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Introduction to the Special Issue on the Future of Advertising

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EDITORIAL

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The future of advertising is evolving rapidly as new types of media redefine message contents, timing, locations, and audiences. Forecasts for 2022 indicate that digital advertising will account for more than more than $400 billion, or 60% of global ad spending (Adgate 2021).

Marketers have conventionally applied demographics to segment highly fragmented populations into sub-target groups, but advertisers are now using hyper-personalized algorithms to reach consumers across the web and in mobile apps. Measures of advertising campaign effectiveness will go beyond simple success/failure outcomes. Instead, marketers will be using social media networks, online streaming platforms, search engine optimization, artificial intelligence, virtual/augmented reality, and GPS technology (Bakpayev et al. 2022; Baek and Yoon 2020; Castonguay 2021; Childers and Boatwright 2021; Kim, Baek, and Yoon 2020; Kim, Shinaprayoon, and Ahn 2022; Lee, Kim, and Lim 2021; Venmahavong et al. 2019). New technologies will help them collect lifestyle and biometric data, recognize faces and voices, and provide immersive, continuous, interpersonal sensory and emotional experiences.

How should marketers use the new technologies to reach and engage with future generations? How will future consumers process advertising messages in various platforms? How will the new environment change communication dynamics between buyers and sellers? This special issue features some of the latest works examining the future of advertising, combining theory and practice to offer new perspectives that may help academics, practitioners, and policymakers better understand and apply advertising research.

This issue comprises seven original research articles. Most were among the best papers presented at the 2020 Global Marketing Conference in Seoul, and all were rigorously selected after a regular IJA peer review process. The articles collectively contribute to advertising research by (1) providing an overview on the state of advertising and media research (Stewart and Koslow 2021); (2) examining how marketers can best leverage new technologies (Baek et al. 2021; Rialti et al. 2022); (3) analyzing online consumers by segmenting their key search words (Kim and Kang 2021); and (4) identifying psychological, demographic, and cultural factors determining the effectiveness of digital marketing (Choi et al. 2022; Jung and Heo 2021; Zhu, Kim, and Choi 2021).

The authors increase the validity of findings by using various samples and methods, as strengths and weaknesses are mutually complementary. The Stewart and Koslow (2021) article reviews media history to understand the evolution of advertising theory and practice. The Rialti et al. (2022) and Jung and Heo (2021) article report results of surveys of online consumers. The Baek et al. (2021), Choi et al. (2022), and Zhu, Kim, and Choi (2021) articles report experimental data collected from laboratory settings. Collectively, the studies represent consumers from Europe, Asia, and North America, the three continents with the strongest buying powers and largest GDPs (IMF 2022).

Stewart and Koslow (2021) suggest that although media continues evolving and further disrupting advertising research and practice, both traditional and digital media are associated with common general questions about the relationships between advertising and media. That is, many issues framed as unique to digital media are often manifestations of more general issues common to all media. The authors contend that future advertisers will use approaches that combine traditional media research with consumer-directed research.

Baek et al. (2021) report that humanlike AI agents are better than machinelike AI agents for motivating donors to give to charities. That is, donors feel greater psychological closeness and willingness to donate when appeals come from humanlike agents that show particularly broad and toothy smiles. In contrast, they feel disconnection and psychological distance from machinelike AI agents displaying slight or no smiles. Rialti et al. (2022) note that marketers are increasingly adopting gamification as a strategic marketing lever to attract younger consumers. They highlight that gamified advertising could foster social, personal, hedonic, and cognitive benefits, depending on whether audiences perceive the gamification to be coherent with the product/brand pair.

Kim and Kang (2021) investigate segment-specific differences in online user behaviors and advertising costs. Using text analysis of a major online auto insurance company in South Korea, they classify 9,355 search words into four segments. They then compare click-through rates, estimate-to-purchase conversion rates, and click-to-estimate conversion rates to reveal that click behaviors differ in each segment at each stage of online purchase decision processes.

Choi et al. (2022) use a multimethod approach—content analysis and experiments—to investigate the effects and prevalence of sexual appeals in social media. They find that sexually positioned brands are the primary users of sexual appeals and that graphic sexual appeals increase the number of likes and comments on branded social network site contents. Interestingly, consumers are somewhat reluctant to click "like" and to "share" sexual contents, but sexual self-schema levels and individualistic cultural orientations affect intentions to like and share contents. Jung and Heo (2021) observe that motives for using mobile phones shape mobile phone affinities, which then influences intentions to use location-based advertising. Affinity for mobile phones directly transfers to intentions to use location-based advertising and also neutralizes the negative influence of perceived risk about using location-based advertising. Zhu, Kim, and Choi (2021) examine congruity effects between endorser type (celebrity vs. social media influencer), message appeal (soft sell vs. hard sell), and brand characteristics (familiar vs. unfamiliar). For familiar brands, consumers perceive higher fit when social media influencers use hard-sell appeals, and when celebrity endorsers

use soft-sell appeals. For unfamiliar brands, they find congruity only when social media influencers use hard sell appeals.

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