



ISSN: 2146-1961

Eyice Bařev, S. (2024). A general overview of the impact of advergames on consumer purchase behavior: A literature review, *International Journal of Eurasia Social Sciences (IJOESS)*, 15(55), 260-275.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.35826/ijoess.4428>

Makale Türü (ArticleType): Arařtırma Makalesi (Research Article)

A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF ADVERGAMES ON CONSUMER PURCHASE BEHAVIOR: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Gönderim tarihi: 20.11.2023

Kabul tarihi: 12.02.21024

Yayım tarihi: 01.03.2024

ABSTRACT

The rapidly changing nature of technology, the rise of digital games, and the constant evolution in the field of advertising have emphasized the significance of advergames (the fusion of gaming and advertising). This study aims to examine the potential effects of advergames on consumer behavior. The research was conducted through a documentary review method. Existing literature sources were meticulously reviewed to analyze the role of advergames in the advertising industry and their potential effects on consumer interest and purchase behavior. As a result of this review, strong evidence was obtained indicating the significance of advergames on consumer behavior. Advergames, by combining elements of entertainment, advertising, and gaming, generate positive emotions among consumers and stimulate increased interest in products and services. Additionally, the use of advergames was observed to potentially increase consumers' conscious or subconscious desire to purchase products or services. This research highlights the need to consider advergames as a potential factor in advertising strategies and their potential to significantly influence consumer purchase behavior. The role of advergames in the advertising industry is growing, and it is suggested that they may find a more prominent place in future marketing strategies. This study aims to contribute to the understanding of the impact of advergames on consumers and may pave the way for further research in this field.

Keywords: Advergames, consumer behavior, consumer purchase intention, literature review.

INTRODUCTION

The ever-changing and evolving technology is affecting our lives in many areas. One of the areas where technology has an impact on our lives is the "gaming" domain. As a result of the fusion of technology with gaming, games have also spread to the digital realm. Digital games, also known as video games, are constantly evolving, and new players are joining the world of these digital games every day. Digital games can be used for various purposes. One of the areas where they are used is the advertising medium. The digital gaming space is an environment that appeals to various age and gender groups. It is considered by advertisers as a medium that allows them to reach the target audience directly.

Situations such as the desire of consumers to move away from traditional media and the lack of expected interest have paved the way for advertisers to discover new methods. One of the discovered methods is the application of advergames, which is created by the combination of gaming and advertising. As a result of the interaction of the target audience with advergames, conscious, subconscious, or unconscious interest is drawn to the product/service advertised in the game. Advergames encompass elements of entertainment, advertising, and gaming. Since it contains elements that create positive emotions based on advertising, gaming, and entertainment, it can win the approval of the target audience. Positive emotions associated with the product/service and ultimately the brand create sympathy from the target audience. Through advergames, consumers can acquire information about the product/service before entering the shopping process, make choices during the purchase stage with the help of advergames, and remember the product/service continuously in the post-purchase process. The examples given for advergames are just a few of the effects on the purchase process. Therefore, it can be said that advergames influence consumer buying behavior and lead them to behave as expected.

When looking at the literature, the first applied study that conducted a current situation analysis regarding the advergame topic in the Turkish literature was carried out by Aktaş and colleagues (2010). This study aimed to understand the effects of advergame application on primary school students. An experimental method was employed to measure changes in children before and after playing the game. In another study by Akyol (2010), two separate methods, namely experiments and surveys, were used to investigate whether advergame applications contribute to brand communication in terms of raising brand awareness. This study was conducted with a total of 289 participants, divided into two separate subject groups. The findings revealed that the advertising game generated brand awareness and enhanced positive emotions among consumers, leading to a broader positive impact. In this context, it can be inferred that advergames may facilitate effective brand communication, enhance brand memorability, contribute to brand awareness, and ultimately influence consumer purchase behavior.

