

ATTENTION TO FACEBOOK ADVERTISING AND ITS IMPACT ON STUDENTS

A Thesis

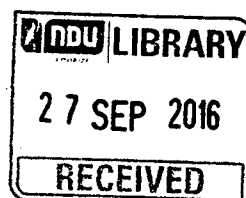
Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in *Advertising*

by

Therese Selim Nakad

Department of Media Studies
Notre Dame University – Louaize
Lebanon

Spring, 2015



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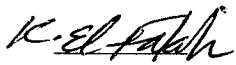
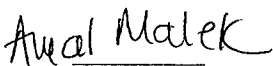

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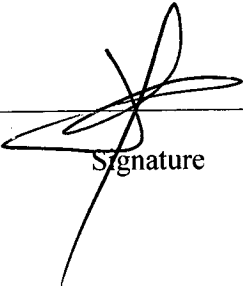
Spring, 2015

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The Thesis Release Form

I, Theresa Nallad, authorize Notre Dame University – Louaize to supply copies of my thesis to libraries or individuals on request.


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Acknowledgments

I am grateful to God for the good health and wellbeing that were necessary to complete this thesis that required a lot of work, research and dedication.

Still, completing it would not have been possible without the support of my dedicated committee members. Therefore, I would like to express my sincere thanks to:

My advisor Dr. Khalid El-Fakih who helped put me on the right track and provided me with all the necessary facilities for the research. I appreciate his patience, understanding, and support. I thank him for taking the time out of from his busy schedule to serve as my advisor. His valuable guidance motivated me with the research and writing of this thesis.

I could not have imagined having a better advisor, who has made all the difference in my graduate school journey.

I am also grateful to my first reader Dr. Amal Malek for her constant supervision throughout my writing process and for her time and effort in helping me complete my thesis.

I also take the opportunity to express gratitude to my second reader Dr. Christy Mady for her help, effort and motivation.

Last, I would like to thank my parents for their nonstop encouragement, and spiritual support throughout my life. Without them, this thesis would not have seen the light.

I also place on record, my sincere appreciation to all, who, directly or indirectly, provided a helping hand in this venture.

Abstract

Social networking sites have opened the doors of communication allowing people from around the world to engage and to interact with each other. As one of the most outstanding social networking communities, Facebook boasts over 1 billion active users, visiting the platform several times a day.

The purpose of this study is to examine whether Lebanese students pay attention to the ads displayed on Facebook and what kind of attitudes they have toward Facebook ads. A thorough revision of relevant literature in the fields of online advertising, Facebook advertising attention, media elements, and online advertising impact was conducted to establish the hypotheses and the theoretical foundations of this study. Three hypotheses were tested on a sample of 426 Lebanese university students surveyed from Balamand and Notre Dame University-Louaize and the results were analyzed quantitatively.

Results showed that 34% of students who were enrolled in a Facebook or group member never showed interest in ads, 41.8% rarely paid attention to Facebook Ads and 3.1% did pay attention. Moreover, 57% did not even click on a Facebook ads in comparison with 4% who said they did. Only 2.1% of the students tend to buy products based on ads provided while 52% either block or ignore the ad.

The findings supported hypotheses one and three. Hypothesis one stated that the more time students spend on using Facebook, the more interest ads will be generated by users while hypothesis three said that positive effect and increase on ad liking are generated from media elements. The second hypothesis which states that being informed of Facebook advertising has a significant positive influence on students' attitude towards Facebook ads was not supported.

Keywords: Facebook, Social media, Attention, Like, Share, Comment, Irritation, Avoidance.

I. Introduction

Attention to Facebook Advertising and Its Impact on Students

With the advent of the new millennium, the Internet took its place as one of the major media of communication in the current society leading to essential dynamic and revolutionary changes in the history of advertising. These changes have been driven by the development of the new technologies which provide an effective communication platform for organizations prompting them to move their national and international branding, commerce and customer relations online (Al Khasawneh, 2012). This shift required research and expertise in website design, new online consumer behavior and an understanding of consumers' perceptions of online organizations. "Over time, the Internet has become a highly personalized information space in which consumers can tailor their media exposure to their specific needs and desires" (Liang, Lai, and Ku 2006, p.23).

Virtual community, social networking community, social networking service, and online community are words that are recently brought up in general conversations, media and business words. The virtual community is the social network of individuals who interact through specific social media, has a great effect on decision making. Consumers use virtual communities as social and information networks (de Valck, Van Burggen and Wierenga 2009). "In fact, the power of a virtual community, such as Facebook, as a reference group, is related to the heterogeneity of its member base" (de Valck, Van Burggen and Wierenga 2009, p.185). "The virtual community differs from any other community only by being in a "virtual Space"; it still provides the same sociability support, information and sense of belonging" (de Moor and Weigand, 2007, p.223). "People from all social classes interact and engage with each other even though they might never meet in real life" (de Valck, Van Burggen and Wierenga, 2009, p.185).

Having realized the importance of virtual spaces including social networking websites to the advertising industry, marketers have begun advertising on such websites to broaden their product messages. “Advertising is a persuasive form of communication used to persuade an audience to take or continue some action, usually with respect to a commercial offering, or political or ideological support as well as to increase sales” (Wikipedia, 2015). Advertising acts as a decision influencer for the consumer: it increases the variety of choices when dealing with the purchase of a certain product.

Throughout the years, different media have been used for advertising. Early advertising relied on traditional media. The forms of traditional media advertising are the print, audio, and audio-visual. Other forms of advertising include outdoor advertising, such as billboards and electric displays as well as ads in buses, subways, taxis, airports, and bus terminals.

New technology came to add a new dimension to the many forms of advertising. Advertisers are now relying on innovative and different modes of interactive technology to effectively market their products or services, using the Internet. Online advertising is an effective tool that links users to the website of a certain company or product where information such as new product announcements, contests, and product catalogs appear.

With the new technology and the online communication, media markets are increasingly driven by User-Generated Content (UGC). “User-Generated Content refers to media content created or produced by the general public rather than by paid professionals and is primarily distributed on the Internet. User-generated content sites provide platforms for information sharing, video sharing, photo sharing, and blogging. UGC sites are expected to generate \$4.3 billion by 2011, more than four times what U.S. user-generated content sites generated in 2007” (Gangadharbatla, 2010, p.5). Within the user-generated content sites, the role and growth of social networking sites has been remarkable. Facebook, for example, is

becoming a key communication channel for investors to interact with each other, with their friends and colleagues, as well as with the organizations from which they consume (Farrar, 2008). Facebook has, in fact, become the most popular destination on the Internet. (eMarketer, 2011).

It has more than 1 billion active members worldwide who often visit the platform several times a week (Facebook Newsroom, 2013). Since the website became a public access model in 2006, its growth has been extraordinary: the platform has developed and commercialized rapidly, introducing new features and services for its users (Deirdre O'Brien, and Ann M.T., 2012). It is considered the most exceptional social networking site that allows users to communicate with each other easily and that can be accessed from almost everywhere in the world. Also, Facebook has become one of the major activities in a college student's daily life.

As a virtual social media platform, Facebook offers an easy and cost-effective way for both profit and nonprofit sectors to communicate product information, promote their products and services, and build brand communities. The interactive capabilities the Facebook offers, also makes virtual content-sharing activities easy for users and encourages target audiences to participate in marketing activities (Thackeray et al. 2008). In order to get the attention of potential consumers and to influence their attitudes towards a brand or an organization, this type of personal participation becomes effective (Thackeray et al., 2008). Thus, Facebook's major strengths lie in the fact that it is a place for social networking and relationship building, and an ideal platform for facilitating favorable consumer behavior and promoting brand engagement (Tuten, 2008). For these reasons, much attention has been given to Facebook advertising, how students respond to such advertising and what particular factors drive consumers to hold a positive attitude towards Facebook advertising.

