

# Exploring the Psychological Links between Users' Reactions to Advertisements on Instagram: Cognitive, Emotional and Conative Effects

Dr. Mourad Boudrioua<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Imen Khouja<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Laboratory of psychological and social studies, Mohamed Khidir University of Biskra (Algeria)

<sup>2</sup>Higher Institute of Fine Arts of Sousse, University of Sousse (Tunisia)

The Author's Email: mourad.boudrioua@univ-biskra.dz<sup>1</sup>, imen-khouja@outlook.com<sup>2</sup>

Received: 05/03/2023; Published: 27/01/2024

## Abstract:

In this article, we explore the psychological interactions between Internet users and advertisements on Instagram, focusing on the cognitive, affective, and conative effects. Through the analysis of the Instagram page 'Orange Tunisie', we explore the subtleties of the psychological link between page followers and advertising content, providing insights into the psychological mechanisms behind user responses in the digital world.

**Keywords:** Advertising, psychology, social networks, cognitive response, emotional response, conative response.

*Tob Regul Sci.*™ 2024;10(1): 671 - 679

DOI: [doi.org/10.18001/TRS.10.1.44](https://doi.org/10.18001/TRS.10.1.44)

## Introduction:

Social media has radically changed the way individuals interact with the digital world, creating an ecosystem where information, social relationships and consumption opportunities are closely intertwined. At the heart of this dynamic, advertising on social networks plays a central role in capturing the attention of users and eliciting a variety of responses. But behind every click, share or purchase prompted by an ad, there are underlying psychological processes.

The interplay between Internet users' cognitive, affective and conative responses to social network advertising is the focus of this study. This research aims to uncover the mechanisms that shape perceptions, trigger emotions and influence recipients' behaviour.

The proliferation of advertising on social networks raises several questions. How do cognitive mechanisms influence the way people perceive advertising? What is the relationship

between cognitive responses and the emotions evoked by advertising? What is the link between cognitive and affective reactions and the resulting actions?

This study seeks to answer these questions in order to uncover the relationship between advertising on social networks and users' different reactions. This study proposes to explore these questions in order to uncover the relationship between advertising on social networks and user psychology. Understanding these mechanisms will not only refine advertising strategies, but also shed light on how these interactions shape the evolving user experience in the digital realm. Thus, the central theme of this research is to understand the psychological connections that underlie users' responses to advertising on social networks.

## **1- Psychology and advertising: A powerful alliance**

The link between advertising and psychology is complex and compelling, combining the art of persuasion with a deep understanding of human behaviour. By using psychological principles, advertisers aim to evoke emotions, make emotional connections with their target audiences and consequently influence their behaviour. The use of colour, captivating visuals and evoking emotions all serve to exploit psychological mechanisms to capture attention and shape perceptions. In this regard, Daniel Kahneman, a psychologist and economist, asserts that "advertising is a form of art that seeks to capture attention and influence perceptions, relying on the complex mechanisms of human psychology"<sup>1</sup>.

The in-depth study of consumer psychology plays a crucial role in the development of tailored advertising strategies that address the unique needs and aspirations of the target audience. The interplay between advertising and psychology reveals a fascinating realm where the power of persuasion and human understanding intertwine to shape the impact of promotional communications.

Advertising on social networks is subtly integrated into the fabric of our online interactions, using the nuances of psychology to achieve its goals. Social media provides a highly targeted space where advertisers can precisely target their audience based on their age, interests, behaviours and demographics, a concept known as behavioural advertising.

Advertising on social networks seeks to create an immediate connection with the recipient by harnessing the power of emotion. The goal is to persuade and influence the behaviour of recipients in an increasingly sophisticated digital environment.

## **2- Deciphering responses to advertising: Cognitive, Affective and Conative**

### **2-1 Cognitive reactions:**

---

<sup>1</sup>- Daniel Kahneman, "System 1 / System 2: The Two Speeds of Thought," Flammarion, 2012, 560 pages.

Advertising is designed to attract attention through its visual elements. The psychology of cognitive perception plays a significant role in how recipients perceive and assimilate these advertising messages. In this sense, Astous et al. (2010), Darpy and Guillard (2016) define cognitive reactions as "knowledge and beliefs about the object of attitude"<sup>2</sup>.