Aktaş and colleagues (2010) as well as Akyol (2010) examined advergame applications in terms of brand communication and the relationship between consumers. Lewis (2006) conducted an experimental study with 100 participants aged between 18-24 to measure player perceptions of advertising in online games. The study

collected data related to attitudes toward advertising in the gaming environment, various levels of advertising awareness, message comprehension, ad recall, and factors affecting purchase behavior. The findings indicated that advertising games can influence players by creating high awareness within the game. However, if advertising and gameplay are not well-coordinated, it may negatively impact players, resulting in a lower perception of realism in the game. Furthermore, the study observed that females and non-gamers embraced advertising usage in the game more than males and enthusiastic gamers, perceiving it as 'interactive.' Mallinckrodt and Mizerski (2007) conducted an experimental study on small children who played advergames, exploring their perceptions, preferences, and desires. According to the data obtained from participants aged between 5-8, as age increased, brand preference decreased. However, it was observed that the majority of children in the 7-8 age group embraced the brand within the game. Similar to Lewis (2006), another study emphasized the importance of thematic suitability in advergame applications. Wise and colleagues (2008) conducted an experimental study to examine the relationship between attitudes towards games (equivalent to attitudes towards advertising) and attitudes towards brands. The results showed a positive relationship between the thematic alignment of the brand with the advergame and attitudes towards both the advergame and the brand. Therefore, when designing advergame applications, attention should be given to the thematic alignment of the brand's product/service. This way, positive conditioning towards the sponsoring brand can be enhanced. Wise and colleagues (2008) and Lewis (2006) addressed advergames in their studies, focusing on the alignment of game themes and game brands. Achieving this alignment is important for the brand to fulfill its purpose. In this context, the aim of the research is to examine the potential effects of advergames on consumer behavior. Within the scope of the research objective, the aim is to thoroughly investigate the impact of the continuous evolution of technology and the proliferation of games in the digital realm, especially the effects of advergame applications in the field of advertising. This examination aims to assess the interaction between advergames and the target audience, the advertising impact, and the potential effects on the desire to purchase products/services, using the method of document analysis. This documentation review seeks to provide a foundation for understanding the place and importance of advergames in the world of advertising. In this context, the research question is as follows: 'Do players who engage with advergames develop a desire to purchase a product or service?'"

METHODOLOGY

Research model

In this research, which is primarily based on qualitative research methodology and utilizes document (textual material) analysis as the data collection tool, a descriptive analysis technique was employed for data analysis. Document analysis aims to analyze written materials containing information about the phenomena under investigation (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). Document analysis is particularly useful as a research method when direct interviews and observations are not feasible. This method encompasses the analysis of written and verbal materials that contain information about the topics to be investigated. Document analysis involves the

examination and analysis of written materials that provide information about the incidents or phenomena to be researched. Traditionally, document analysis has been used by historians, anthropologists, and linguists, but it has also made significant contributions to the development of important theories by sociologists and psychologists (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). In our research, document analysis was employed to analyze written materials containing information about the topics to be investigated.

Research document

In this research, which is conducted primarily through document analysis, an overview and evaluation of the impact of advergame applications on consumer purchasing behavior were carried out. This assessment was based on the analysis of materials produced by Lee and colleagues (2009), Michigan State University (2013), and Gölgeci and Akdağ (2019).

FINDINGS

Based on the document analysis conducted within the scope of the research objectives, the obtained data have been evaluated under thematic headings within the framework of the relevant literature as follows:

Advergame and brand-consumer communication

A brand can be defined as any kind of sign that can be displayed or expressed through drawings, including personal names, letters, numbers, product form, packaging, or shape; it can be replicated and published through printing and distinguishes a business's products or services from those of other businesses (Turkish Patent and Trademark Office, 2020). From a social perspective, marketing can be defined as a societal process where individuals or groups freely engage in the exchange of goods and services, presenting and sharing according to their desires and needs (Kotler, 2002, p. 4). In this societal process, it can be said that brands give importance to brand communication to develop an effective marketing strategy.

According to Boztepe Taşkıran, brand communication management, simply put, is the strategic management of brand communication efforts aiming to create a positive perception towards the attitudes and behaviors of the target audience. This management can sometimes be used like traditional communication management: The brand, being the source, transmits the message to the target audience through various communication tools, and in response, the target audience's feedback directs the brand communication strategy. The main purpose of this communication strategy is to establish long-term positive communication with consumers. Creating, reinforcing, and maintaining the brand-consumer relationship constitutes the communication effort of all brands (2017, p. 66). Marketing strategy, meanwhile, shapes around the marketing mix and influences brand communication.

