant effect on the average time spent on these websites [F (3, 644) = 7.073, $p = 000$]. The most significant effect was social interaction motivations [F (4, 643) = 5.207, $p = 000$]. This was followed by entertainment motivations [F (4, 643) = 5.186, $p = 000$], information motivations [F (4, 643) = 5.021, $p = 001$], and convenience motivations [F (4, 643) = 3.450, $p = 008$] on the average time spent on these websites, see table (5-4).

Motivations	Time spent on commercial websites			
	<i>df_{between}</i>	<i>df_{within}</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall motives	3	644	7.073	.000*
Information motives	4	643	5.021	.001*
Convenience motives	4	643	3.450	.008*
Social interaction motives	4	643	5.207	.000*
Entertainment motives	4	643	5.186	.000*

Table 5-4. ANOVA results for motives effects on time spent on commercial websites

Post hoc analysis using the LSD technique indicated that significant differences occurred in the time spent on commercial websites based on the overall, socialization, and entertainment motives of using these websites. Although the ANOVA revealed a significant difference in information and convenience motives as well, but LSD post hoc analysis revealed no significantly different relationships. The significant difference in the time spent on commercial websites based on the overall motives can be attributed exclusively to the category of the respondents who are “strongly agree” with the motivations for commercial websites. “Strongly agree” category was the highest compared to all the other scale categories, with the significant p -value at 0.01, except “strongly disagree” category because there was no answer found in this category (N= 0).

The significant difference in the time spent on commercial websites based on both socialization, and entertainment motives of using these websites can be attributed exclusively to the category of the respondents who are “strongly agree” with both socialization and entertainment motives of using these websites. “Strongly agree” category was the highest compared to all the other scale categories, with the significant p -value at 0.01. (For a comparison of differences in the time spent on commercial websites by overall, socialization, and entertainment motives of using these websites, see table (5-5).

Dependent	Overall motives	Overall motives	n	Mean	Sig.
Time spent	Strongly agree (N= 33)	Agree	347	.471	.014*
		Neutral	257	.729	.000*
		Disagree	11	1.091	.003*
		Strongly disagree	0	-----	-----
	Socialization motives	Socialization			
	Strongly agree (N= 36)	Agree	160	.504	.010*
		Neutral	303	.695	.000*
		Disagree	130	.797	.000*
		Strongly disagree	19	.904	.003*
	Entertainment	Entertainment			
	Strongly agree (N= 43)	Agree	624	.504	.000 *
		Neutral	694	.695	.000*
Disagree		830	.797	.000*	
Strongly disagree		786	.904	.002*	

Table 5-5. LSD Post Hoc comparison of the time spent on commercial websites based on motives of these websites

The findings of this hypothesis agree with the basic assumption of uses and gratifications theory which is people choose to participate and select media or messages

from a variety of communication alternatives in response to their motivations (e.g., Carey & Kreiling, 1974; Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, 1974; Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1982; Rosengren, 1974; Rubin, 2002). As well as, these findings also agree with results of Internet uses and gratifications studies (e.g., Ko, Cho & Reborts, 2005; Luo, Remus, Chea, 2006; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Yoon, Cropp & Cameron, 2002); since these studies found that motivations of using the Internet have a significant effect on the time spent online. Likewise, the researcher found that the consumers' motivations of the commercial websites have a significant effect on their time spent on these websites.

■ H3. Motivations of using commercial websites are positively associated with the attitudes toward using these websites.

Pearson's correlation revealed a strong relationship between overall motives of using commercial websites and positive attitudes toward using these sites ($r = .257, p = .000$). The most significant predictor of overall motives was "I feel comfortable in surfing these websites" ($r = .249, p = .000$). This was followed by "I would like to visit these websites again" ($r = .216, p = .000$), "I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites" ($r = .207, p = .000$), "I would rate these sites as one of the best types" ($r = .193, p = .000$), and "these websites build a relationship with me" ($r = .169, p = .000$), see table (5-6).

Attitudes toward using commercial websites	Motivations	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall attitudes	.257	.000*
These Websites build a relationship with me	.169	.000*
I would like to visit these websites again	.216	.000*
I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites	.207	.000*
I feel comfortable in surfing these websites	.249	.000*
I would rate these sites as one of the best	.193	.000*

Table 5-6. The relationship between respondents' motives of using commercial websites and positive attitudes Items toward using these sites

The most significant predictor of positive attitudes toward using commercial websites was convenience motives ($r = .313, p = .000$). This was followed by entertainment ($r = .163, p = .000$), information gathering ($r = .149, p = .000$), and socialization ($r = .111, p = .005$), see table (5-7).

Motivations of the commercial websites	Attitudes	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Information motives	.149	.000*
Convenience motives	.313	.000*
Social interactions motives	.111	.005*
Entertainment motives	.163	.000*

Table 5-7. The relationship between respondents' motives items of using commercial websites and overall positive attitudes toward using these sites

H3a. Information seeking motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with attitudes toward using these websites.

Pearson's correlation revealed a strong relationship between information seeking motives of using the commercial sites and positive attitudes toward using these websites ($r = .149, p = .000$). The most significant predictor of information seeking motives was "I feel comfortable in surfing these websites" ($r = .192, p=.000$). This was followed by "I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites" ($r = .158, p=.000$), "I would rate these sites as one of the best types" ($r = .153, p=.000$), and "I would like to visit these websites again" ($r = .144, p=.000$). But Pearson's correlation analysis revealed no significant relationship between information seeking motives and "these websites build a relationship with me" item ($r = .023, p=.552$), see table (5-8).

Attitudes toward using commercial websites	Information motivations	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall attitudes	.149	.000*
These websites build a relationship with me	.023	.552*
I would like to visit these websites again	.144	.000*
I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites	.158	.000*
I feel comfortable in surfing these websites	.192	.000*
I would rate these sites as one of the best	.153	.000*

Table 5-8. The relationship between respondents' Information motives of using commercial websites and positive attitudes items toward using these sites

H3b. Convenience motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with attitudes toward these websites.

Pearson's correlation has also revealed a strong relationship between respondents' convenience motives of using commercial websites and positive attitudes toward the sites ($r = .313, p = .000$). The most significant predictor of convenience motives was "I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites" ($r = .304, p=.000$). This was followed by "I would like to visit these websites again" ($r = .303, p=.000$), "I feel comfortable in surfing these websites" ($r = .256, p=.000$), "I would rate these sites as one of the best types" ($r = .213, p=.000$), and "these websites build a relationship with me" ($r = .154, p=.000$), see table (5-9).

Attitudes toward commercial websites	Convenience motivations	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall attitudes	.313	.000*
These websites build a relationship with me	.154	.000*
I would like to visit these websites again	.303	.000*
I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites	.304	.000*
I feel comfortable in surfing these websites	.256	.000*
I would rate these sites as one of the best	.213	.000*

Table 5-9. The relationship between respondents' convenience motives of using commercial websites and positive attitudes items toward using these sites

H3c. Social interaction motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with attitude toward these websites.

Pearson's correlation has also revealed a strong relationship between respondents' social interaction's motivations of using the sites and their positive attitudes toward using commercial websites ($r = .111, p = .005$). The most significant predictor of social interaction's motives was "these websites build a relationship with me" ($r = .154, p=.000$). This was followed by "I would rate these sites as one of the best types" ($r = .118, p=.003$), and "I feel comfortable in surfing these websites" ($r = .105, p=.008$). But there was not a relationship between social interaction motives and both of "I would like to visit these websites again" ($r=.032, p=.409$), and "I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites" ($r = .047, p=.231$), see table (5-10).

Attitudes toward commercial websites	Socialization motivations	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall attitudes	.111	.005*
These websites build a relationship with me	.154	.000*
I would like to visit these websites again	.032	.409
I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites	.047	.231
I feel comfortable in surfing these websites	.105	.008*
I would rate these sites as one of the best	.118	.003*

Table 5-10. The relationship between respondents' socialization motives of using commercial websites and positive attitudes items toward using these sites

H3d. Entertainment motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with the attitudes toward using these websites.

Pearson's correlation has also revealed a strong relationship between respondents' entertainment motives of using commercial websites and their positive attitudes toward using these sites ($r = .163, p = .000$). The most significant predictor of entertainment motives was "I would rate these sites as one of the best types" item ($r = .149, p=.000$). This was followed by "I feel comfortable in surfing these websites" item ($r = .145, p=.000$), "these websites build a relationship with me" item ($r = .142, p=.000$), and "I would like to visit these websites again" ($r=.138, p=.000$). But there was no relationship between entertainment motivations of commercial websites and "I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites" item ($r = .015, p=.695$), see table (5-11).

Attitudes toward using commercial websites	Entertainment motivations	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall attitudes	.163	.000*
These websites build a relationship with me	.142	.000*
I would like to visit these websites again	.138	.000*
I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites	.015	.695
I feel comfortable in surfing these websites	.145	.000*
I would rate these sites as one of the best	.149	.000*

Table 5-11. The relationship between respondents' entertainment motives of using commercial websites and positive attitudes Items toward using these sites

The result of this hypothesis supports the result of Daugherty, Eastin & Bright's (2008) study; since they found that online consumer's motivation relates positively to his or her attitude toward using the Internet. Likewise, the researcher found that motivations of using commercial websites are positively associated with the attitudes toward using these websites.

■ H4. Obtained gratifications from commercial websites are positively associated with the attitudes toward these websites.

Pearson's correlation revealed a strong relationship between respondents' overall gratifications from using commercial websites and their overall positive attitudes toward using these sites ($r = .246, p = .000$). The most significant predictor of overall gratifications was "I feel comfortable in surfing these websites" ($r = .255, p = .000$). This was followed by "I would like to visit these websites again" ($r = .237, p = .000$), "I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites" ($r = .203, p = .000$), "I would rate these sites as one of the best types" ($r = .159, p = .000$), and "these websites build a relationship with me" ($r = .109, p = .005$), see table (5-12).

Attitudes toward using commercial websites	Gratifications	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall attitudes	.246	.000*
These websites build a relationship with me	.109	.005*
I would like to visit these websites again	.237	.000*
I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites	.203	.000*
I feel comfortable in surfing these websites	.255	.000*
I would rate these sites as one of the best	.159	.000*

Table 5-12. The relationship between respondents' overall gratifications of using commercial websites and positive attitudes' items toward using these sites

On the other hand, the most significant predictor of positive attitudes toward using commercial websites was "convenience gratifications" ($r = .220, p = .000$). This was followed by "entertainment gratifications" ($r = .210, p = .000$), "socialization gratifications" ($r = .191, p = .000$), and "information seeking gratifications" ($r = .150, p = .000$), see table (5-13).

Gratifications from commercial websites	Attitudes	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall gratifications	.246	.000*
Information gratifications	.150	.000*
Convenience gratifications	.220	.000*
Social interactions gratifications	.191	.000*
Entertainment gratifications	.210	.000*

Table 5-13. The relationship between respondents' gratifications items of using commercial websites and overall positive attitudes toward using these sites

H4a. Information gratifications of the commercial websites are positively associated with attitudes toward using these websites.

Pearson's correlation revealed a strong relationship between respondents' information gratifications of using commercial websites and positive attitudes toward commercial websites ($r = .150, p = .000$). The most significant predictor of information gratifications was "I feel comfortable in surfing these websites" item ($r = .190, p = .000$). This was followed by "I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites" ($r = .149, p = .000$), "I would like to visit these websites again" ($r = .141, p = .000$), and "I would rate these sites as one of the best types" ($r = .128, p = .001$). But Pearson's correlation analysis revealed no significant relationship between overall information gratifications and "these websites build a relationship with me" item ($r = .057, p = .147$), see table (5-14).

Attitudes toward commercial websites	Information gratifications	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall attitudes	.150	.000*
These websites build a relationship with me	.057	.147
I would like to visit these websites again	.141	.000*
I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites	.149	.000*
I feel comfortable in surfing these websites	.190	.000*
I would rate these sites as one of the best	.128	.001*

Table 5-14. The relationship between respondents' information gratifications of using commercial websites and overall positive attitudes toward using these sites

H4b. Convenience gratifications of the commercial websites are positively associated with attitudes toward using these websites.

Pearson's correlation has also revealed a strong relationship between respondents' convenience gratifications of using commercial websites and their positive attitudes toward using these sites ($r = .220, p = .000$). The most significant predictor of convenience gratifications was "I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites" item ($r = .231, p = .000$), "This was followed by "I would like to visit these websites again" ($r = .217, p = .000$), "I feel comfortable in surfing these websites" ($r = .208, p = .000$), "I would rate these sites as one of the best types" ($r = .149, p = .000$). But Pearson's correlation analysis revealed no significant relationship

between convenience gratifications and “these websites build a relationship with me” item ($r = .027, p=.493$), see table (5-15).

Attitudes toward using commercial websites	Convenience gratifications	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall attitudes	.220	.000*
These websites build a relationship with me	.027	.493
I would like to visit these websites again	.217	.000*
I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites	.231	.000*
I feel comfortable in surfing these websites	.208	.000*
I would rate these sites as one of the best	.149	.000*

Table 5-15. The relationship between respondents’ convenience gratifications of using commercial websites and overall positive attitudes toward these sites

H4c. Social interaction gratifications of the commercial websites are positively associated with attitudes toward using these websites.

Pearson’s correlation revealed a strong relationship between respondents’ social interaction’s gratifications of using commercial websites and their positive attitudes toward using these sites ($r = .191, p = .000$). The most significant predictor of social interaction’s gratifications was “I feel comfortable in surfing these websites” ($r = .186, p=.000$). This was followed by “I would rate these sites as one of the best” ($r = .176, p=.000$), “I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites” ($r = .136, p=.001$) “I would like to visit these websites again” ($r = .128, p=.001$) and “these websites build a relationship with me” ($r = .118, p=.003$), see table (5-16).

Attitudes toward using commercial websites	Socialization gratifications	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall attitudes	.190	.000*
These Websites build a relationship with me	.118	.003*
I would like to visit these websites again	.128	.001*
I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites	.136	.001*
I feel comfortable in surfing these websites	.176	.000*
I would rate these sites as one of the best	.186	.000*

Table 5-16. The relationship between respondents’ socialization gratifications of using commercial websites and overall positive attitudes toward using these sites

H4d. Entertainment gratifications of the commercial websites are positively associated with the attitudes toward using these websites.

