Visibility through clutter: How could brands cut through advertising clutter on Instagram?

Abstract:

Upcoming businesses from all sectors are heavily relying on Instagram in order to build their brand with respect to its user friendliness, low cost, and accessibility. The application offers an abundance of business-friendly tools allowing organizations to build an online store, create collaborations, or even sponsor their own content in order to reach a wider audience greater than their current followership.

The context of this research concerns the food & beverage sector in the middle east which established itself as one of the fastest-growing foodservice markets in the world, and provided and opportunity for numerous restaurant chains both internationally and locally (Allen, 2017). As this sector continues to grow at an unprecedented rate small upcoming restaurants are facing difficulties in capturing consumers' attention on Instagram due to the advertising clutter. There is a general agreement in the literature that advertising clutter reduces the effectiveness of advertisements, as evidenced by decreased recall and recognition. Furthermore, as an upcoming business venture conducting a pre-launch marketing campaign can help provide a better understanding of what to expect from the market before going the extra mile and opening the business (Marvel et al,. 2020). According to Rathore & Ilavarasan (2020) businesses cannot use post-launch techniques in a pre-launch phase as they are unapplicable. Post launch marketing can portray the consumer opinion on social media after testing the product or service, however pre-launch is all about building buzz and excitement around what's to come.

In the quest of uncovering what captures consumers' attention in a advertising cluttered environment, a conceptual framework was designed that consists of cognitive and advertising theories that were never merged in the past literature. Focus groups were conducted based on the framework, and the analysis of those groups pointed towards the use of Ironic Advertising as a novel approach in gaining consumer attention within Instagram's middle east food & beverage sector. Ironic advertising is a mismatch between what consumers expect to see in advertising and what is actually presented. Furthermore, the analysis also shows that the use of opinion leaders is an effective tool in building buzz and excitement combined with the use ironic advertising.

The objective behind building the framework is to provide an Instagram marketing reference for firms to follow in the pre-launch stage that can assist in attaining consumer attention and potentially ease a restaurant's launching phase. The theories utilized in this model are schema incongruity, which is where ironic advertising is derived. Signaling theory is also utilized and consists of several extrinsic ques. AIDA theory is utilized and expanded in order to assist the pre-launch of restaurants. Lastly, bottom-up cognitive processing in visual attention is utilized by taking into account ironic advertising as the salient feature.

As this research employs a mixed methods approach, there will be a quantitative methodology that will further justify the conceptual framework.