A. Problem Statement

“Research related to Facebook advertising and students’ attitudes and behaviors towards the platform is an area of extensive academic research. A number of theoretical frameworks highlight the importance of this research, justify its focus and stress its potential influence on the domains of Internet advertising and consumer behavior” (Alsamydai and AlKhaswaneh, 2013, p.42)

On one hand, researchers have been extensively studying the subject, because advertising remains the leading source of revenue for most social networking sites and for Facebook in particular. On the other hand, market experts have been critical for Facebook. They argued that the platform is inappropriate for marketing purposes because people use Facebook as a means to stay in touch with friends and not as an advertising information source. Many companies, accordingly, are still hesitant to advertise on Facebook because of the lack of control on the content, while there are still no available data whether ads on Facebook really help to sell a product or a service or not. (Carrera et al., 2008; Charlesworth, 2009; Dax, 2009; Gillin, 2009).

B. Research Objectives

This study investigates different advertising strategic techniques used on Facebook and their effectiveness. The purpose is to provide a comprehensive analysis on how university students in Lebanon use Facebook advertising, and if users respond to marketing communication initiatives or not. More precisely, this thesis explores whether students pay attention to the ads displayed and studies the attitudes they have toward Facebook ads. Do they click, share, comment, like, respond, recall, get irritated, avoid advertising or have a purchase intent?

It should be noted that while Facebook ads do not appear as banners in the center, top or left sidebars of Facebook pages, they are shown in different placements depending on the target. Promoting a page post (Fan page), a sponsored page that Facebook offers with a special discount or promotion, is also considered in this research.

In particular, the following research objectives have been considered important for investigation, within the broader research objective addressed in this study which is Attention to Facebook advertising and its impact on students:

- To identify if Facebook users are aware of the advertisements.
- To identify if advertising via Facebook motivates users to buy.
- To try to find out if users trust Facebook advertising messages.
- To identify the factors related to message content that influence students' behaviors toward Facebook advertising.

II. Literature Review

Facebook was launched by Mark Zuckerberg on February 4, 2004, at Harvard University. Its original goal was to help students at the university communicate with each other (Krivak, 2008). The platform has experienced a boom to become the most popular social networking site of our times. Since it opened to the public, it has been allowing people to communicate and to stay in contact with friends (Alexa, 2010; Facebook, 2010a; Facebook, 2010b) and to build a loyal and reliable relationship with clients by targeting the right audience and creating a personalized content suitable for each customer's needs (Chaffey and Smith, 2005; Facebook, 2010c; Laudon and Traver, 2008). "Facebook, which has 1.35 billion individuals worldwide checking the service at least once a month, is recently entering a crowded and unfamiliar field with the workplace service" (Goel, 2015). A work-friendly platform for businesses has been recently created by Facebook team. It is considered a new system to make friends with businesses connected and to share documents and files: the employer creates an account which is separate from any personal Facebook they may have. Everyone in the company is automatically in the network and every post by any employer on his/her timeline is visible to everyone else in the corporate network. Advertising was ruled out on the system yet, it could be an ad-free option as well as a paid option.

All companies aim to promote their products or brands through different platforms: Facebook ads (similar to traditional online banners), Apps (applications, games...), and fan pages. Fan pages are pages within Facebook created by marketers. Unlike personal profiles, fan pages do not gain "friends" but "fans" which are people who choose to like a page, only interested users may become a fan for a certain page by linking their profile page with the fan page that contains several features such as integrated applications, discussion boards, or even Facebook shops (Ivens and Rauchnabel, 2011). Every fan page can gain an unlimited number

of fans, holds a “Wall” where a brand and also fans can publish postings such as text, videos, pictures, etc. Fans can react to those postings by clicking the “I Like” button or by writing a comment. Marketers use this function daily to keep consumers active and interact with the brands or products. An average Facebook user is a fan of about nine brands (DDB, 2010). Several studies reveal that fan pages can be a very effective marketing tool (Dholakia, 2010; Fox et al., 2010). Facebook, for instance, is very popular; its users are wide-spread in a vast geographic area, so marketers adopted advertising via Facebook as one of the modern ways to distribute messages concerning their products.

Facebook continues to add new features and developments to the platform on constant basis (Roberts, 2010). Because it is free to create an account, Facebook has to generate its revenue from advertising, to be more specific from companies that want to access members via marketing and advertising activities on the website (Lilley et al, 2012).Vascellaro (2008) suggests that advertisements on Facebook are experimental and their revenues may not be high, unlike other social networking sites. There are a variety of ways to use Facebook for advertising. The new added options and different features allow creativity and experimentation in advertising. Each Facebook account has a personal profile page, a “wall” to write public messages to other users, applications such as photos, events, groups, videos, notes and links as well as an inbox to write private messages. Also, users can add friends, upload and “like” photos and videos, maintain blogs and share posts and activities for free. Restaurants, cafes, bars, health and fitness centers, artists and even politicians create their own pages which users can interact with by inviting or adding them to their profile. Prominent global brands Coca Cola, Red Bull and Audi are on Facebook.

A survey by Salesforce Marketing Cloud in 2015 about the most used and effective social media networking channels found that Facebook continues to be favored as the social channel for marketers with 80% using the social network and 73% believing in its

effectiveness. Out of the 70% of respondents who use Twitter, 68% find it to be effective while out of the 62% who use LinkedIn, 69% consider it effective, and out of the 56% who use Google+ and YouTube, 69% trusting in their effectiveness. The previous cited social networks are the only ones used by more than half of the respondents. (Beck, 2015)

Ads on Facebook can be created by users either through Facebook's self-service interface or through a certified ads API developer such as Qwaya. Facebook ads are displayed across the platform, and some formats are eligible to show in the News feed (Qwaya, 2015)

There are two categories of Facebook advertisements: Ads or Sponsored stories.

The first category includes ten different ad types: App ad, Domain ad, Event ad, Page like ad and page post ads. These ads are authorized to appear depending on their type:

- App ads are ads for applications on Facebook; there is no destination for this type, and they always take people to the application itself when clicked.
- Domain ads are the classic Facebook ads that you see on the right hand side. Usually the domain ads are clickable, linkable and takes you off the site. A direct response campaign is used where the conversation takes place outside the platform.
- Event ads are ads for Facebook events. They are placed everywhere and users can join the event directly from the ad.
- Page like ads are ads for Facebook page that can be liked directly from the ad.
- Page post ads are posts promoted or sponsored in order to increase their reach. When appearing in the News feed, page posts ads can be liked, commented and shared just like unsponsored page posts. Five different page post ads types are available: link, photo, text and videos.
- Offer ads promote an offer in any store or online.

The second category of advertisement is the sponsored stories which are messages coming from friends about them engaging with a business” (Facebook, 2012, p.6). In this category the advertiser cannot create the content of the ad; it is created by Facebook users. “Sponsored stories are the most interactive form of ads on Facebook” (Qwaya, 2015).

As one of the largest and fastest growing social networking sites, Facebook’s goal is to become the operating system of the Internet and to make the world more open and transparent by giving everyone the right to share and to connect with each other (Facebook, 2010d; Laudon and Traver, 2008). Effectively, visiting Facebook has become an essential part of users’ daily lives, a necessity like oxygen, food and water, as users check and see the site more than two or three times per day. According to Facebook statistics, 50% of active users log on to the platform on a daily basis while the average user has 130 friends and is connected to 80 community pages, groups and events (Facebook, 2010b). The use of Facebook is the highest among individuals aged between 18 and 25, whereas female users outnumber male users (Eldon, 2010; Smith, 2010).

According to Elisabeth Cohen, a CNN medical correspondent, therapists are seeing more and more “Facebook addicts” who become uncontrollable Facebook users as the site interferes with their relationships, jobs and normal daily life (Roberts, 2010).

There are a number of reasons why people are attracted to Facebook. A recent study shows that users are attracted to Facebook because it builds on the following: Curiosity, when checking other profiles pages and looking at friends photos; enjoyment that allows easy communication with others friends, and excitement by sending gifts and playing games with others (Palmer and Koenig-Lewis, 2009).