Pearson’s correlation has also revealed a strong relationship between positive attitudes toward using commercial websites and entertainment gratifications received from using these sites ($r = .210, p=.000$). The most significant predictor of entertainment gratifications was “I would like to visit these websites again” item ($r=.201, p=.000$). This was followed by “I feel comfortable in surfing these websites” ($r = .191, p=.000$), “these websites build a relationship with me” ($r = .163, p=.000$), “I would rate these sites as one of the best” ($r = .144, p=.000$), and “I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites” item ($r = .125, p=.001$), see table (5-17).

Attitudes toward using commercial websites	Entertainment gratifications	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall attitudes	.210	.000*
These websites build a relationship with me	.163	.000*
I would like to visit these websites again	.201	.000*
I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites	.125	.001*
I feel comfortable in surfing these websites	.191	.000*
I would rate these sites as one of the best	.144	.000*

Table 5-17. The relationship between respondents' entertainment gratifications of using commercial websites and overall positive attitudes toward using these sites

The result of this hypothesis agrees with the results of some studies (e.g., Luo, 2002; Thorson & Rodgers, 2006); since they found that the users' gratifications obtained from the websites are positively associated with their attitudes toward these websites. And the current study found that the users' gratifications obtained from the commercial websites are positively associated with their attitudes toward these websites.

■ H5. Motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with obtained gratifications.

Pearson's correlation revealed a strong relationship between overall motives of using commercial websites and overall obtained gratifications from using these sites ($r = .618, p = .000$). The most significant predictor of overall motives of using commercial websites was "information gathering gratifications" ($r = .520, p = .000$). This was followed by "convenience gratifications" ($r = .428, p = .000$), "socialization gratifications" ($r = .425, p = .000$), and "entertainment gratifications" ($r = .370, p = .000$), see table (5-18).

Obtained gratifications from commercial websites	Motivations	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall gratifications	.618	.000*
Information gratifications	.520	.000*
Convenience gratifications	.428	.000*
Social Interactions gratifications	.425	.000*
Entertainment gratifications	.370	.000*

Table 5-18. The relationship between respondents' overall motivations of using commercial websites and Gratifications Items from these sites

On the other side, the most significant predictor of overall gratifications obtained from using commercial websites was "information gathering motives" ($r = .501, p = .000$). This was followed by "convenience motives" ($r = .445, p = .000$), "socialization motives" ($r = .400, p = .000$), and "entertainment motives" ($r = .384, p = .000$), see table (5-19).

Motivations of the commercial websites	Gratifications	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall motives	.618	.000*
Information motives	.501	.000*
Convenience motives	.445	.000*
Social interactions motives	.400	.000*
Entertainment motives	.384	.000*

Table 5-19. The Relationship between respondents' motivations items of using commercial Websites and overall gratifications items from these sites

H5a. Information seeking motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with information gathering from these websites.

Pearson's correlation revealed a strong relationship between Information seeking motivations of the commercial websites and obtained information gathering from these websites ($r = .530, p = .000$).

H5b. Convenience motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with the obtained convenience gratifications from these websites.

Pearson's correlation revealed a strong relationship between convenience motivations of the commercial websites and obtained convenience gratifications from these websites ($r = .548, p = .000$).

H5c. Social Interaction motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with the obtained social interaction gratifications from these websites.

Pearson's correlation revealed a strong relationship between social interaction motivations of the commercial websites and obtained social interaction gratifications from these websites ($r = .476, p = .000$).

H5d. Entertainment motivations of the commercial website are positively associated with the entertainment gratifications from these websites.

Pearson's correlation revealed a strong relationship between entertainment seeking motivations of the commercial websites and obtained entertainment gathering from these websites ($r = .623, p = .000$).

The previous studies (e.g., Cheung & Lee, 2009; Leung, 2009; Palmgreen, Wenner & Rayburn, 1980; Rayburn & Palmgreen, 1984) found that there was a highly correlation between GS (motives) measures and its corresponding GO measures. And the findings of this hypothesis support this result; since users' motivations of the commercial websites are positively associated with their obtained gratifications from these websites.

■ H6. Attitudes toward using commercial websites have a significant effect on the time spent on these websites.

ANOVA was used to test hypothesized relationships between consumers' attitudes toward using commercial websites and consumers' time spent on these websites. Six separate ANOVAs tests were run. One for general average of attitudes and five for each measure of attitudes values. The Dependent variable was the average time spent on these websites. Independent variables were the five measures of attitudes values as well as the average of overall attitudes.

As expected, a one-way ANOVA found positive attitudes to have a significant effect on the average time spent on these websites [$F(4, 643) = 7.279, p=000$]. The most significant effect was "I feel comfortable in surfing these websites" [$F(4, 643) = 5.613, p=000$]. This was followed by "I would like to visit these websites again" [$F(4, 643) = 5.179, p=000$], "I would rate these sites as one of the best" [$F(4, 643) = 3.928, p=004$], "These sites build a relationship with me" [$F(4, 643) = 3.274, p=011$]. But results of One-way ANOVAs did reveal no significant effect for "I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites" item on the time spent on commercial websites [$F(4, 643) = 2.098, p=080$] only, see table (5-20).

Attitudes toward using commercial websites	Time spent on these websites			
	<i>df_{between}</i>	<i>df_{within}</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall attitudes	4	643	7.279	.000*
These websites build a relationship with me	4	643	3.274	.011*
I would like to visit these websites again	4	643	5.179	.000*
I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites	4	643	2.098	.080
I feel comfortable in surfing these websites	4	643	5.613	.000*
I would rate these sites as one of the best	4	643	3.928	.004*

Table 5-20. ANOVA results for attitudes effects on "time spent on commercial websites"

Post hoc analysis using the LSD technique indicated that significant differences occurred in the time spent on commercial websites based on the overall attitudes, and three separated items of attitudes' measurement toward using these websites. Firstly, the significant difference in the time spent on commercial websites based on the overall attitudes can be attributed exclusively to the category of the respondents who are "very satisfied" about commercial websites. "Very satisfied" category was the highest compared to all the other categories except "satisfied" category, p -value $> .05$.

Second, the significant difference in the time spent on commercial websites based on "these sites build a relationship with me" item, as one of attitudes' measurement items, can be attributed exclusively to the category of the respondents who are "satisfied" about commercial websites. "Satisfied" category was the highest compared to the other categories except "very satisfied" category, p -value $> .05$. Finally, the significant difference in the time spent on commercial websites based on both "I feel comfortable in surfing these websites" and "I would rate these sites as one of the best", as two items of attitudes' measurement items, can be attributed exclusively to the

category of the respondents who are “very satisfied” about commercial websites. “Very satisfied” category was the highest compared to all the other categories except “satisfied” category, p -value $> .05$. For a comparison of differences in the time spent on commercial websites by attitudes, see table (5-21).

Time spent	Overall attitudes	Overall attitudes	n	Mean	Sig.
	Very satisfied (N= 28)	Satisfied	288	.360	.083
		Neutral	291	.742	.000*
		Dissatisfied	35	.700	.009*
		Strongly dissatisfied	6	1.071	.023*
	These sites build a relationship with me	These sites build a relationship with me			
	Satisfied (N= 168)	Very Satisfied	49	.325	.060
		Neutral	332	.301	.003*
		Dissatisfied	67	.386	.012*
		Strongly dissatisfied	32	.493	.016*
	I feel comfortable in surfing these Websites	I feel comfortable in surfing these Websites			
	Very satisfied (N= 80)	Satisfied	251	.259	.056
		Neutral	246	.530	.000*
		dissatisfied	56	.386	.001*
		Strongly dissatisfied	15	.493	.018*
	I would rate these sites as one of the best	I would rate these sites as one of the best			
	Very satisfied (N= 73)	Satisfied	142	.234	.111
		Neutral	330	.395	.004*
		Dissatisfied	66	.498	.006*
		Strongly dissatisfied	37	.715	.001*

Table 5-21. LSD Post Hoc comparison of the time spent on commercial websites based on attitudes of using these websites

Some studies (e.g., Cha, 2009; LaRose, Mastro & Eastin, 2001) found that expectations and attitudes toward Internet outcomes will be related to Internet usage including the time spent on these websites, and Luo (2002) found that the users’ time spent on Internet sites is positively associated with their attitudes toward these websites; since the attitudes toward the Internet will be related to Internet use including the time spent online; since perceived credibility and benefit will be positively related to this use, while perceived alienation and negative effect of the Internet will be negatively related to this use (Rhee & Kim, 2004). In this context, this hypothesis result detected the

effects of attitude towards Internet sites on the time spent on these websites; since the current study found that attitudes toward using commercial websites have a significant effect on the time spent on these websites.

■ H7. The consumers' time spent on commercial websites have a significant effect on consumers' gratifications from these websites.

In order to measure the effect of respondents' time spent on commercial websites on their gratifications from these websites, one-way ANOVAs test was run; the independent variable was the average time spent on these websites. And dependent variables were overall obtained gratifications and the four measures of gratifications items.

As expected, a one-way ANOVAs found the average time spent on these websites to have a significant effect on the overall obtained gratifications from commercial websites [$F(4, 643) = 7.000, p=000$]. The most significant effect of respondents' time spent on commercial websites on their gratifications from these websites was on information gratifications [$F(4, 643) = 4.439, p=002$]. This was followed by the effects on entertainment gratifications [$F(4, 643) = 4.107, p=.003$], and social interaction gratifications [$F(4, 643) = 3.618, p=006$]. But ANOVAs test did reveal no significant effect for convenience gratifications [$F(4, 643) = 1.771, p=.133$], see table (5-22).

Obtained gratifications	Time spent on these websites			
	<i>df_{between}</i>	<i>df_{within}</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall gratifications	4	643	7.000	.000*
Information gratifications	4	643	4.439	.002*
Convenience gratifications	4	643	1.771	.133
Social Interaction gratifications	4	643	3.618	.006*
Entertainment gratifications	4	643	4.107	.003*

Table 5-22. ANOVA results for time spent on commercial websites effects on obtained gratifications from these websites

Post hoc analysis using the LSD technique indicated that significant differences occurred in overall, information and entertainment gratifications. Although the ANOVA revealed a significant difference in social interaction gratifications as well, but LSD post hoc analysis revealed no significantly different relationships. The significant difference in overall gratifications from commercial websites can be attributed exclusively to the category of the respondents who use commercial websites more than 20 hour weekly. "More than 20 hour weekly" category was the lowest compared to (1-5), (6 -10), and (11-15) hours weekly. But there was no statistically significant difference between "more than 20" and (16 - 20) hours weekly. On the other hand, (from 1 to 5 hours) category was the highest compared to (6-10), (11-15), and "more than 20" hours weekly.

Regarding information gratifications, the significant difference can be attributed exclusively to the category of "respondents who use commercial websites from 1 to 5 hours weekly". (1-5) hours weekly category was the highest compared to (6 -10), (16 -

20), and “more than 20 hours” weekly. But there was no statistically significant difference between (1-5) hours and (11-15) hours weekly. For entertainment gratifications, “more than 20 hours weekly” category was the lowest compared to (1-5), (6 -10), and (15 -20) hours weekly. But there was no statistically significant difference between “more than 20”and (11 - 15) hours weekly. On the other hand, (from 1 to 5 hours) category was the highest compared to (6 -10), (16 -20), and more than 20 hours weekly. (For a comparison of differences in overall, information, and entertainment gratifications for commercial websites by the time spent on these websites, see table 5-23).

Dependent variables	Time per week	Time per week	n	Mean	Sig.
Overall gratifications	More than 20 hours	(1-5)	470	-.466	.000*
		(6-10)	99	-.249	.038*
		(11-15)	27	-.353	.024*
		(16-20)	17	-.234	.195
Information	(1-5) hours	(6-10)	99	.195	.007*
		(11-15)	27	.104	.128
		(16-20)	17	.391	.015*
		More than 20	35	.301	.008*
Entertainment	More than 20 hours	(1-5)	470	-.609	.000*
		(6-10)	99	-.502	.004*
		(11-15)	27	-.404	.077
		(16-20)	17	-.592	.025*

Table 5-23. LSD Post Hoc comparison of the different gratifications obtained from commercial websites based on the time spent on these websites

There is a positive relationship between time spent on using mass medium and gratification-utilities obtained from these media (Dimmick, et al, 2007). Concerning the Internet as medium, if users have a positive gratifications obtained from Internet use, they can easily adopt it and spent more time on using it. But for those who are indifferent or have negative outcomes from using this medium, it is very difficult to adopt (Rhee & Kim, 2004).

In contrast to these results, this study found that the consumers' time spent on commercial websites have a significant effect on consumers' gratifications from these websites; this means that the consumers who spend more time on using commercial websites, will obtain more gratifications than those who spend less time on using these websites.

■ H8. Consumers' gratifications from commercial websites have a significant effect on the consumers' time spent on these websites.

ANOVA was also used to test effects of consumers' gratifications from commercial websites on consumers' time spent on these websites. Five separate ANOVA tests were run. One for general average of gratifications and four for each measure of gratifications types. The dependent variable was the average time spent on these websites. Independent variables were overall gratifications and the four measures of gratifications items. As expected, a one-way ANOVA found general gratifications to have a significant effect on the average time spent on these websites [F (3, 644) = 9.269, $p=000$]. The most significant effect was for "information gratifications" [F (3, 644) = 4.812, $p=003$] on the average time spent on these Websites. This was followed by entertainment gratifications [F (4, 643) = 4.045, $p=.003$], and social interaction gratifications [F (4, 643) = 2.599, $p=.035$]. But ANOVA test did reveal no significant effect for convenience gratifications [F (4, 643) = 1.571, $p=.180$] on the average time spent on these websites, see table (5-24).