In the management of brand communication within the scope of application and marketing strategy for businesses, the marketing strategy has a notable dimension. The marketing strategy is shaped around the 4Ps

of marketing: Product/Service, Price, Promotion, and Place (Boztepe Taşkıran, 2017, pp. 66-67). The product element represents all tangible and intangible concepts that meet the consumer's wants and needs and allow the producer to earn money by being exchanged in the market. The price element represents the value assigned to the product or service. The distribution element can be said to represent the path and transportation method taken by the product or service from the production site to the consumer for use. The promotion element encompasses all activities aimed at increasing the competitiveness of the product and securing its place in the market (Öndoğan, 2010, p. 7). With the inclusion of People, Process, and Physical Evidence concepts, marketing has evolved from 4P to 7P. The human concept, emerging with experiences, involves company employees. Examples of the human element include the approach of a store sales representative, the engagement of a waiter with customers entering a restaurant, the speech of a customer representative, and the personal hygiene importance given by personnel installing household appliances like refrigerators. The emergence of the human concept has led to the "standardization problem". This situation has paved the way for the process concept.

Later, as the distribution concept began to evolve, the physical facility concept emerged, necessitating physical distribution channels such as dealerships and stores. Since the distribution concept includes all channels, including digital channels, it can be said that the physical facility concept has been separated from the distribution concept (Öğütçü, 2015). The promotion element in the marketing mix is of particular interest due to its closer relationship with brand communication.

The promotion element directly connects to brand communication management as it includes public relations, advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, point of purchase, and direct marketing communication. By utilizing expertise in each of these areas, consumer-brand communication is established (Boztepe Taşkıran, 2017, p. 67).

When determining a marketing strategy, there are certain points to consider. No matter how suitable the product/service is for the target audience, responsive to demands, and of high quality; if the right marketing strategy is not determined, problems may arise in delivering the producer's product or service to the target audience (Kaya, 2018, p. 109).

It can be said that there has been a shift in preference from a communication style where control is solely in the hands of the brand, to brand positioning where consumers also have control. Brand positioning (Tanyeri Mazıcı, 2016, p. 74), due to competitive conditions, is driving brands towards comprehensive and deep relationships with their target audience. Therefore, the relationship between the brand and the consumer needs to have characteristics such as being as personalized and traceable as possible. This necessitates elevating the brand's fundamental traits such as being noticed, creating dependence, standing out, and being preferred to a higher level and transforming into a relationship form that offers control to the target audience.

New communication tools that offer more control to the target audience and enable brands to interact more with their target audience present an opportunity for brand positioning. It can be said that developing a new communication strategy using this opportunity will positively contribute to the brand image.

Communication tools like mobile phones, social media, and the internet are referred to as new media technology environments (Gershon & Bell, 2013, p. 259). All content in new media is created with computer software (Manovich, 2006, p. 10). Technological advancements have also been effective in the field of communication, thus providing the opportunity to communicate between the brand and the target audience along digital strategies. As a result of consumers' increased interaction with new media, brands have had to adapt their traditional communication strategies to digital communication strategies (Boztepe Taşkıran, 2017, p. 131). One such adaptation to digital communication strategies could be digital games.

Digital games attract the attention of the advertising industry due to factors such as all sociological and demographic groups being involved with digital games in their leisure time and the digital gaming sector becoming a leading entertainment industry. For the advertising industry, digital games are considered a suitable means of reaching the target audience by combining advertising with games (Herrewijn & Poels, 2013, p. 17). The success of brand communication put forth with advertising use depends on the implementation of a good media strategy and sufficient research about the target audience. In media strategy, defining the target audience, planning the medium, duration, and frequency of use is crucial for advertising effectiveness. The environment followed by the consumer is of great importance in achieving the goals of the advertisement (Boztepe Taşkıran, 2017, pp. 90-91).

In our current time period marked by rapid technological advancements, the consumer exposed to advertisements from various angles tends to pay less attention to ads. In interactive advertisements, using a combination of entertainment, visuals, sound, games, and music can attract the attention of indifferent consumers amidst the intensity of the message (Oskay & Koçer, 2016, p. 123). Although all mass media tools have their own importance, limited-duration TV or radio ads, newspaper ads lost in dense text, and other such advertisements face problems in reaching the target audience, such as insufficient attention, visibility issues, etc. Additionally, for these ads, the consumer does not request them. The brand owner, by agreeing with the media owner, tries to reach the target audience with their advertisement. If it is not a well-planned ad campaign with a large budget, the reachability to the target audience is low (Kavoğlu, 2012, pp. 10-11). For all these reasons, advertisers may prefer the more entertaining Advergame application for brand communication. Through Advergame, it is possible to engage in long-term and direct communication with the target audience. Reaching the target audience who show interest voluntarily and for entertainment purposes can be more cost-effective, involve longer interaction, and be easier.

The user playing the game becomes part of the game advertisement voluntarily and without coercion. Thus, through advergame, the intended message is sent to the target audience, making persuasion easier.