Facebook’s statistics (2009) noted that more than 70% of Facebook users utilize platform applications on a monthly basis. “Since these platforms are optional, it is significant that users are seeking out additional Facebook features and uses for the site. As the popularity

of added features continues, the purpose of Facebook has shifted for more than casual networking with friends” (Roberts, 2010, p.25). Social network gaming company “Zynga” has dominated Facebook with applications such as FarmVille, Café World and Mafia Wars. Zynga has over 126 million active users monthly, making it the leader in the Facebook development platform (O’Neill, 2009). Approximately, 50 million dollars were spent on Facebook advertising annually and this figure is expected to increase as the company continues to develop over the year (O’Neill, 2009). Zynga and other games allow Facebook users to purchase virtual products with a credit card as a means to advance further in the game. This technique leads to more advertising revenue and to the development of ads on the site (Roberts, 2010).

Advertising on Facebook allows advertisers to select the exact demographic profile of audiences they wish to target to segment users nationally and geographically. As part of the ads platform, a segmentation tools is available to test different segments: by gender, age, location and interests. This helps advertisers avoid any waste of time or energy on people outside their target market. At this stage, advertisers can view the results of who is clicking their ad and modify it accordingly. Click Through Rate (CTR) is recently used in Facebook advertising as an alternative to banner ads which have lately lost their popularity (Facebook, 2010a)

“The Kenshoo study is a global leader company in digital marketing software that recently published a new report which evaluate the performance of Facebook ads in a number of countries: The study (2012, p.1) reveals that:

Countries with high Facebook penetration represent great opportunities for advertisers. On one hand, in Mexico and Turkey, the platform is popular, heavily used and checked via mobile devices; marketers take advantage of efficient Facebook costs per thousand of rates. On the other hand, the United States and the

United Kingdom have the highest costs per thousand of rates, with a high attention to ads from marketers. In the above mentioned countries, Facebook advertising is popular. However, a high click through the rate indicates that Italians are willing to interact with Facebook ads. The country has a low cost recommended bid from Facebook; so ads can be placed relatively inexpensively” (p.1).

To test the effectiveness of Facebook’s advertisers’ micro targeting method, Lessin (2008) created his own Facebook advertisement. The ad was targeted to his girlfriend, so he typed in her specific demographic (a Wall Street Journal Reporter, 25 years old, living in San Francisco, graduated from Harvard University in 2006, majored in history, etc...) and was able to target the ad directly and placed it on her Facebook website or page. This test demonstrates advertisers’ ability to nano-target a market in a unique way that was not possible in traditional advertising.

“The platform’s impact is highly remarkable in the area of advertising: First, ads are the most important element that include a text line, a title and a picture which is limited in length and size respectively. They are displayed either in the news feed which are more effective or in the advertising space of each site” (Maurer and Wiegman, 2011, p.489). However, traffic is hardly generated through ads, since users are not interested in them; but they are interested in the organizations’ news and might look for more information on the organization’s homepage (Maurer and Wiegmann, 2011). Whenever a user clicks on the ad, he/she is automatically linked and directed to a website or to the site within Facebook. This system is based on the possibility to target the exact audience that marketers want to approach.

Second, Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook CEO, recently introduced what he called a “social ad” that is designed to help advertisers create some of the best ad campaigns ever built (Klassen, 2007). Many advertisers have collaborated with Facebook to create social ads

where users can post any item they rent or buy and recommend it to their friends. Blockbuster is an example of an advertiser that associates with Facebook. It is an online marketplace where users can post the items they rent or buy; thereby recommending the same to their friends. At this stage, users are more likely to pay attention to a message that comes from a friend they can trust (Gangadharbatla, 2010).

Social networking sites, then, provide a great opportunity for companies to increase their interaction between the business and customer, a direct way and a more targeted means to reach your audience. According to Learmouth (2009), Facebook, among other social networking sites, is an effective marketing platform because networking and communication are already taking place. It lets users share their interactions with different brands throughout their friend's networks through a news feed and a program called Beacon (Klaasen, 2007). The platform presents an entirely new way to examine a product or brand: "It has not only transformed the research and purchase consideration phase, but it also provides shoppers with a platform to advocate for the products and stores they love" (Swedowsky, 2009). Product reviews, for example, could appear on a fan page or in an application.

Analytic Partners (2013), a global marketing consultancy, conducted a survey in New York about Facebook users' behaviors in response to Newsfeed advertising. Half of the 735 respondents occasionally pay attention to and/or click on advertisements in their newsfeeds and 85% are more inclined to pay attention or to click on a Newsfeed advertisement served to them on a computer as opposed to a mobile device. Furthermore, this same study showed that 60% of Facebook users are more likely to pay attention to a company product or a service ads that are already on Facebook, 27% followed by a sponsored story and last of all, 13% pay attention to a non-related Facebook advertisement targeted for them. When it comes to ad content, 67% of Facebook users are most likely to click on discount offers such as promotional offers and coupons, 41% on contests or giveaways and 25% on videos.

Concerning Facebook automatically playing videos, the survey shows that 83% of the respondents found any kind of video that automatically played in their newsfeed disturbing and ignore them accordingly. On the contrary, 17% feel attracted to watching videos automatically played. We can notice that more males (34%) are likely to click on video content than females (19%). The video advertising average is more targeted towards the younger demographic, ages varying between 18 and 44 (31%) compared to ages 45 and older (19%).

When talking about retargeted advertisements through Facebook, 51% of the users say that they do not notice these types of advertisements, 49% do notice them and 30% say that it does not make them more likely to act on it such as click, like, comment, share or buy. We can say that retargeting ads can encourage action. Actions are identified by Facebook users: 35% share a content from a Facebook page they have “Liked”, 31% click on Facebook page because a friend had “liked” it and 17% actually buy a product that a friend recommended on Facebook, the remainder 46% users had no action and not done of these things. (Analytic Partners, 2013)

Nancy Smith, founder and CEO of Analytic Partners noted that “it’s not a surprise that Facebook has emerged as a mainstream advertising channel. In fact when we asked survey participants which platform they’d most prefer to receive advertisements on, it was Facebook that scored the highest against Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and others” (Analytic Partners, 2013, p.1).

To test ad perception in the eye of consumer and what would make Facebook advertising more effective, a recent survey using Facebook site was conducted in 2010 on undergraduate students at four major universities in United States. 74.2% of the participants were female and 25.8% were male. The study showed that the average participant had between 500 and 1000 Facebook friends and this number is considered normal and important

since “the average user on the site has only 130 friends” according to Facebook’s Statistics (2009). This can explain that participants in this survey are active on the site. Based on the results generated from the survey, the majority of students are fully aware of advertising on Facebook, with less than 5% of respondents out of 100 from each university are not noticing it at all. “News Feed” home page and on the side bar of other people’s profiles are the most common places ads were seen. These ads are typically considered and displayed as traditional banner ads and students did not notice ads in other places such as Platform applications; which indicate that they are not fully aware about untraditional advertising on Facebook. When asked about specific Facebook ads, 88% of total respondents mentioned seeing the ads that directly target their demographic. Many suggestions were elaborated by students for effective advertising such as giveaways, promotions, more eye-popping ads to catch user’s attention. At this stage, advertisers should take in consideration the above suggestions to their advantage when conducting an advertising campaign on Facebook” (Roberts, 2010).

Shannon, Stabeler and Quigley (2009) compare billboards advertisements to Facebook. They came up with results that showed the privileges that advertising on Facebook has over billboard advertising. First, Facebook ads can be repeated on users’ pages and this repetition grabs their attention. Second, individuals who have many connections in their network are more valuable to shops because they will have more impact among their elite groups.

A number of media elements, such as pictures, colors, size of the posting, design features, videos, graphs, and the amount of text, play an important role in Facebook advertising, and an invitation to respond to the post affects students liking of the postings as well. A number of likes shows whether or not Internet users pay attention to a posting.