Obtained gratifications	Time spent on these websites			
	$df_{between}$	df_{within}	F	p
Overall gratifications	3	644	9.269	.000*
Information gratifications	3	644	4.812	.003*
Convenience gratifications	4	643	1.571	.180
Social Interaction gratifications	4	643	2.599	.035*
Entertainment gratifications	4	643	4.045	.003*

Table 5-24. ANOVA results for obtained gratifications effects on the time on commercial websites

Post hoc analysis using the LSD technique indicated that significant differences occurred in the time spent on commercial websites based on the overall, information, socialization and entertainment gratifications obtained from these websites. Firstly, the significant difference in the time spent on commercial websites based on the overall gratifications can be attributed exclusively to the category of the respondents who are "very satisfied" about commercial websites. "Very satisfied" category was the highest compared to all the other scale categories, with the significant p -value at 0.01, except "strongly dissatisfied" category because there was no answer found in this category (N= 0). Second, the significant difference in the time spent on commercial websites based on the information gratifications can be attributed exclusively to the category of the respondents who are "very satisfied" about commercial websites. "Very satisfied" category was the highest compared to "neutral" and "dissatisfaction", with the significant p -value at 0.01. But there was no statistically significant difference between "very satisfied" and both of "strongly dissatisfied" category, because there was no answer found in "strongly dissatisfied" category (N= 0), and "satisfied" category, p -value > .05. Third, the significant difference in the time spent on commercial websites based on the socialization gratifications can be attributed exclusively to the category of the respondents who are "satisfied" about commercial websites. "Satisfied" category

was the highest compared to “neutral” and “dissatisfaction”, with the significant p -value at 0.01. But there was no statistically significant difference between “satisfied” and both of “very dissatisfied” and “strongly dissatisfied” categories, p -value $> .05$. Finally, the significant difference in the time spent on commercial websites based on the entertainment gratifications can be attributed exclusively to the category of the respondents who are “very satisfied” about commercial websites. “Very satisfied” category was the highest compared to all the other scale categories. (For a comparison of differences in the time spent on commercial websites by overall, information, and entertainment gratifications from these websites, see table 5-25).

Time spent	Overall gratifications	Overall gratifications	<i>n</i>	Mean difference	Sig.	
	Very satisfied (N= 40)	Satisfied	360	.642	.000*	
		Neutral	236	.865	.000*	
		Dissatisfied	12	1.225	.000*	
		Strongly dissatisfied	0	-----	-----	
	Information gratifications	Information gratifications				
	Very satisfied (N= 86)	Satisfied	386	.285	.056	
		Neutral	166	.482	.000*	
		Dissatisfied	10	.837	.001*	
		Strongly dissatisfied	0	----	-----	
	Socialization gratifications	Socialization gratifications				
	Satisfied (N= 194)	Very Satisfied	43	.059	.743	
		Neutral	320	.229	.018*	
Dissatisfied		81	.291	.039*		
Strongly Dissatisfied		10	.586	.090		
Entertainment gratifications	Entertainment gratifications					
Very satisfied (N= 55)	Satisfied	219	.338	.034*		
	Neutral	285	.532	.001*		
	Dissatisfied	66	.630	.001*		
	Strongly dissatisfied	23	.572	.030*		

Table 5-25. LSD Post Hoc comparison of the time spent on commercial websites based on gratifications from these websites

There is a positive relationship between time spent on using mass medium and gratification-utilities obtained from these media (Dimmick, et al, 2007). Concerning the Internet as medium, if users have a positive gratifications obtained from Internet use, they can easily adopt it and spent more time on using it. But for those who are indifferent or have negative outcomes from using this medium, it is very difficult to adopt (Rhee & Kim, 2004). For example, convenience shopping orientation increases the usage of convenience shopping features on e-commerce websites (Kim & LaRose, 2004). In this regard, the current study has found that consumers' gratifications from commercial websites have a significant effect on the consumers' time spent on these websites; this means that the consumers who obtain more gratifications from using commercial websites, spend more time on these websites more than those who spend less time on using these websites.

■ **H9. There is a significant difference between German and Egyptian consumer's attitudes toward using commercial websites.**

In order to examine the difference between German and Egyptian consumer's attitudes toward using commercial websites, Independent samples t-tests had been occurred. There were significant differences between the Egyptian and German groups regarding overall attitudes ($t = 2.881$, $df = 646$, $p = .004$), and the following two attitudes items: "I would like to visit these websites again" ($t = 7.989$, $df = 646$, $p = .000$), and "I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites" ($t = 5.003$, $df = 646$, $p = .000$). But there were no differences between the two groups regarding the other attitudes items: "I would rate these sites as one of the best" ($t = -.032$, $df = 646$, $p = .975$). "I feel comfortable in surfing these websites" ($t = .040$, $df = 646$, $p = .968$), and "These sites build a relationship with me", ($t = .058$, $df = 646$, $p = .954$), $p > .05$, see table (5-26).

Attitudes toward using commercial websites	Country (Germany or Egypt)		
	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall attitudes	2.881	646	.004*
These websites build a relationship with me	.058	646	.954
I would like to visit these websites again	7.989	646	.000*
I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites	5.003	646	.000*
I feel comfortable in surfing these websites	.040	646	.968
I would rate these sites as one of the best	-.032	646	.975

Table 5-26. T-test results on the Egyptian and German consumer's attitudes toward websites

There are strong effects for cultural background on attitudes toward media usage including the Internet; some studies (e.g., Campbell, 2007; Li & Kirkup, 2007) found that there is a significant effect for cultural background in the way regarded computing activities and using the Internet. In this context, this hypothesis also found that there are the effects for culture (German and Egyptian) on attitudes toward commercial websites;

since the researcher found that there is a significant difference between German and Egyptian consumer's attitudes toward using commercial websites.

Depending on the results of survey study, the researcher presents new model to clarify the uses and gratifications of commercial websites (as the most important format of online advertising) with respecting the cultural differences, see figure (5-3).

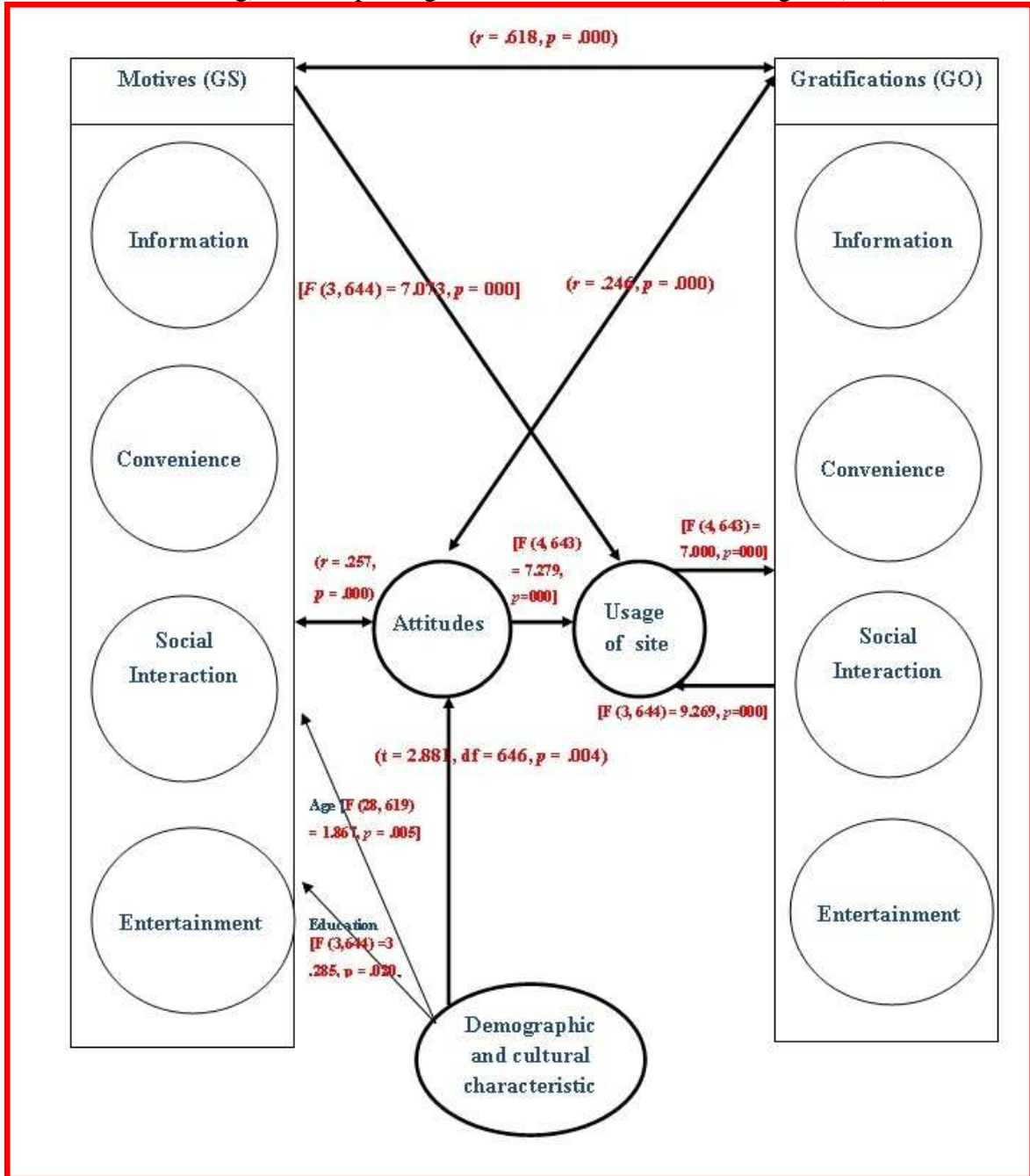


Figure 5-3. Uses and gratifications model of commercial websites

This model links between uses and gratifications theory and cultural studies through studying the uses and gratifications of commercial websites in two different cultures (Egyptian and German cultures); the current study introduced model of uses and gratifications theory to explain its sequence elements that contain 1) demographic

and cultural elements, 2) motives (sought gratifications), 3) attitudes, 4) time spent on using commercial websites, and 5) obtained gratifications. This model highlights the interference these five basic elements:

- (1) Demographic and cultural characteristics of the users have some effects on motives of commercial websites, and they have strong and direct effects of the users attitudes toward these websites and the time spent on using these media.
- (2) There is strong relationship between gratifications sought (motives) and gratifications obtained. Palmgreen, Wenner & Rayburn (1980) confirmed that each gratifications sought (GS) correlated moderately to strongly with its corresponding gratifications obtained (GO) for the audience.
- (3) There is strong relationship between gratifications sought (motives) of commercial websites and the time spent on using these websites and these motives have strong effects on attitudes toward these websites.
- (4) There is strong relationship between gratifications obtained (GO) from commercial websites and attitudes toward these websites and there is strong relationship between gratifications obtained (GO) and the time spent on using these websites.

5.3 Results of content analysis study

Because there are normative expectations for media features and formats consumed in commercial websites for advertising purposes, content analysis of sites visited by sample was employed to better understand the nature of the content being consumed. Of the initial 252 visited commercial websites by the sample of German and Egyptian users, a total of 248 websites were content analyzed. Four websites had to be removed from the study due to technical errors involved in coding the sites. Sixty – seven point three percent (167) websites were visited by the German users, and eighty-one websites (32.7%) were visited by Egyptian users (see figure 5-4).

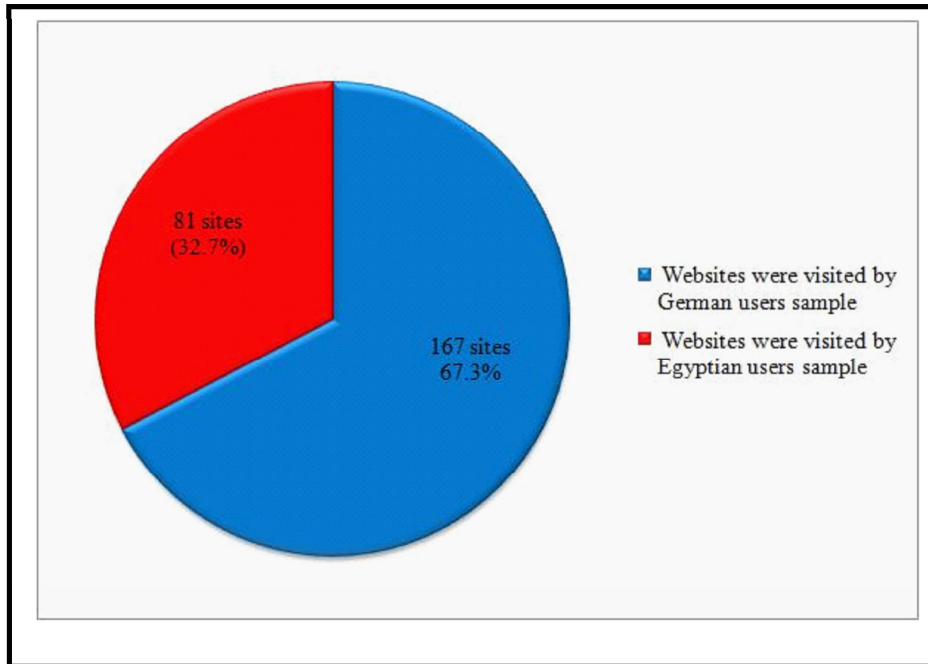


Figure 5-4. The sample of the commercial websites based on the users (Egyptian or German)

One hundred twenty-eight websites (76.65%) of the commercial websites that were visited by German sample are local (for German companies) and only thirty-nine (23.35%) of them are international. On the other hand, forty-one websites (50.6%) of the commercial websites that were visited by German sample are local (for Egyptian companies) and thirty-nine (49.4%) of them are international. This may refer to the gap between two countries regarding the number of the commercial websites in each country.

■ Research Question 1

The first research question explored the general practices of commercial websites regarding the languages that are presented on these commercial websites, type of these websites, also the quantity, advertisers, and locations of ads on these websites.

H1a. Considered possible differences in commercial websites' use of languages based on the users of the site – German or Egyptian. One hundred fifteen sites (46.4%) of overall sample present their contents in more than one language. Thirty-seven point nine percent of overall sample (94) sites were shown in German language only; twenty

three sites (9.3%) present their content in Arabic language only, and six point five percent (16) sites present their content in English only. An independent sample t-test analysis did show that there was a significant difference in commercial websites' use of languages based on the users of the site ($t = -5.269$, $df = 246$, $p = .000$). German users used commercial websites that were presented in “German language only” (55.7%) more than did Egyptian counterparts (1.2%). But Egyptian users used commercial websites that were presented in “Arabic language only” (28.4%), “English language only” (14.81%), and “more than one language” (55.6%) more than did German counterparts (0%), (2.4%), and (41.9%), see figure (5-5).