## 2-2 Emotional reactions:

Advertising often aims to evoke certain emotions in the recipient, such as happiness, fear, empathy, etc. It is a reaction experienced as a result of the interaction between the recipient and the brand. According to Jacques Chalifour, a Canadian psychotherapist and educator, an emotional response is defined as "a functional state of the organism involving physiological activation (neuroendocrine response), expressive behaviour (neuromuscular postural and facial response), and subjective experience (feeling)"<sup>3</sup>.

## 2-3 Conative responses:

Conative responses, also known as behavioural responses, refer in our study context to engagement behaviours such as clicks, shares and comments. Behavioural psychology studies how these responses are interpreted by advertising stimuli and how they influence recipients' decisions. Advertising on social networks is a domain where psychology operates at multiple levels, from perception to behavioural response. Understanding these relationships can optimise advertising strategies by tailoring messages to users' expected psychological responses.

Conative responses include various elements related to an individual's past experiences (cognitive and emotional) and immediate reactions to the displayed object.

## 3- Case study: The impact of the "Orange Tunisie" Instagram page on the reactions of its fans

### 3-1 Analysis of the content of the brand page: "Orange Tunisie"

As a case study, we have chosen the "Orange Tunisie" Instagram page. We chose this page because, on the one hand, the telecommunications sector represents a dynamic industry and is one of the leading sectors investing in advertising<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, the "Orange Tunisie" Instagram page shows a well-planned content strategy. The variety of posts is good, alternating between information about its services, useful tips, entertaining content and inspirational material.



<sup>2</sup> D. Darpy and V. Guillard, "Consumer

<sup>3</sup> Emotion Management," 2009, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Tunisia: Advertising Investment, (on tunisie-l-investissement-publicitaire-ac

s," Dunod, Paris, 2016.

ofin.com/publicite/2601-35375- in January 2021.

**Figure 1: Advertising content on the Instagram page "Orange Tunisia."**

The site organises competitions that add a fun dimension and encourage active participation from its subscribers. These clever initiatives increase fan engagement and foster a dialogue between the brand and its community, as well as among the fans themselves, strengthening the bond between the brand and its fans.

This experiential strategy serves as a means for the brand to differentiate itself from competitors and position its offering beyond functional and commercial attributes. It creates enjoyable and memorable experiences for its fans by integrating them in a pleasant and subtle way.

The supporting slogan, written in Tunisian dialect, reads: " رابحين ديما دور العجلة و اريح "برشا كادوات", which translates into English as "Always winners, spin the wheel and win many gifts".

The use of dialect is inevitable in the majority of advertisements on social networks. It follows a logic of familiarity with Internet users, aiming to make them feel closer to their target audience and create an emotional connection. As a result, fans feel highly valued by the brand and are immersed in an experiential perspective, no longer passive consumers who simply receive information.



Figure 2: Advertising content on the Instagram page "Orange Tunisia."

Through its publications, the "Orange" brand site closely follows major events such as Eid, Ramadan and New Year, which places it in the social fabric. In this particular publication, "Orange Tunisie" wanted to send its best wishes to its fans on the occasion of Eid. The slogan of the publication was in Arabic: "إن شاء الله عيدكم مبروك", which translates into English as "If God wills, Eid Mubarak to you".

By going beyond mere commercial discourse, this approach aims to create a connection with its fans and foster a sense of authenticity. By incorporating these moments of different important traditions into its communication strategy, the site becomes a living reflection of the diverse passions and interests of its subscribers, enriching the life of its community and demonstrating its interest in its fans. Beyond promoting the brand's products and services, this emphasis on culture reflects the brand's commitment to its fans. This thoughtful approach allows each fan to feel known and valued by the brand, encourages interaction and engagement, and creates an emotional connection between the brand and its fans.



Figure 3: Advertising content on the Instagram page "Orange Tunisia."