Attention to Advertisements

Before consumers can be affected by advertising messages, they need first to pay attention. “Attention is the allocation of mental resources, visual or cognitive, to visible or conceptual objects”. (Teixeira, T, 2014, p. 1). “Previous studies indicated that people can be influenced by ads without directly paying attention, but these are myths” (Teixeira, 2014, p.2). “People who were exposed to subliminal advertising of Coca-Cola and popcorn in a movie theater were more likely to buy these products after they left the theater. The academic community studying advertising topic agrees that to have a certain impact on consumers, a small amount of attention is necessary for ads and higher impact is generated from greater attention”(Teixeira, 2014, p.2).

In many communication forms, advertising depends on the message, sender, receiver, medium and context. Ads purposes are multiple: to build awareness, to sell products and fight off competition. Three components are always present in advertising: ad content, attention and persuasion. Ad content is important to capture the consumer’s attention. Once the attention is captured, the ad needs to persuade the consumer by changing his/her attitude or behavior regarding a certain product or brand. Two main questions advertisers need to take into consideration: how to capture consumers’ attention in a cost effective way and how to turn this attention into purchase behavior. “Traditionally, ad exposure has been forced upon consumers, assuming attention as a given” (Teixeira, 2014, p. 2).

Rossiter and Percy (1997) argue that attention is a crucial initial answer to advertising messages. Rossiter and Percy (1997), claim that pictures are the key element for gaining attention as they may pull the reader in. It shows that pictures are processed more easily than texts and are more likely to transport a message (Meyers-Levy and Malaviya, 1999).

Moreover, prior research demonstrates that the size of the advertisement in both print ads and online banners has a positive effect on ad awareness, recognition or liking of the ad,

even if the amount of text has a negative influence (Fritz et al., 2007; Robinson et al., 2007; Baltas, 2003; Trohdahl and Jones, 1965). Large font sizes, pictures and white spaces are used in large ads because they are more eye-catching and provide more opportunities of not overstuffing the ad; they affect the positive liking of the advertising message. In contrast, advertising messages with a large amount of text are less likely to be perceived or processed because the text is not observed as pictures in advertising (Rossiter and Percy, 1997).

Lee and Ahen (2012) investigated how attention levels affect the users. Through an eye-tracking approach, they measured the level of attention that results from ad exposure and explore how different levels of attention influence users in conscious and unconscious ways. Animation was considered one of the most popular attention grabbing tools that was examined more specifically the investigated was the effect of animation on attention and how it moderates cognitive processing. After measuring and analyzing 40 users' actual eye movement data, Lee and Ahen (2012) found that animation in banner ads not only attracts less attention than static ads, but also reduces the positive effect of attention on the memory. Also, 30 out 40 of the participants in this experiment could not recognize the advertised brand. The animated banner ad was unconsciously processed and did influence attitudes toward the brand. The results suggest that animation in banner ads does not necessarily increase users' attention, but that even if a user does not consciously notice a banner ad, the user's attitude toward the brand is influenced (Lee and Ahn, 2012).

Furthermore, there is an avoidance of online advertising in the general Internet environment. For example, pop up ads are usually disturbing and people usually ignore them: they are perceived as clutter. Shavitt, Lowery and Haefner (1998) state that consumers prefer products that are not advertised because they are well aware that advertising contributes to the cost of purchased products. They believe that the majority of advertising is manipulative

and not informative. If the ad is perceived as manipulative, it will have a negative effect on the consumer's perceptions of the advertised product.

There are a number of reasons behind users' avoidance of online ads. Among them is, ad clutter where consumers are exposed to many ads, distrust where consumers lost trust in ad messages, and short attention period; consumers are not motivated to watch long ads. These factors play an important role in decreasing the attention to ads. Not all brands have short, clear and simple ad message that can be effectively communicated to people with great attention. Some messages to be understood require constant attention. The best option to attract attention is to use ad content with dual purpose: increase attention and then convert it into persuasion.

Two research projects explain how content could be used to increase attention. The First project consisted of "82 ads for different products with various levels of humor and non-humor entertainment have been done by Teixeira (2014). Viewers' reactions to the entertainment content in these ads were recorded by filming their faces while they watched the ads at home or at work. A fast-tracking technology was used to detect the faces expressions such as smile and laughter to examine the total amount of entertainment experienced throughout the ad and how it is related to each person's decision of whether or not they fully watched the ad and their intent to purchase the product. Teixeira (2014, p.17) found that "the more the viewer was entertained, the more he/she was likely to view the ad until the end. Viewers who watched the ad till the end, the more they were entertained, the higher their intent to purchase the product but only at a certain point after which more entertainment led to fewer purchases." Pepsi ad for example generated 3 different ads in the 2011 Super Bowl: "Catch", "Love hurts" and "First date". Low entertainment aroused by "Catch" ad with low viewing rates (18%) and low purchase intent; while much more entertaining, more viewers (45%) and very high purchase were recorded for "Love Hurts" ad.

Concerning “First Date”, the ad was the most entertaining and watched by more viewers to the end (81%) but the average Pepsi purchase dropped. The previous results shows that using entertainment to create more engaging ads always helps to attract attention; however, advertisers should balance between increasing attention and persuading consumers, as excessive attention paid can prevent persuasion that leads to low purchase intent.

“In the other project, ads were also showed to consumers as prior project and face-tracking system was also used to measure reactions (joy, surprise,) but this time a personality questionnaire was given to each consumer before the ads. For each ad shown, consumers were allowed either to view or skip it, and if they viewed, they could share it with others. At this point, it was expected that ads for brands people liked or they were familiar would be more likely to be viewed till the end and this what it was found. Concerning selecting or sharing the ad, the brand did not matter; being unfamiliar brand is just as likely as a familiar to be shared if it gets viewed. For the emotional content, feelings of joy and surprise are very important to explain viewing as well as sharing. Furthermore, viewers’ personality would also have such a strong influence on broad sharing” (Teixeira, 2014, p.17).

According to Maurer and Wiegmann (2011, p.493), “users do not notice that ads on Facebook influence their purchase decisions because ads are not meeting their needs well. An explanation of this point could be that organizations do not invest neither at the right time nor in the appropriate target filters in order to meet the different customers’ needs.” Maurer and Wiegmann (2011, p.493) state that “There is no interaction between users and ads because users are not clicking regularly on the ads and do not evaluate them; they think that Facebook ads are annoying and they perceive them differently.” Fan pages which are the direct link between users and an organization, can be established at this stage. As mentioned before, Fan pages can have an infinite numbers of fans and advertising is more efficient, easily promoted and used by marketers recently. Postings on fan pages usually contain advertising messages

and may increase the consumers' interaction with the brand. Many members who are using Facebook are more likely to become fans of a certain page that meets their demands and needs. Therefore, in order to keep members visiting their fan pages regularly, the major focus should be to retain their pages up to date with the latest pictures, news and videos that satisfy the fans' interest and encourages them to visit the page more often before any purchase decision. There are indications that users are more likely to purchase products from brands they are fans of; by using events and interesting news, a fan can turn into a buying customer (Maurer and Wiegmann, 2011). Also, invitations to respond to a certain posting gives consumers room for self-expression; consumers interact with brands online which lead to several positive effects especially if the interaction is rewarding. At the end, individuals feel connected with an interaction or a fan page which may increase the perceived familiarity and thus the liking (Shen and Khalifa, 2008).

Contextual relevance is defined as an important form of targeted ads relevant to an audience in Internet advertising because advertisers seek to deliver the targeted ads that match the context of online users' decisions. According to Li and Bukovac (1999), contextually relevant ads attract more attention and influence Internet advertising effectiveness and consequently Facebook relevant sponsors were more likely to stimulate recall, brand evaluations and purchase intent more likely than irrelevant sponsors (Rodgers, 2004). The issue of credibility in this case is highly taken into consideration. Rodgers (2004) shows that a sponsor's chance of success, even if the linkage of sponsorship is relevant, will be offended in case a lack of credibility exists in a site.