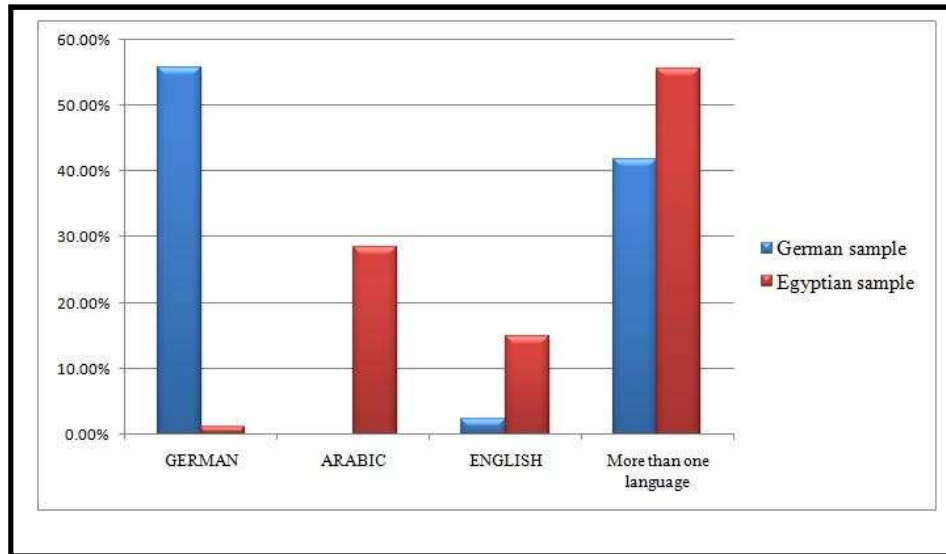


Figure 5-5. The languages that are presented on German and Egyptian commercial websites

H1b. Considered possible differences in commercial websites' types based on the users of the site – German or Egyptian. Seventy-three point eight percent of overall sample (183) sites were websites of traditional companies. Thirty-seven sites (14.9%) of overall sample were online portals. Twenty-eight sites (11.3%) of overall sample were online shopping stores. An independent sample t-test analysis did show that there was a significant difference in commercial websites' types based on the users of the site ($t = 8.512$, $df = 390$, $p = .000$); the websites that were visited by German sample used both “websites of traditional companies” (76.6%) and “Online shopping stores” (12.6%) more than did Egyptian counterparts (67.9%) and (8.6%). But the websites that were visited by Egyptian sample used “online portals websites”(23.5%), more than did German counterparts (10.8%), for more information, see figure (5-6).

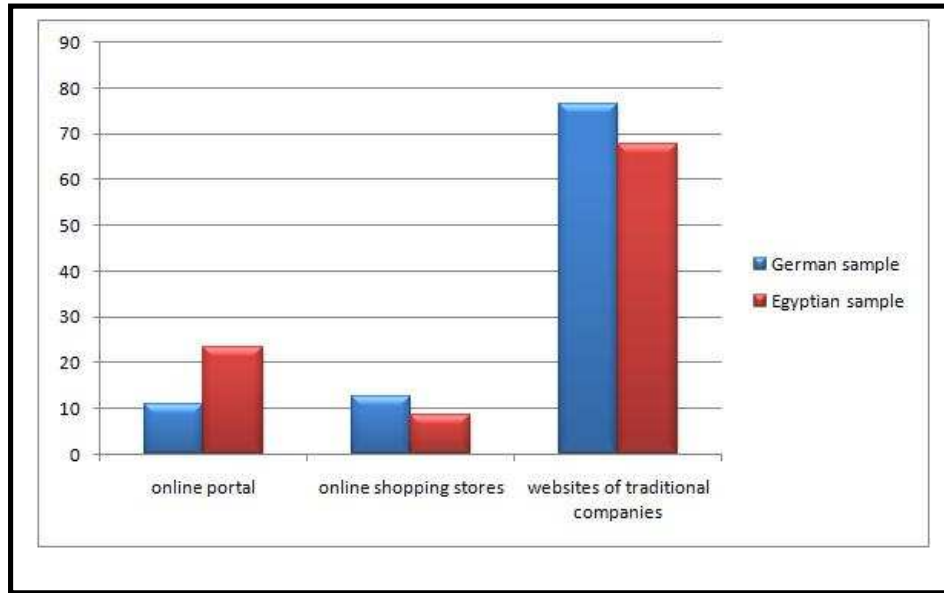


Figure 5-6. The types of commercial websites that were visited by German and Egyptian users

This result is related to the results of the current survey study; since the German respondents used shopping utility of commercial websites more than Egyptian respondents did, consequently, the German users used more online shopping stores than Egyptian counterparts. As well as Germany has a big market and many companies (in contrast to Egypt), and this may be the reason of visiting the websites of traditional companies more than Egyptian users.

H1c. Considered possible differences in commercial websites' hosting of individual ads based on the users of the site – German or Egyptian. The total number of ads displayed on commercial websites, their placement, as well as the type of businesses advertising on those sites. A total of 392 ads were found on the 123 sites only (49.6%) of the overall websites sample (248). The average number of ads per commercial website was 1.58. The websites that were visited by German users were presented more ads (1.9 ads per website) than the websites that were visited by Egyptian sample (.93 ads per website); Ninety-one (54.5%) of the websites that were visited by German sample presented 316 ads (80.6%) of overall online ads on the websites that were visited by the overall websites sample. Only nineteen point four percent (76 ads) of overall online ads on the websites that were visited by the overall sample, were presented on 32 sites (39.5%) of the websites that were visited by Egyptian sample, see figure (5-7).

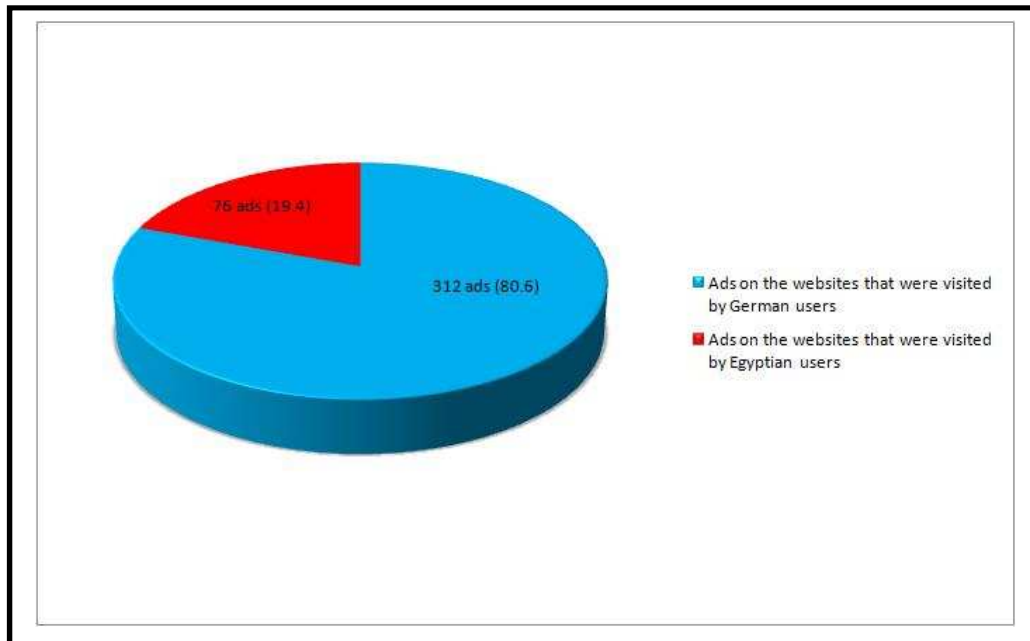


Figure 5-7. Individual ads on commercial websites that were visited by German and Egyptian users

H1d. Considered possible differences between advertisers of individual ads on commercial websites based on the users of the site – German or Egyptian. The most frequent advertisers of individual ads on commercial websites were dot.com and other traditional advertising products ($n = 298$, 76%) as opposed to self-promotion ($n = 94$, 24%). An independent sample t-test analysis did show that there was no significant difference in commercial websites' advertisers based on the users of the site ($t = -1.866$, $df = 390$, $p = .063$).

H1e. Considered possible differences between locations of individual ads on commercial websites based on the users of the site – German or Egyptian. Most ads have not specific location at the page ($n = 280$, 71.4%). After none specific location, the bottom center ($n = 44$, 11.2%), top left hand corner ($n = 17$, 4.3%), both of top center and top right hand corner ($n = 14$ for each location, 3.6%), bottom left hand corner ($n = 13$, 3.3%) and bottom right hand corner of ($n = 10$, 2.6%). An independent sample t-test analysis did show that there was a significant difference in locations of individual ads on commercial websites based on the users of the site ($t = 3.284$, $df = 390$, $p = .001$); the vast majority of coded ads were static ($n = 386$, 98.5%) as opposed to floating ($n = 6$).

■ Research Question 2

The second research question explored the posting of corporate contact information and also the facilitations to surf the websites. The analysis looked for a total of six contact information items per commercial websites: corporate site/postal address, phone number, the relation between the name of corporate and online address, corporate overview/information, the ability to create an account and the logo of the company.

Various commercial websites utilized anywhere between zero and all six of these elements. The mean amount used was 5.48. Most frequently found was a listing of the relation between the names of corporate and its online addressing (99.6%) of sites analyzed. This was followed by a logo of the company (99.2%), corporate site/postal address (92.3%), corporate overview/information (91.9%), phone number (74.4%) and the ability to create an account (74.6%). See Figure (5-8) for a side by side comparison.

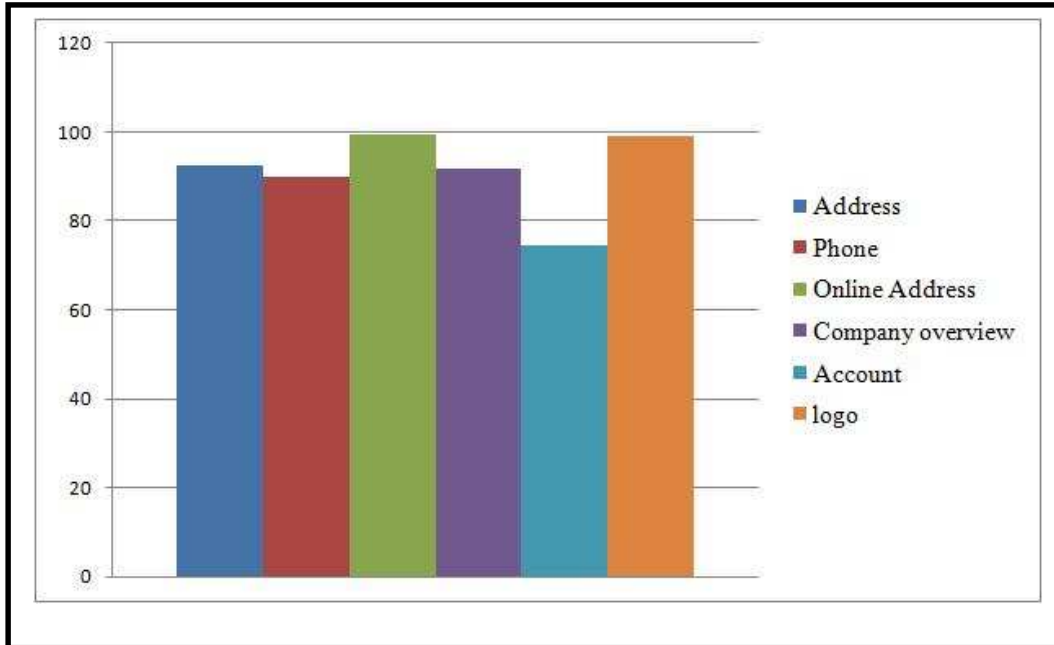


Figure 5-8. Basic and contact information of visited commercial websites

H2a. Considered possible differences in commercial websites' use of site basic and contact information based on the users of the site – German or Egyptian. An independent sample t-test analysis did show that there was a significant difference in the total amount of site items used ($t = 6.836$, $df = 246$, $p = .000$) as well as specific difference in posting of phone numbers ($t = -6.179$, $df = 246$, $p = .000$), corporate site/postal address ($t = -5.840$, $df = 246$, $p = .000$), corporate overview/information ($t = -5.493$, $df = 246$, $p = .000$) and the ability to create an online account ($t = -3.300$, $df = 246$, $p = .001$). But there was no significant difference between sites in the use of two elements: logo ($t = -.523$, $df = 246$, $p = .601$) and the relation between the name of company and online address ($t = .696$, $df = 246$, $p = .487$), see figure (5-9).

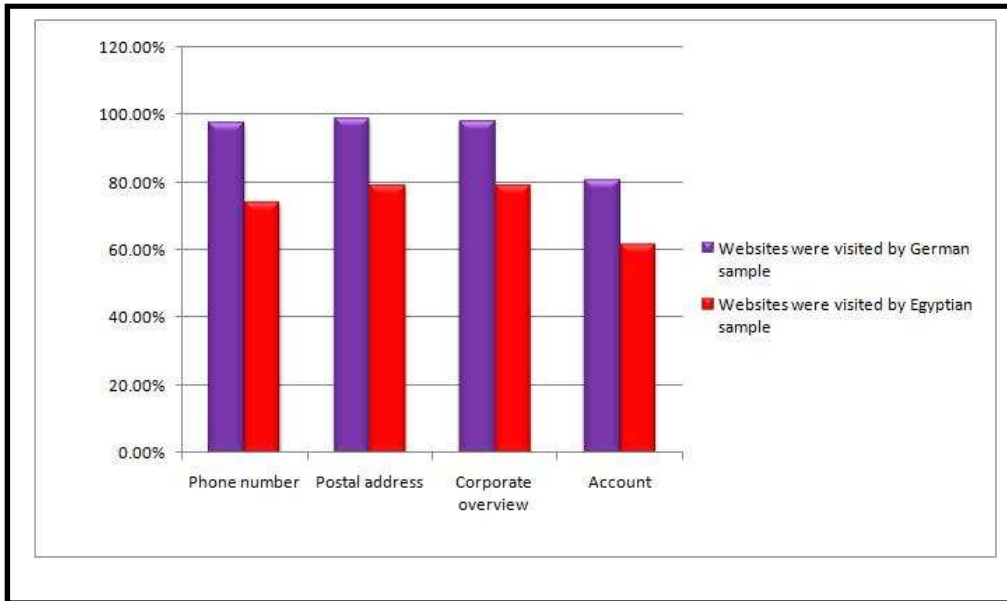


Figure 5-9. Comparison between German and Egyptian visited commercial sites in presenting the basic and contact information

In all cases, the websites that were visited by German users used the basic and contact information ($M=5.74$) more than did the sites that were visited by Egyptian users (4.93) (For more information on the significant relationships, see table 5-27).