Advergame allows the brand to be imprinted in the user's memory, consciously or unconsciously. By choosing the advergame application, the advertising business finds an opportunity for brand communication that is easier, offers longer interaction, occurs according to the user's wishes, and is less costly compared to other advertising media (Bozkurt, 2019, p. 1346).

Interactive brand communication through digital games has positive effects such as behavioral intent, cognitive awareness, and contributing to brand image. The effects of brand interaction in the virtual game environment on consumers can be listed as informing, attitude formation, and prompting action (Reijmersdal et al., 2010, p. 1793).

The presence of brands in digital games is perceived by consumers as more innovative and realistic compared to traditional brand communication styles. Therefore, brand communication experts should communicate through digital games and be present with attention-grabbing, innovative applications in all channels where consumers are. A brand aware of these dynamics can stand out from competitors in the eyes of the target audience (Boztepe Taşkıran, 2017, pp. 169-170). Additionally, applications like AppNava can be used to analyze consumer behaviors during and after the gaming process. AppNava calculates, based on machine learning algorithms, game playing durations, future behavior and spending tendencies of mobile game/application users according to their class. Thus, predicting the future behavior responses of new users and presenting user-specific content, campaigns, in-game sales offers, and advertisements are possible (Ulukan, 2020). Brand owners can organize effective campaigns based on digital games and various analyses to establish effective communication and attract the target audience's attention.

A fun advertisement; Advergame and mobile marketing opportunity

Advertising can broadly be defined as the use of broadcasting tools that offer the opportunity to appeal to large audiences, including the clear identification of the advertising business, in exchange for a fee, for the promotion of products or services (Topsümer & Elden, 2015, p. 14). In this context, digital games can be utilized for advertising purposes. Digital games are chosen by advertisers as a means to convey products or services to a wide audience. Advertisers use digital games, which can express people's lifestyles and provide entertainment, to influence the consumption of the target audience.

Digital games are related to the intensity of activities suitable for consumption at the right time. They are part of consumption that enhances the enjoyment, relaxation, and leisure time. Broadly speaking, although related to the culture of the society they are in, consumption is about the way things and time are used. It represents a way of life. Particularly when looking at the degree of addiction and scope of influence, digital games are largely associated with elements like belonging, hedonism, materialism, and aesthetics (Bati, 2011, pp. 12-13). Digital games are intertwined with lifestyle, consumption, and feelings of beauty and fun. Due to these characteristics, advergames, a combination of games and advertising, are preferred by advertisers.

Detailed information on advergaming will be provided in the following pages, but first, it is beneficial to mention some characteristics of advertising. The features of advertising can be listed as follows (Topsümer & Elden, 2015, pp. 16-17):

- Advertising is an element within marketing communication.
- It is done in exchange for a certain fee.
- It consists of messages sent from the advertiser to the target audience.
- Advertising has the characteristic of mass communication.
- The institution, organization, or person who advertises is identified.
- Advertising aims to persuade and inform the target audience.
- The advertising message includes elements such as product/service, promise, problem-solving, and rewards.
- Advertising works in harmony with other elements of marketing communication to achieve the marketing goals identified by the business.

Advancing technology differentiates customer relationships from traditional marketing methods and leads to more interactive communication. The boundaries defining target audiences are becoming blurred. The unlimited development of the internet, which hosts users with various demographic characteristics, allows brands to communicate with consumers through various campaigns (Maden & Göksel, 2009, p. 241). One of the fruits of the advancing internet and technology is mobile devices. The rapid development of mobile devices can be said to represent a "new era" for advertisers. Advertisers effectively use this medium to communicate, implementing new and effective marketing methods for the target audience. Between 2000 and 2006, popular social media platforms such as Flickr, Skype, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter were established. The year 2007 was a turning point with the introduction of the iPhone and its operating system, iOS. In 2008, the "iPhone App Store," hosting paid and free applications, was launched. In the same year, the Google Chrome web browser and the Android mobile operating system entered the market. WhatsApp emerged in 2009. Instagram was founded in 2010-2011, along with the introduction of iPad tablets and the Snapchat application. Google has worked on the Android operating system, and in 2012, the Google Play (Google App Store) application store entered the market (Şengül, 2019, pp. 26-27). All these developments can be said to have created a suitable advertising environment and opportunities for mobile platforms.