Advertising acceptance in online communities is also an issue. Zeng et al. (2009) explain that social identity relates positively to the advertising acceptance in online social networking communities; users perceive an ad as more valuable and present more behavioral responses to it, if the advertising is more relevant to the community theme and therefore more

relevant to their social identities. More than that, if consumers mistrust the media, they are less likely to pay attention to either the content/message or the advertising (Johnson and Kaye, 1998).

Earlier literature proves that the main goal of advertising is to supply the information to the consumers (Bauer and Greyser, 1968). As consumers have become more demanding and sophisticated, they have higher expectations regarding online products and advertising. This process may allow advertisers to track down and record which products are observed, given attention and purchased.

More and more studies will be elaborated in this thesis showing the different points of view regarding students' perceptions and attitudes towards advertising on Facebook.

III. Theoretical Framework

This thesis will rely on three theories to investigate the attention to Facebook advertising and its impact on students. These theories are the uses and gratification theory, cognitive processing information theory, and the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action) Model.

“Uses and Gratifications theory frames media usage in terms of the psychological needs or gratification of the individual.” (Blumer and Katz, 1974, p.19-32). The objective of this theory is to explain the reason why people use media and what they use it for. “As an audience based theory, uses and gratifications hypothesizes that different consumers use the same media message for different purposes: to satisfy their needs, to understand motives for media behaviors and to identify functions that stem from needs, motives and behaviors” (Katz, Blumer and Gurevitch, 1974, p.509-523). Implicit here are the assumptions that people consciously select media that can fulfill their needs and that they are capable of identifying the reasons why they make specified media choices (Katz et al., 1974). This is highly applied

to Facebook users who feel attracted to Facebook because Facebook can satisfy their needs accordingly.

“The AIDA model (or the Attention, Interest, Desire and Action model) is also applied for the explanation and structure of Facebook advertising. Getting attention is the first step created by the graphic and functional innovation of the ad which confronts users with something new and bizarre. Attention is intended to stimulate the users’ curiosity and interest and to awaken the desire for experiencing what is behind this new technology. The main idea behind the AIDA model is to get the clients or customers to purchase a product, have an experience with it or make a big step in their lives” (Butterfield, 1997, p.2).

“The cognitive information processing model requires individuals to go through the stages of exposure, attention and comprehension, attitude and memory formation in order to influence the behavior” (Lee and Ahn, 2012, p.119-137). For example, the eye receives online visual information and codes them into electric neural activity which is fed back to the brain where it is stored and coded. This information can be used by other parts of the brain related to mental activities such as memory, perception and attention. The output might be, for example, to read what you can see. As with all forms of advertising, exposure is a necessary requirement for the Internet banner ad effectiveness. Nevertheless, exposure does not guarantee the users’ attention when, on the Internet, ad avoidance occurs most frequently. If an ad is perceived, the message may or may not remain in the consumer’s memory or mind after cognitive processing. But, even if the advertising message is not consciously remembered, the exposure can be unconsciously processed and subsequently change the user’s affective state (Lee and Ahn, 2012, p.119-137).

IV. Research Questions & Hypothesis

Based on the literature review and mainly on the uses and gratifications theory with the AIDA model, the research question is thus to determine if users pay attention to ads on Facebook and what their attitudes towards the ads are. The following questions which will be answered by Lebanese Facebook users are to be investigated for their importance to this research:

Q1: Are Facebook users aware of its advertisements?

Q2: Does advertising via Facebook motivate users to buy?

Q3: Do users trust Facebook advertising message?

Q4: What are the factors related to message content that influence students' behavior toward Facebook advertising?

In addition, the following hypotheses are based on both the theoretical framework and the reviewed literature:

H1: The more time students spent using Facebook, the more interest ads will be generated by users.

H2: Being informed of Facebook advertising has a significant positive influence on students' attitude towards Facebook advertising.

H3: Positive effect and increase on ad liking are generated from media elements.

In the following section is a discussion of dependent and independent variables of the study and how they are measured:

Interest is measured in terms of "Like" and "Share". We use the number of "Like" as a dependent variable because it contains the relevant aspect of ad liking. The numbers of "Like" reflect whether or not users pay attention to a posting.

Time is measured in terms of numbers of hours spent using the Facebook platform: several times a day, once a day, several times a week and several times a month.

Positive effect is measured in terms of media elements used in the ad such as graphics, colors, designs, animated pictures and text sizes.

Being informed is measured by the numbers of members/fans that join, share and like a page or groups.

V. Research Methodology

In order to answer the research questions and its subcategories and to test the mentioned hypotheses. A quantitative research method was used. A survey was composed of a questionnaire concerning the attention to Facebook advertising and its impact on students. The sample included 426 students taken from two Universities: Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) and University of Balamand (UOB), the students ages varied between 18 and 34. The universities were selected because the researcher has good experience in both of them and both follow the American educational system. Each participant must have a Facebook page or a profile and must be enrolled as a member at least in one group or fan page. Each student will complete a questionnaire under the same circumstances and environment on both campuses. To maintain anonymity, the questionnaires did not identify the participants' names. Therefore, answers of the participants should help address the purpose of this study which is mainly how ads on Facebook influence users' attitudes and behaviors.

VI. Results and Data Analysis

After conducting this survey, data were collected and analyzed accordingly. The statistical program SPSS was used for the analysis. A detailed section will be provided in tables to answer the research questions and hypothesis.

Demographic and Facebook usage

Four hundred twenty six students participated in this survey: 56.1% were males and 39.4% were females, and 4.5% were missing (Table 1). Their ages varied between 16 and 34 years, except one participant who was above 34 years (Table 2) and they have different marital statuses: 87% were single, 1% were married. Of the participants, 2 divorced persons, 1 widowed and 24 didn't mention their marital status (Table 3). Concerning the educational level, 85.2% were undergraduates while only 10.8 % were graduates (Table 4).

At the beginning of the study, participants first answered whether they use internet or not. As it is expected, most participants (94.1%) had internet access (Table 5). More specifically, 88 % of contributors had a Facebook account (Table 6) and 77.9% were enrolled as a member in a Facebook page or group (Table 7).

Regarding the research questions, the results revealed the following:

For the first research question that asked the extent to which respondents were aware of Facebook advertising, table 8 below provided a surprising result as 41.8% said they rarely paid attention to ads on Facebook in comparison with 3.1% who said they did. Moreover, 57% of respondents did not even click on a Facebook ads in comparison with 4 % who said they did (Table 9). Table 10, showed that 52% of students considered that ads that came across Facebook pages were not relevant to their interest. This leads us to conclude that a high percentage of Lebanese respondents do not pay attention to the ad and an even higher percentage would not click on the ad. The main reason respondents gave are that the ad does not match their interest. So, perhaps attention to the ad and the click through rate might increase if the ads targeted consumer interests better and this can be done through the monitoring of consumer behavior online.

Table 8: *Frequency of Attention to ads*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	never	84	19.7	21.6	21.6
	rarely	178	41.8	45.9	67.5
	occasionally	69	16.2	17.8	85.3
	usually	44	10.3	11.3	96.6
	all the time	13	3.1	3.4	100.0
	Total	388	91.1	100.0	
Missing	System	38	8.9		
Total		426	100.0		

Table 9: *Frequency of Click on ads*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very often	17	4.0	4.4	4.4
	sometimes	127	29.8	32.8	37.2
	not all	243	57.0	62.8	100.0
	Total	387	90.8	100.0	
Missing	System	39	9.2		
Total		426	100.0		

Table 10: *Frequency of Ads interest to you*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	99	23.2	25.5	25.5
	no	223	52.3	57.5	83.0
	don't ever notice	66	15.5	17.0	100.0
	Total	388	91.1	100.0	
Missing	System	38	8.9		
Total		426	100.0		

Concerning the second research question: Does Advertising via Facebook motivate users to buy? The survey also asked about the way users express their interest in ads. The results showed that 52% either block or ignore the ad. In addition, only 2.1% of the students tend to buy based on ads provided (Table 11).