Basic and contact information	Country (Germany or Egypt)				
	German Websites	Egyptian Websites	t	df	P
Phone number	97.6%	74.1%	-6.179	246	.000 *
Postal address	98.8%	79 %	-5.840	246	.000 *
Corporate overview	98.2%	79%	-5.493	246	.000 *
Ability to create an account	80.8%	61.7%	-3.300	246	.001 *

German visited Sites: $N = 169$. Egyptian visited Sites: $N = 81$

Table 5-27. T-test significant comparisons between German and Egyptian visited websites in using basic and contact information

H2b. Considered possible differences in commercial websites' use of site basic and contact information based on the language of the site – German, Arabic, English or more than one language. A one-way analysis of variance revealed that there was significant difference in the average amount of these items used per site [$F(3, 244) = 10.508, p = .000$]. The most significant difference between sites in the use of four elements: Postal address [$F(3, 244) = 11.705, p = .000$], phone number [$F(3, 244) = 10.173, p = .000$], corporate overview/information [$F(3, 244) = 9.759, p = .000$] and the ability to create an online account [$F(3, 244) = 3.205, p = .024$]. But there was no significant difference between sites in the use of two elements: The relation between the name of company and online address [$F(3, 244) = .383, p = .766$] and logo [$F(3, 244) = .132, p = .941$]. (For more information on the significant relationships, see table 5-28).

Basic and contact information	Language			
	df between	df within	F	P
Postal address	3	244	11.705	.000 *
Phone number	3	244	10.173	.000 *
Names of companies and their online address relationships.	3	244	.383	.766
Corporate overview	3	244	9.759	.000*
Ability to create an account	3	244	3.205	.024*
logo of the company	3	244	.132	.941

German Sites: $N = 94$. Arabic Sites: $N = 23$. English sites: $N = 16$. Websites in more than one language = 115.
Table 5-28. ANOVA Comparisons between commercial websites' use of basic and contact information based on the language of the site

Post hoc analysis using the Bonferroni technique indicated that significant differences occurred in use of these tools for presentation of postal address, phone number, and corporate overview. Although the ANOVA revealed a significant difference in creation of online accounts as well, post hoc analysis revealed no significantly different relationships. This may be due to the small number of websites reviewed by some categories (e.g., 16 English websites and 23 Arabic websites). The significant difference in posting of address information can be attributed exclusively to the category of Arabic. "Arabic sites" was the highest compared to all other categories with the significant p -value at 0.01. It is followed by the websites that were written in more than one language, English sites and German sites. Regarding both the posting of telephone numbers and corporate overview information on the homepage, the significant difference can be also attributed exclusively to the category of "Arabic sites". "Arabic sites" was the highest compared to all other categories with the significant p -value at 0.01. It is followed by the websites that were written in more than one language, English sites and German sites. (For a comparison of differences in site use of addresses, phone numbers and corporate overview information by Language, see table 5-29).

Dependent variables	Language	Language	<i>n</i>	Mean difference	Sig.
Postal Address	Arabic	German	94	.337	.000*
		English	16	.348	.000*
		More than one language	115	.261	.000*
Phone Number	Arabic	German	94	.337	.000*
		English	16	.348	.000*
		More than one language	115	.209	.000*
Corporate overview	Arabic	German	94	.316	.000*
		English	16	.348	.000*
		More than one language	115	.270	.000*

Online portal: N =37. Online shopping: stores N= 28. Websites of traditional companies = 183.

Table 5-29. Bonferroni Post Hoc analysis of commercial websites' use of basic and contact information based on the language of the site

H2c. Inquired as to whether there is any difference in commercial websites use of these techniques based on the type of these websites analyzed. A one-way analysis of variance revealed that there was no significant difference in the average amount of these items used per site [$F(2, 245) = 1.749, p = .176$]. However there was a significant difference between sites in the use of phone numbers [$F(2, 245) = 5.046, p = .007$] only. Post hoc analysis using the Bonferroni technique also indicated that significant differences occurred between sites in the use of phone numbers. The significant difference in posting of phone numbers can be attributed exclusively to the category of online portal. "Online portals" was the higher compared to the websites of traditional companies with the significant p -value at 0.01. However, there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of online portals and online shopping stores. (For a comparison of differences in site use of phone numbers by the type of commercial websites, see table 5-30).

Dependent variables	Types of websites	Types of websites	<i>n</i>	Mean	Sig.
Posting phone number	Online portal	Online shopping stores	28	.038	1.000
		Websites of traditional companies	183	.151	.016*

Online portal: N =37. Online shopping: stores N= 28. Websites of traditional companies = 183.

Table 5-30. Bonferroni Post Hoc Analysis of the different commercial sites types' uses of information

■ Research Question 3

The third research question looked at the interactive features used on commercial websites such as: Keyword search FAQ/help, self- design images, animation, audio, video, interactive newsletter, online order, online transaction, comment, job placement, user groups or community, and online chatting. Various commercial websites utilized anywhere between zero and all fourteen of these elements. The mean amount used was 7.67. The most commonly included features were: image (98.8%) of websites analyzed, keyword search (94.4%), FAQ/help (83.9%), online order (74.6%), and online transaction (73.4%). For a complete breakdown of the percent of websites that used each formatting characteristic, see figure (5-10).

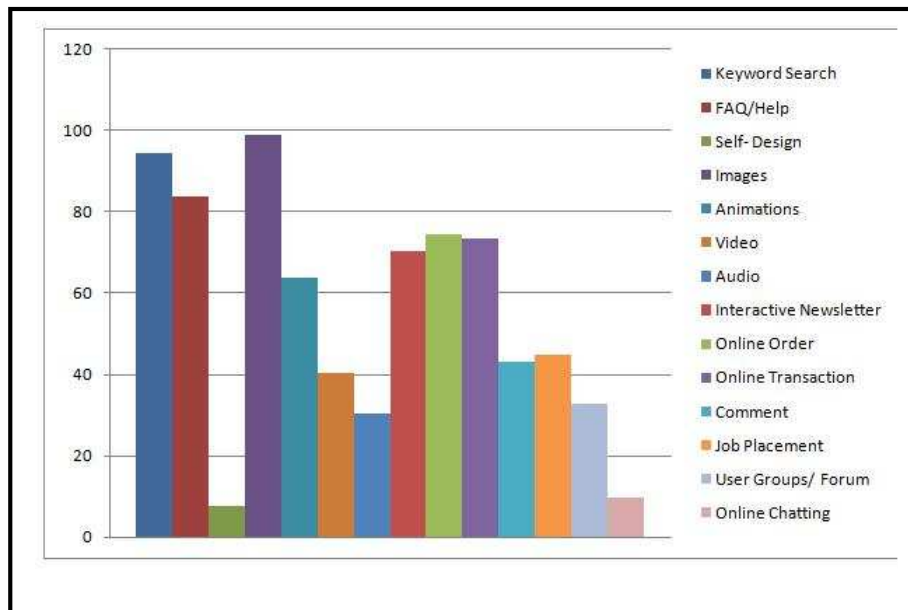


Figure 5-10. Interactive features of visited commercial websites

H3a. Considered possible differences in commercial websites' use of site interactive features based on the users of the site – German or Egyptian. Independent sample t-tests revealed a significant difference. An independent sample t-test analysis did show that there was a significant difference in the total amount of site interactive features used ($t = 6.888$, $df = 246$, $p = .000$) as well as specific difference in presenting online order ($t = -9.596$, $df = 246$, $p = .000$), online transaction ($t = -8.936$, $df = 246$, $p = .000$), interactive newsletter ($t = -8.274$, $df = 246$, $p = .000$), FAQ/ help ($t = -7.244$, $df = 246$, $p = .000$), user groups or community ($t = -3.679$, $df = 246$, $p = .000$), comment ($t = -3.618$, $df = 246$, $p = .000$), audio ($t = -3.459$, $df = 246$, $p = .001$) and animations ($t = -3.029$, $df = 246$, $p = .003$). (For more information on the significant relationships, see table 5-31).

Interactive features	Country (Germany or Egypt)				
	German Websites	Egyptian Websites	t	df	P
Online order	90.4%	42 %	-9.596	246	.000 *
Online transaction	88.6%	42%	-8.936	246	.000 *
Interactive newsletter	85%	39.5%	-8.274	246	.000 *
FAQ/ help	94.6%	61.7%	-7.244	246	.000 *
User groups or community	47%	17.3%	-3.679	246	.000 *
Comment	50.9%	27.2%	-3.618	246	.000 *
Audio	23.4%	44.4%	3.459	246	.001 *
Animations	70.1%	50.6%	-3.029	246	.003 *

Table 5-31. T-test significant comparisons between visited German and Egyptian websites in using interactive features

But there was no significant difference between sites in the use of six elements: Self-design ($t = -.403$, $df = 246$, $p = .687$), online chatting ($t = .988$, $df = 246$, $p = .324$), job placement ($t = -1.157$, $df = 246$, $p = .248$), video ($t = 1.196$, $df = 246$, $p = .233$), images ($t = -1.283$, $df = 246$, $p = .208$) and keyword search ($t = 1.424$, $df = 246$, $p = .156$).

In sum, the websites that were visited by German users show interactive features ($M = 8.39$) more than did the sites that were visited by Egyptian users ($M = 6.20$). The websites that were visited by German users used seven features (online order, online transaction, interactive newsletter, FAQ/ help, user groups or community, comment, and animations), from eight significant features, more than did the sites that were visited by Egyptian users. But the websites that were visited by Egyptian users used one feature only (audio) more than did the sites that were visited by German counterparts. (For more information on the significant relationships, see figure 5-11).

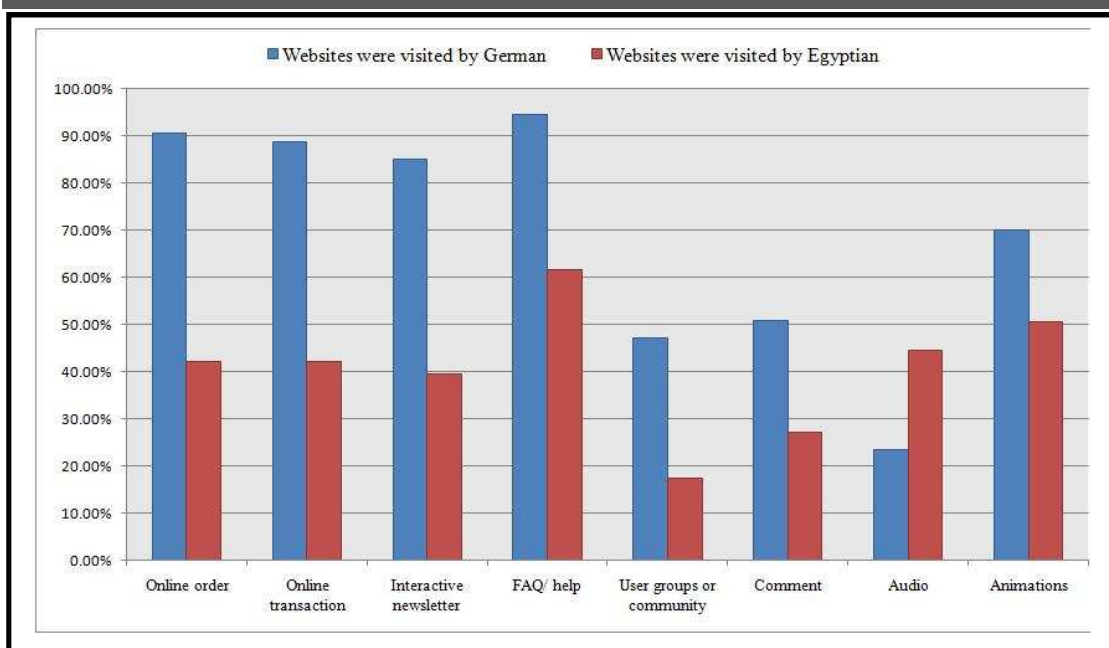


Figure 5-11. Comparisons between visited German and Egyptian websites in using interactive features

This result agrees with Cho and Cheon's (2005) study findings; since they conducted cross-cultural comparison of interactivity on commercial websites on U.S, U.K, Japanese, and South Korea websites. And they found significant differences between Western and Eastern websites in using interactive features on these websites. The current study also found that the websites that were visited by German users show interactive features more than did the sites that were visited by Egyptian users.

H3b. Looked at whether there were any differences in the amount of features used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the language of the site analyzed – German, Arabic, English or more than one language. A one-way analysis of variance revealed that there was significant difference in the average amount of interactive features items used per site [$F(3, 244) = 15.427, p = .000$]. The most significant difference between sites in the use of nine elements: online transaction [$F(3, 244) = 24.239, p = .000$], online order [$F(3, 244) = 23.245, p = .000$], interactive newsletter [$F(3, 244) = 20.907, p = .000$], FAQ/help [$F(3, 244) = 19.555, p = .000$], job placement [$F(3, 244) = 4.996, p = .002$], keyword search [$F(3, 244) = 4.701, p = .003$], animations [$F(3, 244) = 4.638, p = .004$], audio [$F(3, 244) = 4.369, p = .005$], and user groups or community [$F(3, 244) = 2.958, p = .033$]. (For more information on these significant relationships, see table 5-32).

Interactive Features	language			
	df <i>between</i>	df <i>within</i>	F	P
Online transaction	3	244	24.239	.000 *
Online order	3	244	23.245	.000 *
Interactive newsletter	3	244	20.907	.000*
FAQ/help	3	244	19.555	.000*
Job placement	3	244	4.996	.002*
Keyword search	3	244	4.701	.003*
Animations	3	244	4.638	.004*
Audio	3	244	4.369	.005*
Users groups or community	3	244	2.958	.033*

German Sites: $N = 94$. Arabic Sites: $N = 23$. English sites: $N = 16$. Websites in more than one language = 115.
Table 5-32. ANOVA significant comparisons between commercial websites' use of basic and contact information based on the language of the site

But there was no significant difference between sites in the use of five interactive elements: Self-design [$F(3, 244) = .461, p = .710$], images [$F(3, 244) = 1.168, p = .322$], video [$F(3, 244) = 1.526, p = .208$], online chatting [$F(3, 244) = 2.16, p = .093$], and comment [$F(3, 244) = 2.275, p = .080$]. Post hoc analysis using the Bonferroni technique indicated that significant differences occurred in use of these tools for presentation of keyword search, FAQ/help, animations, audio, interactive newsletter, online order and online transaction. Although the ANOVA revealed a significant difference in users groups or community as well, post hoc analysis revealed no significantly different relationships. This may in part be due to the small number of websites reviewed by some categories (e.g., 16 English websites and 23 Arabic websites). (For a comparison of differences in site use of interactive features by Language, see table 5-33).