Mobile marketing is a multi-channel digital marketing strategy that encompasses the target audience spending time on tablets, smartphones, and other mobile devices, through MMS, SMS, email, social media, websites, and applications. It can be called the art of marketing aimed at mobile device users. Effective mobile advertising involves understanding the audience using mobile platforms, designing content covering mobile platforms, marketing on mobile platforms, and strategically using these mobile applications (Webolizma, 2019). The increasing functionality of mobile devices in the world and Turkey day by day allows them to obtain a significant share in e-commerce. The increasing number of mobile users and the growing importance of mobile

applications have led companies in the e-commerce sector to focus on the mobile area (Topçu, 2019). In today's growing e-commerce environment, the increase in mobile devices represents a notable and investment-worthy opportunity for advertisers. Studies support this situation.

In a study conducted on the relationship between university students and mobile marketing, students were found to have a positive perception of mobile advertisements. It was found that mobile advertisements influence the purchasing behavior of students. Moreover, mobile advertisements have been found to be partially entertaining, informative, reliable, useful, and satisfying (Armağan & Gider, 2014). Additionally, research involving participants mostly aged 18-35 was conducted on mobile marketing. The attitude of the participants towards various mobile applications and marketing activities was measured. According to the findings, the mobile applications that consumers are most willing to use are searching the internet with a mobile phone and being able to see various places or social events around them. This shows that consumers prefer applications that make their lives easier over activities containing explicit marketing messages. Following these applications, it was found that consumers tend to be interested in more marketing-focused applications, especially those containing entertaining elements like virtual reality and advergames. On the other hand, it can be said that users are keen to be informed about discounts and campaigns in their vicinity or even at their current shopping location. This indicates that mobile marketing applications should consider "location-based" work. Additionally, consumers are receptive to applications that inform them about campaigns and new products by companies they are interested in. This result suggests that mobile marketing methods can be more effective when tailored to existing customer characteristics.

It has been found that customers are not interested in applications that show advertisements while they are communicating with mobile devices (such as browsing the internet or video calling). In short, consumers embrace mobile marketing applications that are entertaining or offer short-term benefits (Eriş & Kımiloğlu, 2012, p. 51). The advergame application is an entertaining application and can be used on mobile platforms. Advergame applications, which began in the mid-2000s with the increasing use of the internet, first spread on promotional sites and then in the web environment through social media. Advergames, which can be developed at low costs, are offered more in mobile and internet environments but less in console games (Costa, 2016). Therefore, it is considered beneficial to talk about the mobile marketing medium.

The positive and negative aspects of advergame applications from a brand perspective

The advergame application offers numerous benefits to brands. It captures the attention of players engaged with the advertising game, creating an opportunity for them to develop awareness of the brand. Advergame, affordable for almost every business, can have a long-term impact and the potential to reach wide audiences. It provides easier access to younger demographics, which are often difficult to reach through traditional media. A well-designed game can facilitate prolonged interaction and encourage frequent visits to the brand's media environment as players compete with friends. These visits not only increase the likelihood of remembering the

brand and its products/services but also provide businesses with valuable data, enabling them to develop effective, personalized campaigns. Furthermore, products restricted by various laws can be marketed through advergames without limitations. However, advergame applications also come with some disadvantages. A well-planned approach is essential for creating an advergame, as unplanned initiatives can be costly. Differentiating an advergame from others can be challenging and demanding. Additionally, the game itself requires marketing to attract attention. The positive and negative aspects of advergame applications from a brand perspective can be listed as follows (İşgüzar, 2012; Olker, 2018; Oskay & Koçer, 2016, p. 126; Taylor, 2019):

Negative aspects

- High Cost: Despite digital game development becoming more affordable, the process can still be more expensive than traditional advertising and digital ads.
- Imagination: The game needs to be of a style that users have not experienced before.
- Promotion: Besides developing the advergame, promoting the game itself is necessary, meaning it requires effective marketing.

Positive aspects

- Brand awareness. The game enables interaction between the user and the brand. This interaction might lead to recalling the brand during shopping needs, and discussions about the game and its brand elements among friends.
- Suitability for every business. Advergames can be created at reasonable costs for any sector. What's important in the created game is presenting it in a way that users will love. It's more about crafting an effective game than promoting beauty products, food items, or automotive products.
- Long-term impact. Unlike normal advertising campaigns, which are forgotten by customers soon after they end, advergame applications create awareness. The symbol of the downloaded advergame remaining on devices for a long time is significant for reminding users of the brand and its elements. Even though players know that the game is actually an advertisement, they tend not to mind because they enjoy interacting with product-based characters.
- Attention-grabbing. After playing the game, players pay attention to who the advertiser is. In advergames, players don't have the chance to detach like in TV ads because the advertisement is part of the game's content.
- High engagement. Since most people enjoy playing games and are satisfied while playing, advergames offer more significant engagement opportunities compared to other advertisements.
- Opportunity to reach youngsters. It can be hard to reach young individuals through traditional media. Advergames are more effective in this regard.
- Duration of interaction. If the game offers a unique and fun experience, it can be played for a long time.