The third research question asked if users trust the Facebook advertising message. 73.5% of the students did not feel confident using information seen in an ad to make a purchase decision (Table 12), this means that students tend to distrust advertising message. We can therefore deduce that advertising on Facebook does not motivate users to buy since the majority of respondents mentioned that they block or ignore the ad and a higher percentage mentioned that the ad does not entice them to buy.

Regarding the fourth research question, one of the major objective of this study is to determine what content is most appropriate to attract attention and influence students. Table 13 below present's statistics concerning media elements which include content, image, and color, animation, flash and sound and size. Two things were apparent: first the mean of all media elements was above the average (2.5) indicating that students tended to consider all

these elements attractive. Second, students refer to catchy images as the most attractive element that influence them.

Table 13: *Descriptive Statistics of Media elements*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
content	360	1	5	3.05	1.445
catchy images	361	1	5	3.47	1.364
colors	356	1	5	2.95	1.294
Size	351	1	5	2.77	1.308
Animation	353	1	5	2.91	1.344
static ad	306	1	5	2.35	1.187
Flashandsound	327	1	5	2.40	1.327
Mix	301	1	5	2.93	1.390
Valid N (listwise)	280				

To elaborate more on the idea of media elements, a correlation table between media elements and ad liking will be provided. Results will help us study the impact of message content on students' behavior towards Facebook advertising.

Table 14: *Correlation between ad liking and media elements*

	Content	Catchy images	Colors	Size	Animation	Static ad	Flash & Sound	Mix of them	
Ad Liking	Pearson Correlation	-.196**	-.141**	-.103	-.154**	-.245**	-.216**	-.233**	-.263**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008	.054	.004	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	354	355	351	347	348	301	323	297

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results in the above table 14 supported the relationship between ad liking and media elements since the correlation is significant for all variables—except color. Furthermore, the “mix of them” variable is the highest correlated variable with ad liking. Note that the negative correlation is due to the fact that the positive side of the positive effect variables is the negative of ad liking.

Therefore, the content, catchy images, colors, size, animation, static ad, flash and sound as well as a mix of all media elements are factors that influence student’s behavior towards Facebook advertising. Note that the most influential variable depends on the analytical tool being used.

Testing Hypotheses

Three analytical tools were used in order to test each hypothesis; these include the cross tabulation, chi-square and correlation. The cross tabulation is a tool used to compare the relationship between categorical variables by displaying a joint frequency distribution table of cases. Such type of variables can acquire one of a limited number of possible values and thus assign each individual to a specific category. Note that this test shows the relationship between two or more categorical variables only. The chi square (χ^2) is a tool to analyze any joint frequency distribution table. This tool has given you the opportunity to determine whether the variables are statistically independent or associated. In addition, the correlation test will be used to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables.

H1: The more time students spent using Facebook, the more interest ads will be generated by users.

Table 15: Cross tabulation between time and ad liking

		ad liking					Total	
		all the time	usually	sometimes	rarely	never		
time	several times a day	Count	6	19	38	48	41	152
		% within time	3.9%	12.5%	25.0%	31.6%	27.0%	100.0%
		% within ad liking	46.2%	48.7%	50.7%	39.3%	31.5%	40.1%
	once a day	Count	3	9	18	24	31	85
		% within time	3.5%	10.6%	21.2%	28.2%	36.5%	100.0%
		% within ad liking	23.1%	23.1%	24.0%	19.7%	23.8%	22.4%
	several times a week	Count	1	5	9	21	20	56
		% within time	1.8%	8.9%	16.1%	37.5%	35.7%	100.0%
		% within ad liking	7.7%	12.8%	12.0%	17.2%	15.4%	14.8%
	several times a month	Count	2	2	3	14	15	36
		% within time	5.6%	5.6%	8.3%	38.9%	41.7%	100.0%
		% within ad liking	15.4%	5.1%	4.0%	11.5%	11.5%	9.5%
	other	Count	1	4	7	15	23	50
		% within time	2.0%	8.0%	14.0%	30.0%	46.0%	100.0%
		% within ad liking	7.7%	10.3%	9.3%	12.3%	17.7%	13.2%
	Total	Count	13	39	75	122	130	379
		% within time	3.4%	10.3%	19.8%	32.2%	34.3%	100.0%
		% within ad liking	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

One can notice that students who use Facebook several times a day tend to “Like” ads sometimes. However, those who open this platform several times a month are less interested in ads. For instance, out of 379 students, there are only 2 who use Facebook several times a month and “Like” ads all the times. In addition, one of the highest percentage within time is 41.7% indicating that 41.7% of students who uses this platform several times a month never “Like” ads.

Chi-square:

H0 (null hypothesis): Time is not related to interest.

H1 (alternative hypothesis): Time is related to interest.

Chi-Square Tests

Table 16: *Chi square testing the relation between time and ad liking*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.587 ^a	16	.482
Likelihood Ratio	16.344	16	.429
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.727	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	379		

a. 5 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.23.

From the top row of the above table, Pearson Chi-square=15.587 with a p value=0.482.

However, at 0.05 significant level, the p value is high ($0.482 \geq 0.05$). Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis which indicates that time is not associated with interest.

Table 17: *Correlation between time and ad liking*

		Time	ad liking
time	Pearson Correlation	1	.152 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	389	379
ad liking	Pearson Correlation	.152 ^{**}	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	379	390

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the table above, a significant positive correlation exists between the time spent using Facebook and users' interest in ads. This means that the more time students spend using Facebook, the more interest ads will be generated by users.

All the tests support hypothesis 1 except the chi square. Thus, the more time students spend using Facebook, the more interest in ads will be generated by users.

H2: Being informed of Facebook advertising has a significant positive influence on students' attitude towards Facebook advertising.

Table 18: Cross tabulation between group member and ad liking

		ad liking					Total		
		all the time	usually	sometimes	rarely	never			
group member	yes	Count	12	29	66	104	109	320	
		% within group member	3.8%	9.1%	20.6%	32.5%	34.1%	100.0%	
		% within ad liking	92.3%	74.4%	85.7%	84.6%	83.2%	83.6%	
		% of Total	3.1%	7.6%	17.2%	27.2%	28.5%	83.6%	
		no	Count	1	10	11	19	22	63
		% within group member	1.6%	15.9%	17.5%	30.2%	34.9%	100.0%	
	% within ad liking	7.7%	25.6%	14.3%	15.4%	16.8%	16.4%		
	% of Total	0.3%	2.6%	2.9%	5.0%	5.7%	16.4%		
Total	Count	13	39	77	123	131	383		
	% within group member	3.4%	10.2%	20.1%	32.1%	34.2%	100.0%		
	% within ad liking	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
	% of Total	3.4%	10.2%	20.1%	32.1%	34.2%	100.0%		

A surprising result appeared in the above table: the largest number of students (109) is enrolled in a Facebook page or group and never show interest in ads. In other words, 34.1% of Facebook page or group members never show interest in Facebook ads.

Chi-square:

Chi-Square Tests

Table 19: *Chi square testing the relation between group member and ad liking*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.486 ^a	4	.480
Likelihood Ratio	3.365	4	.499
Linear-by-Linear Association	.041	1	.839
N of Valid Cases	383		

a. 5 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.23

H_0 (null): Being informed does not have a significant positive influence on students' attitude towards Facebook advertising.

H_1 (alternative): Being informed does not has a significant positive influence on students' attitude towards Facebook advertising.

Since the p value 0.480 is higher than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis. Thus, being informed did not have a significant positive influence on students' attitude towards Facebook advertising.

Table 20: *Correlation between group member and ad liking*

		group member	ad liking
group member	Pearson Correlation	1	-.010
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.839
	N	405	383
ad liking	Pearson Correlation	-.010	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.839	
	N	383	390

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the above table, the correlation coefficient is not significant. Thus, being informed is not related to students' attitude towards Facebook advertising.

The three analytical tools do not support hypothesis two meaning that being informed of Facebook advertising does not have a significant positive influence on students' attitude towards Facebook advertising.