Dependent variable	Language	Language	<i>n</i>	Mean	Sig.
Keyword search	English	German	94	.229	.001*
		Arabic	23	.207	.033*
		More than one language	115	.189	.012*
FAQ/help	Arabic	German	94	.588	.000*
		English	16	.465	.000*
		More than one language	115	.513	.000*
Animations	English	German	94	.368	.025*
		Arabic	23	.122	1.000
		More than one language	115	.374	.019*
Audio	German	Arabic	23	.287	.040*
		English	16	-.004	1.000
		More than one language	115	.182	.024*
Interactive newsletter	German	Arabic	23	.709	.000*
		English	16	.445	.000*
		More than one language	115	.187	.007*
Online order	German	Arabic	23	.697	.000*
		English	16	.395	.001*
		More than one language	115	.262	.000*
Online transaction	German	Arabic	23	.729	.000*
		English	16	.384	.002*
		More than one language	115	.260	.000*

German Sites: $N = 94$. Arabic Sites: $N = 23$. English sites: $N = 16$. Websites in more than on language = 115.

Table 5-33. Bonferroni Post Hoc analysis of commercial websites' use of interactive features based on the language of the sites

H3c. Inquired as to whether there were any differences in the amount of interactive features used on commercial websites based on the types of these sites analyzed. A one-way analysis of variance revealed that there was no significant difference in the quantity of interactive features based on the type of the commercial websites analyzed [$F(2, 245) = .252, p = .778$]. However there was a significant difference between sites in the use of nine elements: Online chatting [$F(2, 245) = 14.939, p = .000$], online transaction [$F(2, 245) = 11.823, p = .000$], online order [$F(2, 245) = 9.462, p = .000$], animations [$F(2, 245) = 7.785, p = .001$], user groups or community [$F(2, 245) = 7.512, p = .001$], Video [$F(2, 245) = 6.930, p = .001$], Self-design [$F(2, 245) = 4.755, p = .009$], FAQ/help [$F(2, 245) = 4.454, p = .013$], audio [$F(2, 245) = 4.225, p = .016$], and Images [$F(2, 245) = 3.280, p = .039$], see table (5-34).

Interactive features	Language of websites			
	<i>df between</i>	<i>df within</i>	F	P
Online chatting	2	245	14.939	.000 *
Online transaction	2	245	11.823	.000 *
Online order	2	245	9.462	.000*
Animations	2	245	7.785	.001*
Users groups or community	2	245	7.512	.001*
Video	2	245	6.930	.001*
Self-design	2	245	4.755	.009*
FAQ/help	2	245	4.454	.013*
Audio	2	245	4.225	.016*
Images	2	245	3.280	.039*

Table 5-34. ANOVA significant comparisons between commercial websites' uses of interactive features based on the language of the site

But there was no significant difference between sites in the use of five elements: Job placement [$F(2, 245) = .359, p = .699$], keyword search [$F(2, 245) = 1.068, p = .345$], comment [$F(2, 245) = 1.101, p = .334$], and interactive newsletter [$F(2, 245) = 2.604, p = .076$]. Post hoc analysis using the Bonferroni technique also indicated that significant differences occurred between sites in the use of the same ten elements. (For a comparison of differences in site use of interactive features by the type of commercial websites, see table 5-35).

Dependent V.	Types of websites	Types of websites	<i>n</i>	Mean	Sig.
FAQ/help	Websites of companies	Online portal	37	-.188	.014
		Online stores	28	.029	1.000
Self -design	Online portal	Online stores	28	-.189	.013*
		Websites of companies	183	.124	.029*
Images	Websites of companies	Online portal	37	-.049	.041*
		Online stores	28	.005	1.000
Animations	Online stores	Online portal	37	.435	.001*
		Websites of companies	183	.340	.001*
Video	Online portal	Online stores	28	-.443	.001*
		Websites of companies	183	-.228	.027*
Audio	Online portal	Online stores	28	-.308	.022*
		Websites of companies	183	-.202	.043*
Online order	Online portal	Online stores	28	.459	.000*
		Websites of companies	183	.208	.020*
Online transaction	Online portal	Online shopping stores	37	.514	.000*
		Websites of companies	183	.257	.003*
User groups	Online portal	Online stores	28	-.345	.009*
		Websites of companies	183	-.310	.001*
Online chatting	Online portal	Online stores	28	-.324	.000*
		Websites of companies	183	-.259	.000*

Table 5-35. Bonferroni Post Hoc analysis of commercial websites' use of interactive features based on the types of the sites

■ Research Question 4

The fourth research question looked at the typically formatting techniques used by ads found on commercial websites. Formatting elements considered were: banner, sponsorship, interstitials/pop-up, classified, advergimes, and hyperlinks. It is important to note that each ad can contain multiple formatting characteristics. A total of 392 of the ads that were reviewed contained formatting techniques. The average number of formatting characteristics per ad was 1.26. The most commonly used formatting techniques included: banner (71.4% of ads analyzed), classified (29.3%), sponsorship (21.7%), interstitials (2.6%), hyperlinks only (1.3%) and advergimes (.5%). For a

complete breakdown of the percentage of ads that used each formatting characteristic, see figure (5-12).

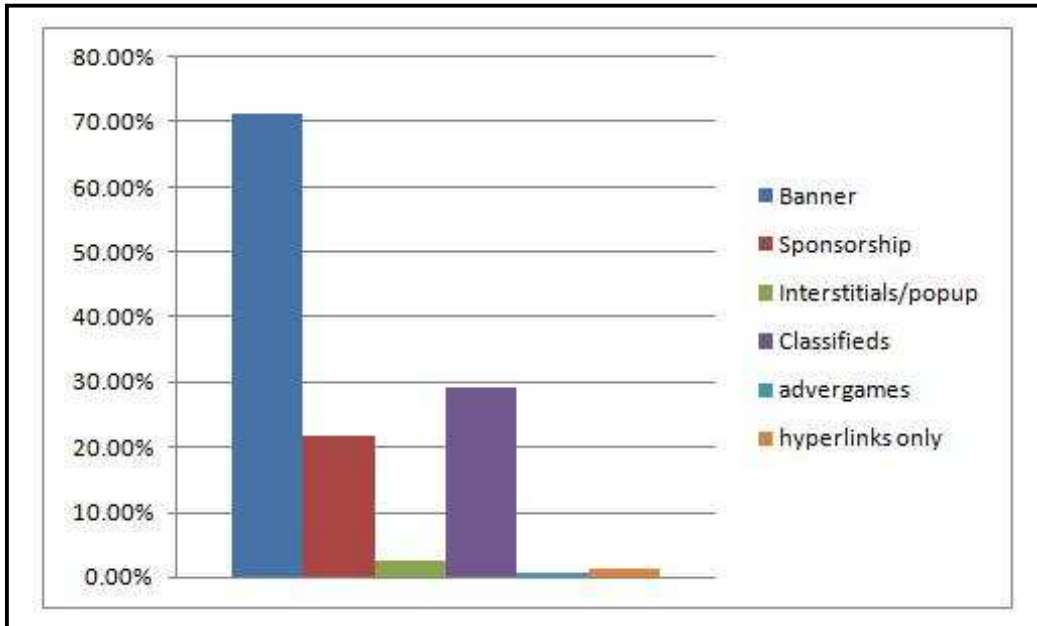


Figure 5-12. Formats of visited commercial websites

H4a. Considered whether there were any differences in the formats of ads featured on commercial websites based on the users of these websites – German or Egyptian. An independent sample t-test analysis revealed no significant differences in the total formatting used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the users of these websites ($t = .861$, $df = 390$, $p = .390$). There was no specific difference between sites in the use of all elements.

H4b. Focused on whether there were any differences in the amount of formatting used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the advertisers of the ads. Independent sample t-tests revealed no significant differences in the total formatting used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the advertisers of these websites ($t = .908$, $df = 390$, $p = .364$). But there was a significant difference between the sites in the use of interstitials/pop up ($t = -2.721$, $df = 390$, $p = .007$).

H4c. Inquired as to whether there were any differences in the amount of formatting used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the type of the site analyzed. A one-way analysis of variance revealed a strong effect for the type of the commercial websites analyzed on the quantity of formatting characteristics per ad [$F(2, 389) = 6.267$, $p = .002$], as well as on showing sponsorship [$F(2, 389) = 7.904$, $p = .000$].

Post hoc analysis using the Bonferroni technique indicated also that the significant differences occurred in use of these formats for mean of overall formatting; since “online shopping stores” was the lowest compared to all other categories with the significant p -value at 0.01. As well as significant difference occurred in presenting of

sponsorship; “online shopping stores” was the lower compared to websites of traditional companies with the significant p -value at 0.01. (For a comparison of differences in site use of sponsorships by the type of advertisers, see table 5-36).

Dependent variable	Types of websites	Types of websites	n	Mean	Sig.
Overall mean of formats	Online shopping stores (N = 87)	Online portal	69	.131	.020*
		Websites of traditional companies	236	.102	.002*
Sponsorship	Online shopping stores (N = 87)	Online portal	69	-.247	.071
		Websites of traditional companies	236	-.202	.000*

Table 5-36. Bonferroni Post Hoc analysis of sponsorships ads on visited commercial websites based on the types of the sites

■ Research Question 5

The fifth research question looked at the features used by ads found on commercial websites. Ad features considered were: animation, audio, video, images, and hypertext. It is important to note that each ad can contain multiple features. A total of 392 of the ads that were reviewed contained feature information. The average number of features per ad was 2.14. The most commonly included features were: color (95% of ads analyzed), hypertext (68%), and images (66%). For a complete breakdown of the percent of ads that used each formatting characteristic, see figure (5-13).

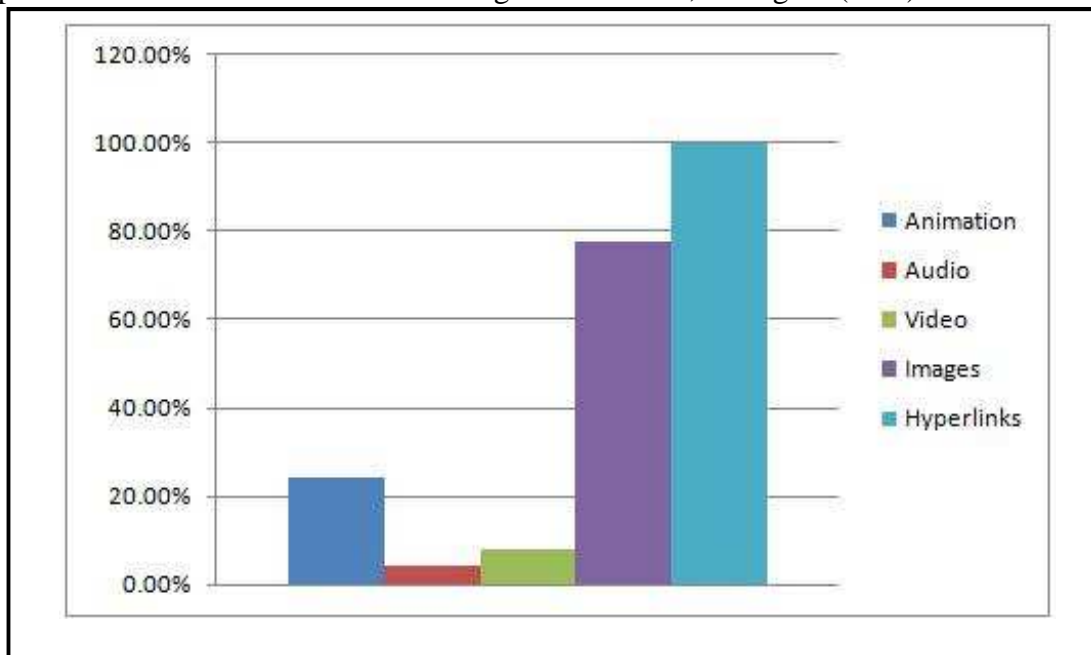


Figure 5-13. Features of visited commercial websites

H5a. Considered whether there were any differences in the amount of features used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the users of the commercial website. Independent sample t-tests revealed no significant difference in the amount of features used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the users of the commercial websites ($t = -.639$, $df = 390$, $p = .523$). However Independent sample t-tests revealed a significant difference in using animations in ads featured on commercial websites based on users of these websites ($t = 2.27$, $df = 390$, $p = .024$).

H5b. Focused on whether there were any differences in the amount of features used in ads featured on commercial websites based the type of advertisers of the ad. Independent sample t-tests revealed a significant difference in the amount of features used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the advertisers of ads shown on commercial websites ($t = 4.302$, $df = 390$, $p = .000$), as well as specific difference in presenting video ($t = -4.28$, $df = 390$, $p = .000$), animations ($t = -2.843$, $df = 390$, $p = .005$), audio ($t = -2.503$, $df = 390$, $p = .013$). But there was no significant difference in presenting images ($t = -1.958$, $df = 390$, $p = .051$). (For more information on the significant relationships, see table (5-37).

Features of ads on commercial websites	Type of advertisers of these ads		
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>
Video	-4.28	390	.000 *
Animations	-2.843	390	.005 *
Audio	-2.503	390	.013 *

Table 5-37. T-test significant comparisons of the ads features used on commercial websites based on the type of advertisers of these ads

H5c. Inquired as to whether there were any differences in the amount of features used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the type of the site analyzed. A one-way analysis of variance revealed a significant difference in the quantity of features per ad based on the type of the commercial website analyzed [$F(2, 389) = 5.733$, $p = .004$]. As well as specific difference in presenting animations [$F(2, 389) = 10.93$, $p = .000$] and audio [$F(2, 389) = 3.03$, $p = .049$]. But there was no significant difference in presenting images [$F(2, 389) = 1.676$, $p = .189$] and video [$F(2, 389) = 2.746$, $p = .065$]. Post hoc analysis using the Bonferroni technique indicated that significant differences occurred in use of these tools for presentation animations only. Although the ANOVA revealed a significant difference in Audio as well, post hoc analysis revealed no significantly different relationships. “Online shopping” was the highest compared to all other categories with the significant p -value at 0.01. It is followed by the websites of traditional companies and online portal (For a comparison of differences in site use of animations by the type of advertisers, see table 5-38).