The Orange Tunisie Instagram page stands out for the richness and diversity of its content. It provides valuable content and subtly promotes its services by sharing practical tips with its community on how to use its services effectively and take advantage of advanced features. For example, in the above-mentioned post, Orange Tunisie offers its fans the code to discover the procedure for activating the SOS function. The slogan of this post is bilingual and reads as

follows "L'internet وفات, sos crédit كان ب تسلكهالك", which translates into English as "The internet is exhausted, the solution is sos crédit".

By incorporating French with the local dialect into its advertising content, it creates a linguistic play. This creates a cultural connection and a sense of familiarity with the recipients, making the ad more appealing to fans who navigate between languages on a daily basis. It's like a knowing wink between the ad and the audience.

Most of the advertising content on the Orange Tunisie site is based on illustrations, which are often amusing. This is done to break down the wall that separates or distances people from advertising. Their main objective is to present advertising images from a playful and distracting point of view in order to create images that don't seem too serious, but are able to evoke pleasure while associating with the brand's values.

In addition, the brand page makes intelligent use of vibrant and captivating imagery to create a visually appealing appearance that aims to evoke positive feelings and strengthen the connection between the audience and the brand, fostering a sense of reliability and authenticity. There is also a strong focus on current events, with publications timed to coincide with special occasions, trends and social events.

### 3-2 Quantitative survey:

The aim of our current survey is to investigate the relationship between cognitive, emotional and conative reactions. To this end, we have used a quantitative method based on a survey.

In fact, a quantitative method is defined as follows: "An analysis that measures behaviour (general public, decision-makers in companies, Internet users...)"<sup>5</sup>.

### 3-3 Sample and questionnaire administration

Our study targets fans of the "Orange Tunisie" Instagram page. We therefore selected fans of the brand's page at random, and our selection was entirely random. The number of fans interviewed was 120. The questionnaire is self-administered as it is sent to the selected fans via Instagram's private messaging function. Therefore, we designed our survey using Google Drive. In addition, this method of administration provides respondents with a sense of anonymity for their chosen and submitted responses.

### 3-4 Discussion of results:

---

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Elemento, "Analysis and Market Study: 5 Innovative Tools," available on [journal.dunet.com](http://journal.dunet.com), JDN, October 28, 2014, (accessed in February 2021).

### **3-4-1 Impact on cognitive reactions:**

To assess the cognitive responses of consumers and their judgement of the quality of the content on the "Orange Tunisie" site, we asked them to evaluate the content and gave them 5 response options: (useful, amusing, playful, boring, disturbing).

The results showed a positive cognitive response of 67%. This percentage can be attributed to the dynamic visual elements accompanied by a clear message, which captured the user's attention from the start and generated a significant level of engagement.

Therefore, based on the experience of fans of the brand page, recipients can form an image based on their perceptions to judge the quality of the brand page's content.

In line with this idea, a study conducted by Holiman and Romley (2014) shows that content is considered high quality by consumers when it provides them with value. Similarly, according to Holiman and Romley:

"You need to create content that your audience wants and needs. Often this content will have little to do with the actual products you sell and more to do with the audience you want to attract"<sup>6</sup>.

Indeed, the perceived quality of a brand is closely linked to how much it invests in creating quality content that meets the expectations of its recipients. If a brand site such as "Orange Tunisie" pays particular attention to the relevance and quality of its content, it demonstrates its commitment to useful communication, which has a positive impact on the perceived quality of its content.

### **3-4-2 Impact on emotional responses:**

In order to assess the emotional reactions of the fans and their emotions towards the "Orange Tunisie" site, we gave them five response options: (The brand's posts give me pleasure, This brand is like a friend to me, I have a lot of affection for this brand, I would be devastated if this brand were to disappear).

The results showed a significant positive emotional response with a rate of 58%. The content of the "Orange Tunisie" brand page managed to evoke a sense of optimism and create an emotional connection with the user's desire for well-being.

The perceived quality of content is also related to the affective dimension of brand loyalty. It is worth mentioning the research of Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi, marketing researchers, which shows that consumers develop an attachment to a brand when they appreciate its quality

---

<sup>6</sup>- G. Holliman and J. Rowley, "Business to Business Digital Content Marketing: Marketers' Perceptions of Best Practice," *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 2014, p. 269-293.

and develop a rich relationship with it. In addition, according to Park et al. (2006), attachment is strengthened when the recipient develops a belief in the perception of relevant and high quality content. This corroborates our findings and confirms the relationship between the two.