H3: Positive effect and increase on ad liking are generated from media elements.

Because media elements are not categorical variables (scaling) cross tabulation is not valid in this case.

Chi-Square Tests

Table 21: *P values of chi square tests*

Pearson Chi-Square	
	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Content	0.031
Colors	0.003
Size	0.001
Animation	0.003
Static ad	0
Flash and Sound	0
Mix of them	0

a. 5 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.23

H_0 (null): Ad liking is not related to the media element

H_1 (alternative): Ad liking is related to the media element

One can notice that all p values are below 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means that ad liking is related to each media element.

In reference to the correlation (table 14) provided previously, one can notice that all the media elements except colors are significantly related to ad liking. In other words, content, catchy images, size, static, flash and sound ads and a mix of them influence students' response in terms of like to ads received on Facebook.

The chi-square and correlation test support hypothesis 3 demonstrating that positive effect and increase on ad liking are generated from media elements.

VII. Conclusion

Social media became a new hybrid component of integrated marketing communications, providing a space for people to communicate as well as a place for organizations to advertise their products or to establish strong relationships with their customers. Advertisers are now relying on innovative and different modes of interactive technology to market their products through social media Facebook for instance, the fourth most popular website in the world today according to ComScore, a company offers interesting perspectives for marketers to promote their brands and an engagement platform enabling members to interact with each other.

The purpose of this thesis was to explore whether students in Lebanese universities pay attention to the ads displayed on Facebook and study the attitudes they have toward Facebook ads. Do they click, share, comment, like, respond, recall, get irritated, avoid advertising or have a purchase intent? The objective of the survey research conducted was to shed light on the influence of Facebook advertising: if users are aware of the ads, if advertising via Facebook motivates users to buy and the factors related to message content that influence students' behaviors towards Facebook ads. A survey data collected from two different Lebanese universities was used to test the main objective of this thesis.

The results of the survey indicate that Facebook platform is highly used by university students and it plays a major role in their daily life. It is evident that students use the platform to communicate and interact with friends and families.

The Literature reviewed (Maurer and Wiegmann, 2011) and this thesis research finding show that students did not pay attention to the ads or click on them: they either block or ignore the ads. The reason behind this finding were that students did not trust Facebook advertising and the ads that came across their pages were not relevant to their interest.

Moreover, organizations do not invest at the right time or in the appropriate target filters to effectively meet the different customers' needs.

Concerning the first hypothesis, the results provided reveal that there is a connection between the times spent using Facebook and ad liking. As predicted, the more time students spent using Facebook, the more interest ads the users develop towards the ads and the level of attention is related to the number of times Facebook account is checked.

With regard to the second hypothesis which questions whether the being informed of Facebook advertising has a significant influence on students' attitude towards Facebook advertising, a negative correlation was found. It is previously mentioned that being informed is measured by the numbers of members/fans that join, share and Like a page or groups. As mentioned, the findings indicate a negative correlation between group member and ad liking which means that the largest number of students were enrolled in a Facebook or group page but never showed interest in Facebook ads. This diverges from the literature review which states fans react to the posting on Fan page by clicking the "I Like" button or by writing a comment. At the end, individuals feel connected with an interaction or Fan page which may increase the perceived familiarity and thus the liking (Shen and Khalifa, 2008).

The data analysis of the third hypothesis indicated that positive effects and increase on ad liking are generated from media elements. This finding converges with the literature (Fritz et al., 2007; Robinson et al. 2007; Baltas, 2003; Trohdahl and Jones, 1965) which showed that large font sizes, pictures and white spaces are more eye-catching and positively affect the liking of the advertising message. Additionally researchers Lee and Ahen (2012) found that animation in banner ads did influence attitudes toward the brand.

From the theoretical perspective, this study supports the statement that students are seeking gratifications from the usage of Facebook. As we can see, students use Facebook to satisfy their needs such as: communicating with friends, following a personal profile or

Fan pages, seeking information about goods and services.

AIDA model is also applied for the explanation and structure of Facebook advertising. Attention generated from media elements in the ads, stimulated the students' curiosity and interest to Like, Share, Comment or even to buy the product advertised.

Finally, the current thesis has made a contribution to our knowledge by providing understanding to Facebook advertising attention and its impact on students' attitudes.

VIII. Limitations of the study

This thesis, provided some explanations about advertising on Facebook and how it affected the students who use Facebook. Yet, there are some limitations to this study:

First, the study focused on a sample of Lebanese students. It is recommended that research with students from different cultures be made to provide a basis for comparisons and to contribute additional explanations on whether students pay attention to Facebook ads or not and how it impacts different cultures.

Another limitation is that not using probability sampling procedure from the two universities' population and choosing only two universities in the North of Lebanon may not necessarily reflect the total Lebanese university students' representation. In addition, surveying subjects from outside the academic environment should be done to provide comparative data with this study's results.

IX. Recommendations for Future Research

My research on Facebook advertising and its impact on students is innovative and informative. The current research makes a significant contribution to existing knowledge by enhancing our understanding of Facebook advertising and students behavior in the online context. Such study can be examined in the context of mobile marketing as well.

Additional studies within this field are suggested such as the combination of Facebook and other services for example Instagram and the marketing effects of the combinations.

Also, future research should take an account of other social networking sites such as Twitter, by studying the online advertising development and its impact on students.

I also suggest using larger size samples from other nationalities. There may be differences between different nations based on the level of available internet technology.

An eye-tracking experimental research should be conducted with Lebanese students to find out what attracts the eyes first in advertising on Facebook

Another study can be conducted to find out the reasons why “Being informed of Facebook advertising has a significant positive influence on students’ attitude towards Facebook advertising,” was not supported.

I also recommend using probability sampling to enhance the generalizations of the results.

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Appendices

Appendix I

Survey Questionnaire

I, Theresa Nakad, an MA student at Notre Dame University-Louaize, and would like to thank you for participating in this survey which is related to attention paid to advertising on Facebook and its impact on students.

Completion of the survey should take 10 minutes or less. Please answer all of the items.

Your input is highly appreciated and your responses will be strictly confidential. You will not be identified in any way.

1- Gender:

- Male
- Female

2- Age:

- 16 – 20
- 21 – 25
- 26 – 30
- 31 – 34
- Above 34

3- Marital Status:

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Other

4- Educational level:

- Undergraduate Student
- Graduate Student

5- Do you use the internet?

- Yes
- No

6- Do you have a Facebook account?

- Yes
- No

7- Have you been enrolled as a member in a group or fan page?

- Yes
- No

8- How often do you use the Facebook platform?

- Several times a day
- Once a day
- Several times a week
- Several times a month
- Other

9- What do you use the Facebook platform for?

- Communicating/chatting with friends
- Playing games
- Looking at photos
- Follow a certain group or Fan page
- Advertising
- Other.....

10- Do you pay attention to ads on Facebook?

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Usually

- All the time

11- How often do you click on Facebook ads?

- Very often
- Sometimes
- No at all

12- Do you recall seeing any ads on Facebook?

- Yes
- No

13- How do you express your interest in the ad?

- Like the ad
- Promote the ad
- Buy
- Ignore/block the ad
- Share the ad

14- In general, do you feel confident using information you see in an ad to make a purchase decision?

- Yes
- No

15- Please rank the order which attracts you in the following in terms of Facebook ads?

One (1) is the least attractive and Five (5) is the most attractive to you

- Content/information
- Catchy Images
- Colors
- Size
- Animation
- Static ad
- Flash and Sound ad

- Mix of them

16- Which received ads, on different pages, do you pay attention to?

- Across all pages
- On News feed wall pages
- On your profile page

17- Do you believe that the ads you come across on Facebook are of interest to you?

- Yes, they are relevant to my interest
- No, they are not relevant
- I don't ever notice ads on Facebook

18- How often do you respond in terms of "Like" to ads you receive on Facebook?

- All the time
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

19- Does advertising on Facebook offend you? Please explain.