Dependent variable	Types of websites	Types of websites	<i>n</i>	Mean	Sig.
Animations	Online shopping stores (N = 87)	Online portal	69	.247	.001*
		Websites of traditional companies	236	.235	.000*

Table 5-38. Bonferroni Post Hoc analysis of animations ads on visited commercial websites based on the types of the sites

In sum, some results of content analysis study are related to the results of the survey study, for example, the German respondents used shopping utility of commercial websites more than Egyptian respondents did, and other agree with the previous studies' findings; for example, the current study found that the websites that were visited by German users show interactive features more than did the sites that were visited by Egyptian users. Cho and Cheon's (2005) study conducted cross-cultural comparison of interactivity on commercial websites on U.S, U.K, Japanese, and South Korea websites. And they found significant differences between Western and Eastern websites in using interactive features on these websites.

Chapter 6

Discussion, conclusion, and recommendations

Commercial websites are considered the most important channel of online advertising; since it is one format of online advertising and it contains many types and formats of online advertisements such as: banner, interstitials, sponsorship, rich media, and classified ads, as well as their online shopping utility. It is essential to understand more about uses of this type of websites. This study examined the uses and gratifications of commercial websites. It is specifically looked at the relationships among motivations for using these websites, gratifications-obtained from them, attitudes toward these websites and the time spent on using these websites.

In order for marketers, advertisers, and researchers to evaluate the benefits of commercial website use by stakeholders, it is necessary to begin by attempting to understand how stakeholders perceive the commercial websites, why do they use it, what gratifications they receive from using these websites. This research examined the active and goal-directed use of these websites by German and Egyptian stakeholders. The survey was used to assess: the amount of time spent using the commercial websites, their motive for using this type of websites, their attitudes toward these websites, and their gratifications-obtained from these websites. From the analysis of the data collected, the following discussions, conclusions and recommendations were made.

6.1 Discussion

The researcher divided the areas of study into three main areas. These areas were: the uses and gratifications of respondents for using commercial websites, testing the hypotheses of suggested model of commercial websites' uses and gratification, and the characteristics of visited commercial website by German and Egyptian respondents:

6.1.1. The uses and gratifications of users for using commercial websites

This area includes demographic characteristics of the respondents using commercial websites, the gratifications sought and obtained from using these websites among the respondents, their attitudes toward this type of websites, their uses of online ads on these websites, their gained online shopping utility from these sites, and challenges faced by users when using the commercial websites and their opinions to develop these sites.

1. The gratifications sought (motives) and obtained from using the commercial websites among the respondents

In current study, the researchers located basic four gratifications sought (motives) of using commercial websites. The first factor (information seeking) explained 27.66% of the total variance. This factor is loaded mainly with "It is a good way to learn about products and services before they become popular" (0.635), "To compare among the different products or services" (0.615), "I want to see as much products or service as possible before I buy" (0.606), "To learn about unknown things" (0.605), "To learn how I use the products or services" (0.597), "To learn about useful things" (0.590), "I like to be a part of the commercial community" (0.467), "To get information for free" (0.467), and "It's a good way to do research" (0.433).

The second factor (convenience) explained 14.64% of the total variance. This factor is loaded mainly with “I can get what I want for less effort” (.735), “It is an easy way to make shopping” (.705), “It’s convenient to use” (.697), “To decide which service or product should I buy” (.650), and “I can use it anytime, anywhere” (.643). The third factor (social interaction) explained 9.9% of total variance. This factor is loaded mainly with “To meet people with my interests” (.759), “To interact with the source of product or service directly” (.747), “To express about myself freely” (.707), “To keep up with what’s going on” (.668). The fourth factor (entertainment) explained 6.8% of total variance. This factor is loaded mainly with “It’s enjoyable” (.834), “It’s entertaining” (.804), “To pass time” (.715), “I just like to surf the commercial websites” (.670), and “It’s a habit” (.613).

The researcher used the same measurement to investigate the gratifications-obtained but worded somewhat differently. In this case, items were worded to measure the perceived benefit that the respondent gained from the experience of using commercial websites for example: To compare among the different products or services item in motivations scale became commercial websites help me to compare among the different products or services.

Overall, the greatest motivations of using commercial websites was socialization ($M = 2.90$). For the German group, their greatest gratifications sought or motives were socialization ($M = 3.11$). For Egyptian group, entertainment sought was the greatest motives ($M = 2.75$); The entertainment motives were stronger among the respondents ($M = 2.75$), probably because of the difficulties of online shopping in Egypt such as: the absence of big online markets (e.g. e-bay, Amazon, handelbuch.de) in Egypt, and the absence of online consumer’s confidence among Egyptian consumers, concerning online shopping, may be a critical indicator; they don’t trust the products and security of the websites and they may not have visa card or online account to buy online (Mahmoud, Klimsa, Auter, 2008). These reasons and other push users to use these websites as entertainment tool more than information source for shopping. In the same way, gratifications-obtained from visiting commercial websites may be strongly affected by the same cultural factors. Respondents generally felt that they had obtained social interaction by using commercial websites ($M = 2.72$). For German respondents, socialization was utmost ($M = 2.84$). Egyptian respondents preferred entertainment ($M = 2.72$) over all other motives.

2. The attitudes toward commercial websites

Subjects responded to a series of five positively worded statements about commercial website use with a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). We used items from a study performed by Ko, Cho, and Roberts (2005) to tap into respondents’ general attitudes toward using commercial websites. Subjects responded to a series of five positively worded statements about commercial website use with a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). These five statements are:

- (1) “These websites build a relationship with me
- (2) I would like to visit these websites again
- (3) I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites
- (4) I feel comfortable in surfing these websites
- (5) I would rate these sites as one of the best” (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, p.63).

The researcher ignored the sixth statement “This site is a good place to spend my time” because it is already mentioned in the measure of motives and gratifications.

Respondents generally were positive about their experience of using commercial websites (N = 648, M 2.54). Egyptian respondents (N = 296, M 2.63) were slightly more positive about the experience of using commercial websites than German counterparts (N = 352, M = 2.47).

3. The uses of online ads on these websites

To measure the degree of interaction between respondents and the individuals ads that found on commercial websites, a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1='Never used' to 5= often use. This scale was worded to measure the benefit that respondents gained from the experience of using individual ads on commercial websites (for more information, see table 6-2).

Fifty-nine point six percent (N= 386) of overall respondents reported paying attention to ads on commercial websites (M=2.17). Egyptian respondents paid attention to ads on commercial websites (N=192, 64.9%, M=2.48) more than did their German counterparts (N=194, 55.1%, M=1.91).

Forty-four point nine percent (N= 291) of overall respondents reported clicking on ads of commercial websites (M=1.74). Egyptian respondents clicked on ads found on commercial websites (N= 164, 55.4%, M=1.99) more than did their German counterparts (N= 127, 36.1%, M=1.53).

Twenty – six point one percent (N=169) of overall respondents reported purchasing items from ads found on commercial websites (M=1.42). Egyptian respondents purchasing items from ads found on commercial websites (N=90, 31.8%, M=1.56) more than did their German counterparts (N= 75, 21.3%, M=1.29). According to these results, the Egyptian respondents were more interactive with online ads on commercial websites than did their German counterparts.

4. The gained online shopping utility from these sites

For overall respondents, Four hundred thirteen (63.7%) respondents had gained online shopping utility. For German respondents, Ninety-six point three percent (N = 339) of German respondents used shopping utility of commercial websites but only twenty five percent (N=74) of Egyptian respondents reported buying products and service online.

To measure the degree of online shopping usability, a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 0='Never used' to 5= More than 20 often. This scale was worded to measure the benefit that respondents gained from the experience of online shopping on commercial Websites. The overall experience respondents had gained this benefit (N= 648, M=1.60), the German respondents (N=352, M=2.68) were slightly more positive about the experience of using online shopping on commercial websites than Egyptian counterparts (N = 296, M = .32). An independent-samples t-test has also indicated that

there was a significant difference between German and Egyptian respondents in using of online shopping ($t = -23.307$, $df = 646$, $p = .000$).

5. Challenges faced by users when using the commercial websites for online shopping purposes.

Thirty-six point three (N=235) of overall respondents reported not purchasing from commercial websites or Internet at all, eighty-seven respondents (13.4%) of them did not mention any reason behind avoiding online purchasing. The rest of them (N = 148, 22.84%) have mentioned that the following reasons were behind their avoiding online purchasing:

“I would like to buy what I want from a store directly” “the prices of online shopping products or services are so expensive”, “I don’t trust the products and services of these websites”, “I don’t have visa card or online account to buy” “I want to save the security of my account and I don’t trust of the security of the websites”, “I don’t trust these commercial websites”, “Most of online shopping companies are outside my country and the price will be so expensive because of transportation and customs”, “the ads of the products or services don’t clarify the benefits of these products and services”, “the price of transportation is expensive”, “I let someone else buy for me”, “I just prefer to see the product online”, “I can’t test these products or services before I buy”, “I have bad experiences with online shopping”. For Egyptian respondents, these reasons were more than reasons that were presented by German counterparts because of the obstacles concerning online shopping and commercial websites in Egypt as well as the digital gap between the two countries:

For Egyptian respondents who did not purchase online, the reasons behind avoiding online purchasing were: “I would like to buy what I want from a store directly,” “the prices of online shopping products or services are so expensive”, “I want to save the security of my account and I don’t trust of the security of the websites”, “I don’t have visa card or online account to buy”, “I don’t trust the products and services of these websites”, “I don’t trust these commercial websites”, “Most of online shopping companies are outside my country and the price will be so expensive because of transportation and customs”, “the ads of the products or services don’t clarify the benefits of these products and services, the price of transportation is expensive”, and “I have bad experiences with online shopping”. But for German counterparts, the reasons behind avoiding online purchasing were: “I want to save the security of my account, and I don’t trust of the security of the websites”, “I would like to buy what I want from a store directly”, “I can’t test these products or services before I buy”, “the ads of the products or services don’t clarify the benefits of these products and services”, “I let someone else buy for me”, “I just prefer to see the product online”, and “I don’t trust these commercial websites”.

6. Tests of suggested model's hypotheses

This study also presents a theoretical model describing the relationships between the uses and gratifications elements (motives, attitudes, gratifications, and usages) in the context of online advertising particularly commercial websites. All the hypotheses of this study have been fully supported except hypothesis 1; since it was partially supported.

Hypothesis 1, the first hypothesis was partially supported: As predicted, both of age and educational level of respondents have a significant effect on their overall motives of using commercial websites. But the gender the religion of respondents' householder income jobs and the place of residence of the respondents did not have any effect on their overall motives of using commercial websites.

Hypothesis 2, as expected, a one-way ANOVA found overall motives to have a significant effect on the average time spent on these websites; the fact that this hypothesis was supported for all dimensions of motives with the significant p -value at 0.01.

The tests of Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4 revealed that motives of using commercial websites and gratifications obtained from using these websites were both positively and significantly related to positive attitudes toward using these sites, with the significant p -value at 0.01.

Hypothesis 5, as expected, Pearson's correlation revealed a strong relationship between overall motives of using commercial websites and overall obtained gratifications from using these sites with the significant p -value at 0.01

Hypothesis 6, as expected, a one-way ANOVA found positive attitudes to have a significant effect on the average time spent on these websites with the significant p -value at 0.01

The tests of Hypothesis 7 and Hypothesis 8 revealed that the consumers' time spent on commercial websites had a strong effect on consumers' gratifications obtained from these websites, and vice versa, consumers' gratifications obtained from these websites had a strong effect on consumers' time spent on these sites with the significant p -value at 0.01.

Concerning the test of hypothesis 9, there was a significant difference between Egyptian and German consumer's attitudes toward using commercial websites with the significant p -value at 0.01.

6.1.2. The characteristics of visited commercial websites

This study provides an overview analysis of commercial website use in the Germany and Egypt – focusing on general practices of these sites as well as offering specific insights based on users region, types of websites and the targeted user (language). As more and more businesses worldwide are establishing web presences, it is important to understand how commercial websites can provide a value-added

experience for a business' customers. Understanding strengths and challenges in crafting commercial websites can help communicators to develop more effective Internet-based advertising and public relations. It will also help researchers to better understand the communication relationship between customers and organizations. Further, the transnational nature of this study can help scholars and practitioners in Germany and Egypt to better understanding the differences among Germany and Egyptian consumers and how that may affect successful commercial website strategies.

1. Contact information of commercial websites

The content analysis study explored the posting of corporate contact information and also the facilitations to surf the websites. The analysis looked for a total of six contact information items per commercial websites: corporate site/postal address, phone number, the relation between the name of corporate and online address, corporate overview/information, the ability to create an account and the logo of the company. Most frequently found was a listing of the relation between the names of corporate and its online addressing. This was followed by a logo of the company, corporate site/postal address, corporate overview, phone number and the ability to create an account.

The websites that were visited by German users used the basic and contact information more than did the sites that were visited by Egyptian users.

The possible differences in commercial websites' use of site basic and contact information based on the language of the site – German, Arabic, English or more than one language. A one-way analysis of variance revealed that there was significant difference in the average amount of these items used per site. “Arabic sites” was the highest compared to all other categories.

The study inquired as to whether there is any difference in commercial websites use of these techniques based on the type of these websites analyzed. A one-way analysis of variance revealed that there was no significant difference in the average amount of these items used per site.

2. Interactive features of commercial websites

The study looked at the interactive features used on commercial websites such as: Keyword search FAQ/help, Self- design images, animation, audio, video, interactive newsletter, online order, online transaction, comment, job placement, user groups or community, and online chatting. Various commercial websites utilized anywhere between zero and all fourteen of these elements.

The study found that the websites that were visited by German users used interactive features more than did the sites that were visited by Egyptian users. Based on language of the site analyzed, A one-way analysis of variance revealed that there was significant difference in the average amount of interactive features items used per site: the websites that present their contents in German only used interactive newsletter, online order, and online shopping more than other websites, and the websites that

present their contents in English only used keyword search, animations, and audio features more than the other websites, but the websites that present their contents in Arabic only used.

But there was no significant difference in the quantity of interactive features based on the type of the commercial websites analyzed.

3. Formats and features of individual ads on commercial websites

The research looked at the typically formatting techniques used by ads found on commercial websites. Formatting elements considered were: banner, sponsorship, interstitials/pop-up, classified, advergaming, and hyperlinks. It is important to note that each ad can contain multiple formatting characteristics.