### **3-4-3 Effects on Conative Responses:**

In order to assess the conative responses of the fans of the "Orange Tunisie" site, we asked the following question: "To what extent do you estimate your level of participation within the brand page?" The results showed a markedly positive conative response, with a rate of 52% of fans showing their engagement with the "Orange" brand page.

According to marketing researchers Ducoffe and Curlo (2000), participation is not random but depends on quality and relevance, which measure the quality of the publication.

In addition, two studies conducted by marketing researchers Shimt (2012) and Ashley and Tuten (2015) show that high quality and relevant content leads the target audience to engage. These results can also be explained by the fact that the Orange Tunisie brand page shares content that implicitly encourages fans to interact. This can be achieved through text that calls for action, arouses curiosity or offers games, among other approaches. The brand page strategically uses these implicit techniques to encourage fan engagement.

### **3-4-4 Interpretation of results:**

The overall analysis of this case study shows a significant convergence of cognitive, emotional and conative responses. The in-depth understanding of the benefits has stimulated positive emotions, thereby creating a concrete incentive to act. This case study illustrates how a social media advertising campaign can truly engage audiences on multiple levels and successfully use psychological mechanisms to positively influence their behaviour.

In fact, if the content is well received by the consumer, it will meet their expectations and be in line with their mindset. As our survey shows, the effect of perceived quality takes the form of a positive attitude towards the brand and consequently influences the emotional responses we measured in this study, such as brand attachment. In addition, as our research has shown, positive perceived quality encourages engagement.

This study of reactions to the promotional content in our case study provides important insights into how psychological mechanisms influence fan responses. It is clear that the content strategy developed by the brand page was successful in capturing fans' attention and driving them to action. This relationship highlights the importance of understanding the motivations and psychological barriers that underlie behavioural responses.

### **Conclusion:**



Based on a comprehensive study of the psychological connection between users and advertising on the Instagram page of the "Orange Tunisie" brand, it is clear that cognitive, emotional and conative effects are not simply superficial reactions, but rather complex aspects of the user experience. A careful analysis of consumers' reactions reveals how advertising content influences perceptions, emotions and behaviour. The psychology behind these interactions highlights the importance of understanding the target audience. By closely examining the nuances of cognitive responses, exploring the twists and turns of emotional responses, and deciphering conative meanings, marketers can refine their advertising strategies to better meet users' expectations and preferences. The "Orange Tunisie" Instagram page serves as a compelling case study of how to build genuine connections with fans through a deep understanding of their motivations and the creation of meaningful, emotionally evocative experiences that positively influence user behaviour. The link between advertising, psychology and individual response is therefore intrinsically linked to how advertising messages are perceived, felt and interpreted.

#### The bibliography:

- [1] Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Flammarion, 2012, 560 pages.
- [2] D. Darpy and V. Guillard, *Consumer Behaviour 1st ed: Concepts and tools*, Dunod, Paris, 2016.
- [3] G. Holliman and J. Rowley, "Business to Business Digital Content Marketing: Marketers' Perceptions of Best Practice", *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 2014, pp. 269-293.
- [4] Julien Vidal, *Advertising and Psychology*, IN PRESS, 2009, 216 pages.
- [5] LOUKOUMAN Amidou, *Social Media Marketing, Effective use of social media to promote your business*, Ma Edition, 2014, 368 pages.
- [6] Pierre Merklé, *Sociology of social networks*, La Découverte, 2016, 128 pages.
- [7] Pierre Elemento, "Analysis and market research: 5 innovative tools", available on [journal.dunet.com](http://journal.dunet.com), JDN, 28 October 2014, (accessed in February 2021).
- [8] Hani SAFI, Marwan AZOURI and Andre AZOURI, "The Influence of Social Networks on Consumer Behaviour: The Case of the Luxury Goods Industry", Elsevier, 2018.
- [9] -Tunisia: Advertising Investment, (online), available at: <http://www.agenceecofin.com/publicite/2601-35375-tunisie-l-investissement-publicitaire-ade-passe-107-millions-en-2015>, accessed in January 2021.