- Yes, -----
- No, -----

20- Do you think Facebook can be an effective platform for advertisers?

- Yes, very effective
- Yes, somewhat effective
- Not very effective
- Not effective at all
- No opinion

Thank you

Appendix II

General Frequencies

Table 1: *Frequency of Gender data*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	239	56.1	58.7	58.7
	female	168	39.4	41.3	100.0
	Total	407	95.5	100.0	
Missing	System	19	4.5		
Total		426	100.0		

Table 2: *Frequency of Age data*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16-20	207	48.6	50.7	50.7
	21-25	188	44.1	46.1	96.8
	26-30	8	1.9	2.0	98.8
	31-34	4	.9	1.0	99.8
	above 34	1	.2	.2	100.0
	Total	408	95.8	100.0	
Missing	System	18	4.2		
Total		426	100.0		

Table 3: *Frequency of Marital Status*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	single	373	87.6	92.1	92.1
	married	5	1.2	1.2	93.3
	divorced	2	.5	.5	93.8
	widowed	1	.2	.2	94.1
	other	24	5.6	5.9	100.0
	Total	405	95.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	4.9		
Total		426	100.0		

Table 4: *Frequency of Educational level data*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	undergraduate	363	85.2	88.8	88.8
	graduate	46	10.8	11.2	100.0
	Total	409	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	17	4.0		
Total		426	100.0		

Table 5: *Frequency of Internet using*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	401	94.1	99.0	99.0
	no	4	.9	1.0	100.0
	Total	405	95.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	4.9		
Total		426	100.0		

Table 6: *Frequency of Facebook account*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	375	88.0	92.4	92.4
	no	31	7.3	7.6	100.0
	Total	406	95.3	100.0	
Missing	System	20	4.7		
Total		426	100.0		

Table 7: *Frequency of Membership*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	332	77.9	82.0	82.0
	no	73	17.1	18.0	100.0
	Total	405	95.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	4.9		
Total		426	100.0		

Table 8: *Frequency of Attention to ads*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	never	84	19.7	21.6	21.6
	rarely	178	41.8	45.9	67.5
	occasionally	69	16.2	17.8	85.3
	usually	44	10.3	11.3	96.6
	all the time	13	3.1	3.4	100.0
	Total	388	91.1	100.0	
Missing	System	38	8.9		
Total		426	100.0		

Table 9: *Frequency of Click on ads*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very often	17	4.0	4.4	4.4
	sometimes	127	29.8	32.8	37.2
	not all	243	57.0	62.8	100.0
	Total	387	90.8	100.0	
Missing	System	39	9.2		
Total		426	100.0		

Table 10: *Frequency of ads interest to you*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	99	23.2	25.5	25.5
	no	223	52.3	57.5	83.0
	don't ever notice	66	15.5	17.0	100.0
	Total	388	91.1	100.0	
Missing	System	38	8.9		
Total		426	100.0		

Table 11: *Frequency of expressing interest in ads*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	like	130	30.5	33.7	33.7
	promote	9	2.1	2.3	36.0
	buy	9	2.1	2.3	38.3
	ignore/block	222	52.1	57.5	95.9
	share	16	3.8	4.1	100.0
	Total	386	90.6	100.0	
Missing	System	40	9.4		
Total		426	100.0		

Table 12: *Descriptive Statistics of using an ad to make a purchase decision*

In general, do you feel confident using information you see in an ad to make a purchase decision?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	85	20.0	21.4	21.4
	no	313	73.5	78.6	100.0
	Total	398	93.4	100.0	
Missing	System	28	6.6		
Total		426	100.0		

Table 13: *Descriptive Statistics of Media elements*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Content	360	1	5	3.05	1.445
Catchy images	361	1	5	3.47	1.364
Colors	356	1	5	2.95	1.294
Size	351	1	5	2.77	1.308
Animation	353	1	5	2.91	1.344
Static ad	306	1	5	2.35	1.187
Flashand Sound	327	1	5	2.40	1.327
Mix of them	301	1	5	2.93	1.390
Valid N (listwise)	280				

Appendix III

Correlation between Ad liking and Media Elements

Table 14: Correlation between ad liking and media elements

		Content	Catchyimages	Colors	Size	Animation	Static ad	Flash and Sound	Mix of them
Ad Liking	Pearson Correlation	-.196**	-.141**	-.103	-.154**	-.245**	-.216**	-.233**	-.263**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008	.054	.004	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	354	355	351	347	348	301	323	297

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix IV

Cross Tabulation between Time and Ad Liking

Table 15: Cross tabulation between time and ad liking

		ad liking					Total	
		all the time	usually	sometimes	rarely	never		
Time	several times a day	Count	6	19	38	48	41	152
		% within time	3.9%	12.5%	25.0%	31.6%	27.0%	100.0%
		% within ad liking	46.2%	48.7%	50.7%	39.3%	31.5%	40.1%
	once a day	Count	3	9	18	24	31	85
		% within time	3.5%	10.6%	21.2%	28.2%	36.5%	100.0%
		% within ad liking	23.1%	23.1%	24.0%	19.7%	23.8%	22.4%
	several times a week	Count	1	5	9	21	20	56
		% within time	1.8%	8.9%	16.1%	37.5%	35.7%	100.0%
		% within ad liking	7.7%	12.8%	12.0%	17.2%	15.4%	14.8%
	several times a month	Count	2	2	3	14	15	36
		% within time	5.6%	5.6%	8.3%	38.9%	41.7%	100.0%
		% within ad liking	15.4%	5.1%	4.0%	11.5%	11.5%	9.5%
	other	Count	1	4	7	15	23	50
		% within time	2.0%	8.0%	14.0%	30.0%	46.0%	100.0%
		% within ad liking	7.7%	10.3%	9.3%	12.3%	17.7%	13.2%
	Total	Count	13	39	75	122	130	379
		% within time	3.4%	10.3%	19.8%	32.2%	34.3%	100.0%
		% within ad liking	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

Table 16: Chi square testing the relation between time and ad liking

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.587 ^a	16	.482
Likelihood Ratio	16.344	16	.429
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.727	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	379		

a. 5 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.23.

Table 17: *Correlation between time and ad liking*

		time	ad liking
Time	Pearson Correlation	1	.152**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	389	379
ad liking	Pearson Correlation	.152**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	379	390

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix V

Cross Tabulation between Group Member and Ad Liking

Table 18: Cross tabulation between group member and ad liking

		ad liking					Total
		all the time	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	
yes	Count	12	29	66	104	109	320
	% within group member	3.8%	9.1%	20.6%	32.5%	34.1%	100.0%
	% within ad liking	92.3%	74.4%	85.7%	84.6%	83.2%	83.6%
	% of Total	3.1%	7.6%	17.2%	27.2%	28.5%	83.6%
no	Count	1	10	11	19	22	63
	% within group member	1.6%	15.9%	17.5%	30.2%	34.9%	100.0%
	% within ad liking	7.7%	25.6%	14.3%	15.4%	16.8%	16.4%
	% of Total	0.3%	2.6%	2.9%	5.0%	5.7%	16.4%
Total	Count	13	39	77	123	131	383
	% within group member	3.4%	10.2%	20.1%	32.1%	34.2%	100.0%
	% within ad liking	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	3.4%	10.2%	20.1%	32.1%	34.2%	100.0%

Table 19: Chi square testing the relation between group member and ad liking

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.486 ^a	4	.480
Likelihood Ratio	3.365	4	.499
Linear-by-Linear Association	.041	1	.839
N of Valid Cases	383		

Table 20: *Correlation between group member and ad liking*

		group member	ad liking
group member	Pearson Correlation	1	-.010
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.839
	N	405	383
ad liking	Pearson Correlation	-.010	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.839	
	N	383	390

Chi-Square Tests

Table 21: *P values of chi square tests*

Pearson Chi-Square	
	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Content	0.031
Colors	0.003
Size	0.001
Animation	0.003
Static ad	0
Flash and Sound	0
Mix of them	0