Study found that there were no significant differences in the total formatting used in ads featured on commercial websites neither based on the users of these websites nor based on the advertisers of these websites. But there is significant difference in the quantity of formatting characteristics per ad based on the type of the commercial websites analyzed; ads on websites of traditional companies use more formats than ads on online shopping stores.

Regarding features that are used in designing individual ads on commercial websites, these features were: animation, audio, video, images, and hypertext.

The study found that there is no difference between German and Egyptian users in the amount of features used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the users of these websites. But it revealed significant difference in the amount of features used in ads featured on commercial websites based on the advertisers of ads shown on commercial websites. A one-way analysis of variance revealed also a significant difference in the quantity of features per ad based on the type of the commercial website analyzed. “Online shopping” was the highest compared to all other categories with the significant p -value at 0.01.

Most of the sites were found to use contact information, particularly company telephone number and email addresses. The only difference that existed based on business was with the airline/tourism industry – which in all cases failed to offer corporate address information on their homepage.

What was intriguing however is that Egyptian based companies were significantly more likely to present more contact and purchasing tools on their sites than were the German businesses? Address information, company email addresses, and opportunities to request products and services online were found in greater numbers on the Egyptian sites. These differences may be the result of a different relationship between the typical Egyptian business and consumer, a more traditional relationship that relies on telephone calls and in-store visits. Therefore, the Egyptian consumer may utilize an Egyptian commercial website primarily to find information on how to contact the real world “bricks and mortar” organization. It is also important to note that requesting a product online is not the same as creating an online account or making a direct online purchase

from the company. Requests online would most likely be followed up by a traditional phone call or a personal email rather than result in an “automated” feeling online order process.

Regarding the quantity, location, and types of advertising, it was found that computer/tech related ads were most prevalent, followed by ads promoting dotcoms or websites. Although placement of ads did vary widely by industry, it is unclear why these variations occurred. As was expected, German websites contained many more ads than did Egyptian commercial websites. This is not surprise as German consumers have become used to media that are busier with side items, from their newspapers and websites even to television news channels with many added news tickers and scroll bars.

The study revealed that the most common ad formats were hypertext, banner, and referral – and the most popular features of these ads were color use, hypertext, and image inclusion. Not surprisingly, it was found that ads promoting more high tech businesses (such as computer/tech) or hosted on more high tech industry commercial websites were considered more advanced in both format and their features. In the case of both ad format and features, there was no difference in ads on German or Egyptian business commercial websites.

6.2 Conclusion

Creating a better understanding of how respondents react to new and different channels of communication is an important task for communication scholars (Susskind, 2004). This study attempted to clarify the motives, attitudes, and obtained gratifications from commercial websites, as well as the relationships among these elements. The present research has demonstrated that the intersection of uses and gratifications theory and online marketing can lead to a deeper understanding of the marketing constraints and utilities offered by interactive computer-mediated communication technology.

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of literature on commercial websites in several ways. They shed a light on the role of the digital divide and its effects on commercial websites for German/Western based businesses versus Egyptian/Middle Eastern and African based businesses. With a much lower Internet penetration and currently more traditional communication habits between consumers and organizations, it is not surprising that in general Egyptian commercial websites are structured in a more basic fashion and focus on ways to put the consumer in direct contact with the organization. On the other hand, with the very high Internet penetration in the Germany and a marked increase in online-only consumer to business communication, German commercial websites tended to be busier and focused on instantaneous, “automated” style communications.

The results also describe the characteristics of the websites of different industries and compare them, providing useful data in studying the computer mediated communication events across various fields. It is interesting to note as a scholar or a

practitioner which organizations prefer more high tech sites and which ones feel that a more basic approach is called for. Additionally, the results address commercial websites as one form of online advertising and as a medium of presentation of additional individual ads. Again, this was found to vary by both culture and industry offering further insight into the various consumers to business communication relationships cross-culturally and across different industries.

The study offers several useful guidelines, both for firms seeking to establish a presence on the web, as well as for well-established, popular web-based businesses. Additional research should further explore characteristics of commercial websites across various regions, cultures, and businesses.

6.3 Recommendations

The Internet has become a very powerful advertising media, more especially for companies. Many websites designers are involved in the design of commercial. Several findings in this study have implications for academic institutions and website designers. This is because while consumers use the commercial websites, their use of the commercial websites suggests other motivations besides commercial use which should be pronounced in the academic institutions. Based on the opinions of the respondents and the findings of the study, the following suggestions are recommended to improve the use of commercial among the college students:

(1) There should be increased training for consumers and companies staff on how to interact with the commercial websites and their services/products available to enhance online marketing and online advertising particularly in Egypt.

(2) Commercial websites designers must take the initiative of establishing comprehensively what attracts/distracts consumers from using the Internet for commercial purposes. This will be useful in designing commercial websites and providing Internet services and resources that can be used for online marketing.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

This study raises many avenues for future research. Because studies on online advertising so far have focused on studying the formats and uses of online advertising, there is a need to examine uses and gratifications of commercial websites as the most important advertising platform for companies. Additional research would also benefit by testing and developing the traditional methodological approaches for studying online advertising including commercial websites.

This study calls attention to the importance of studying each type of commercial websites; since there is a need to examine uses, attitudes, and gratifications of each type of commercial websites (e.g., banks, travel, hotel/resorts, insurance, food, furniture) and to study the formats and features of each type of these websites and online advertising practices on these sites. On the other hand it raises many avenues for studying other types of websites such as governmental sites, educational sites, and nonprofit sites.

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Appendix

I. Online Questionnaire

This survey is a part of an academic research project about uses and gratifications of commercial websites. Commercial websites include the: Accounting, aerospace, airline, apparel, automobile, banks, beverage, brokerage, chemicals, computers, construction (materials& services), cosmetics, data services, electronics, food, furniture, Healthcare, hotel/resorts, insurance, services, jewelry, newspaper/magazines, mining/exploration, movie/TV, music, office supplies, oil and gas, paper products, pharmaceuticals, publishing, real estate, software, sports, telecommunication, textile, travel trucking/shipping, wine/spirits. As well as online companies such as: Google, Yahoo, Msn, AOL, Excite, Lycos, Netscape, AltaVista.

All information you provide will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. It will take around 15 minutes for you to complete this questionnaire. We would greatly appreciate your time in helping with this research project.

*Thank you,
Abd El-Basit Mahmoud*

Section I : General Information

- 1) ***What is your Gender?*** (Male - Female)
- 2) ***What is your age?*** (Numbers only)
- 3) ***In which country were you born?*** (Egypt-Germany-other specify)
- 4) ***In which country do you presently reside?*** (Egypt-Germany-other specify)
- 5) ***What is your religion?***(Muslim, Christian, Jewish, None, Other specify)
- 6) ***What is your educational level?***(None, Some elementary school, Some secondary school, Some high school (not graduated), High school graduate, College graduate/Masters, College Graduate/PhD, other please specify).
- 7) ***What is your job?*** (Student, Engineer, Teacher, Medicine, Business man or business woman, Professor, I have not job, other please specify).
- 8) ***Which category best represents your monthly household income?*** (Less than \$2000, \$2001 to \$4000, \$4016 to \$6000, More than \$6000, and I'd rather not say).
- 9) ***Please tell us about how many hours do you spend per week surfing the Internet?*** (Numbers of hours only).

Section II: Your usage of the Internet and commercial websites in general

- 10) ***Where do you most often access the Internet? (check all that apply)***
(Home, School, Work place, other free public stations, other private (e.g. Internet cafes)).
- 11) ***What is the maximum speed you access the Internet?*** (Cable Modem, DSL, ISDN, I am not sure, other please specify).
- 12) ***How much time do you spend using commercial websites in a week?***
(Number of hours only)

Appendix

13) *How often do you use each type of the following commercial websites? (Please Use the following the scale below)*

	1 Never use	2 Rarely use	3 Occasional use	4 Sometimes use	5 Often use
Banks					
Advertising websites					
Travel					
Hotel/Resorts					
Insurance					
Accounting					
Airline					
Automobile					
Computers					
Internet Services					
Construction					
Electronics					
Food					
Furniture					
Healthcare					
Newspaper/Magazines					
Movie/TV					
Music					
Paper Products					
Publishing					
Sports					
Telecommunication					
Sexual websites					

14) *What are names of major commercial websites do you visit?*

15) *Do you avoid using some commercial websites according to the cultural and social ethics? (Yes or No).*

16) *If yes, which types of commercial websites do you avoid?*

Section III : Motivations and gratifications of using commercial websites

17) *Complete the phrase, "I use commercial websites because..." with each of the following statements. Select the button that best describes your level of agreement/disagreement for each of the complete statements:*

Items	1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 Neutral	4 Disagree	Strongly disagree
It's a good way to do research					
To get information for free					
To learn how I use the products or services					
I want to see as much products or service as possible before I buy					
To compare among the different products or services					
I like to be a part of the commercial community					
It is a good way to learn about products and services before they become popular					
To learn about unknown things					
To learn about useful things					
It's convenient to use					
I can get what I want for less effort					
I can use it anytime, anywhere					
To decide which service or product should I buy					
It is an easy way to make shopping					
To express about myself freely					
To meet people with my interests					
To interact with the source of product or service directly					
To keep up with what's going on					
To pass time					
I just like to surf the commercial websites					
It's enjoyable					
It's entertaining					
It's a habit					

18) To what extent the commercial websites (which you use) provide you with some of the things we have just been asking about: (Please use the following the scale below)

Items	1 Very satisfied	2 Satisfied	3 Neutral	4 Dissatisfied	5 Very dissatisfied
It's a good way to do research					
Help me to get information for free					
Help me To learn how I use the products or services					
Help me to see as much products or service as possible before I buy					
Help me To compare among the different products or services					
It makes sense that I am a part of the commercial community					
It is a good way to learn about products and services before they become popular					
Help me to learn about unknown things					
Help me to learn about useful things					
It's convenient to use					
It gives me what I want for less effort					
I can use it anytime, anywhere					
To decide which service or product should I buy					
It is an easy way to make shopping					
Help me to express about myself freely					
Help me to meet people with my interests					
Help me to interact with the source of product or service directly					
Help me to keep up with what's going on					
Help me to pass time					
I just like to surf the commercial websites					
It's enjoyable					
It's entertaining					
It's a habit					

Section IV : Online advertisements on commercial websites

19) Do you use online advertisements on commercial website? (If yes answer about 20, 21).

20) Please answer the following questions using the scale below

Items	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Occasional	4 Sometimes	5 Often
How often do you pay attention to ads on commercial websites?					
How often do you click on ads on commercial websites?					
How often do you purchase items from ads found on commercial websites?					

21) **Which types of advertisements on commercial websites do you use? (Check all that apply)**(Sported ads, Banks ads, Clothes ads, Educational ads, Arts, Books, information and magazine, Business/legal/financial, Business opportunities, Computer-related products & services, Internet products & services, Communications, Electronics/electrical, Cosmetics and beauty aids, Entertainment, Flowers and plants, Food/drink, Gifts, Home products, Hobbies/crafts, Jewelry and accessories, Medical and health products, Music and videos, New age products/services, Adult products/services, Safety and security, Toys and games, and Sexual content.

Section V : Attitude toward commercial websites

22) **How satisfied are you with your commercial websites?**(Very satisfied, Satisfied, Somewhat satisfied, Indifferent, Somewhat dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied)

23) **Listed below are several kinds of information often associated with your point of view with general practice on all commercial websites that you have already visited? Please indicate how satisfied you are:**

Items	1 Very satisfied	2 Satisfied	3 Neutral	4 Dissatisfied	5 Very dissatisfied
These sites build a relationship with me					
I would like to v these websites again					
I am satisfied with the services or products that are available on these sites					
I feel comfortable in surfing these websites					
I would rate these sites as one of the best					

Section VII: Online shopping

24) **How many times have you made online purchases?**

25) **If yes, what are products or services do you purchase from commercial website?**

26) **If never, why not?**

27) **From your point of view, which methods should be used to develop these commercial websites? (check all that apply):**

- Facilitate online shopping through commercial websites
- Offer free services/products (such as free download)
- Respect the cultural and ethical values
- Offer the interactive features (e.g., email, chat) to contact with other users or/and the company
- Offer comparison with other company’s products
- Present information using multimedia such as: video, audio, 3D animations
- Offer the external and internal links on a topic to explore the issue deeper and to navigate in the same page/document
- Present updated information about products/services
- Other (Please Specify):

II. Content analysis

First Part: Contact information and features homepages of commercial websites.

(1) Basic information of websites

- a. **Company name**
- b. **Homepage**
- c. **Users** (German or Egyptian)
- d. **Language** (German /Arabic/ English/more than one language)
- e. **Type of website** (online portal, online shopping store, websites of traditional companies)

(2) Contact information of commercial homepages

- a. **Address** (yes/no)
- b. **Phone** (yes/no)
- c. **The relation between online address and the name of company** (yes/no)
- d. **Company overview/information** (yes/no)
- e. **Account** (yes/no)
- f. **Logo** (yes/no)

(3) Interactive features of commercial homepages

- a. **Keyword search** (yes/no)
- b. **FAQ/help** (yes/no)
- c. **Self- Design** (yes/no)
- d. **Images** (yes/no)
- e. **Animations** (yes/no)
- f. **Vedio** (yes/no)
- g. **Audio** (yes/no)
- h. **Interactive newsletter** (yes/no)
- i. **Online order** (yes/no)
- j. **Online transaction** (yes/no)
- k. **Comment** (yes/no)
- l. **Job placement** (yes/no)
- m. **User groups or community** (yes/no)
- n. **Online chatting** (yes/no)

Second Part: online advertisements on commercial websites

(1) Basic information of websites

- a. **Company name**
- b. **Type of website** (online portal, online shopping store, websites of traditional companies)
- c. **Users** (German or Egyptian)
- d. **Advertiser** (Self-advertisement, or dotcom/website and other companies ads)
- e. **Static/Floating**
- f. **Location** (top right hand corner, top left hand corner, top centered, bottom right hand corner, bottom left hand corner, bottom centered, other locations).

(2) Formats of online advertisements

- a. **Banner** (yes/no)
- b. **Sponsorship** (yes/no)
- c. **Interstitials/popup** (yes/no)
- d. **Classifieds** (yes/no)
- e. **Advergames** (yes/no)
- f. **Hyperlinks only** (yes/no)

(3) Features of online ads

- a. **Animation** (yes/no)
- b. **Audio** (yes/no)
- c. **Video** (yes/no)
- d. **Images** (yes/no)
- e. **Hyperlinks** (yes/no)
- f. **Other** (Specify)