- Data analysis. Provides the opportunity to access and analyze user data.
- Customization. Allows for tailoring the advertising message in a personalized way.
- Interaction. Facilitates interaction between the user and the brand.
- Opportunity arising from competition. Encourages players to continually visit the site to beat their competitors and climb up the leaderboard.
- Viral/word-of-mouth marketing (WOM). Naturally creates opportunities for word-of-mouth marketing (WOM).
- New campaign opportunities. Provides data for new marketing campaigns.
- Escape from restrictions. Offers the opportunity to market products that are banned or restricted in traditional media due to government policies.
- Reminder. Increases recall rate and memorability due to the intensive use of audio and visual elements in conveying the message.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

Developing new communication technologies are transforming individuals, who participate as users in a virtual environment, into potential consumers by establishing communication between virtual and real life. In this process, the media can create and determine the needs of its users. Additionally, the media can inform, entertain, attract interest, create pleasure, and provide satisfaction in many cognitive and psychological areas. Beyond just creating a need for consumption, it aims to form various images and generate a desire for novelty. Users are persuaded and convinced through the imaginary relationship presented between the virtual and real worlds, influencing them to behave in the desired manner (Kuşay & Akbayır, 2015, p. 141).

The intersection of digital games with marketing not only offers a fun environment for persuasive communication but also fulfills marketing objectives such as creating brand loyalty and positioning the brand. This communication process also plays a role in developing attitudes and behaviors or in establishing the brand in the mind and encouraging consumption. Brand communication messages sent to the target audience can directly or subconsciously, consciously or unconsciously influence, especially children. The aim of brands appearing in the digital environment with persuasion-based brand communication is to have children, who are consumers, exhibit desired attitudes and behaviors (Kuşay & Akbayır, 2015, pp. 139-140).

Some businesses in game advertisements disclose the commercial nature of the game with labels such as “advergame,” “this is an advertisement,” or “ad break” (Kuşay & Akbayır, 2015, p. 140). While some businesses declare their advertisements, others do not and may even use covert tactics to influence the target audience's perception. Therefore, media literacy and its sub-branch, advertising literacy, are extremely important for protection from advertising and various media harms.

It can be said that from the existence of humankind to the present day, the game has undergone various changes linked to the development of technology and has maintained its existence. The change referred to

here includes the digitalization of games, their reflection on various platforms, and their adaptability for different purposes.

The market for digital games varies, offering both paid and free options; including box sales, online downloads, in-game purchases, and expansion pack sales. The marketing of digital games depends on factors like the target audience, gaming platforms, and revenue models.

The popularization of digital games, significant demand, widespread usage, and the increasing number of players, games, and gaming platforms have attracted the attention of advertisers. This is because the challenges of reaching the target audience through traditional mediums like radio, television, and newspapers have led to new marketing efforts; the target audience shows less interest in traditional media advertisements, rather trying to avoid them. In response to this situation, new marketing methods have been discovered and developed. One such developed marketing effort is the advergaming. Advertisers have adopted advergaming, a fusion of game and advertisement, offering a more cost-effective, longer-lasting interaction and entertainment-based advertising to a target audience tired of traditional media.

Advergaming can be defined as the transformation of advertising into a game format. It is an activity where brands become more enjoyable and evoke positive emotions in the eyes of the target audience, appealing to their perceptions and attitudes. This marketing activity aims to influence the consumer's purchasing behavior. Advergaming aims to increase brand recall, recognition, create a positive opinion about the brand, and be the first brand that comes to mind, among other awareness goals. Thus, brand awareness can be significantly enhanced.

The consumer's purchasing behavior can be planned or incidental, encompassing pre-sale, at-the-moment-of-sale, and post-sale processes. Multiple factors can influence the consumer's purchasing behavior, including internal and external, psychological, sociological, cultural, and personal factors. Advergaming in the pre-sale process can influence by introducing the product/service, providing information, encoding the brand with entertainment in memory, and spreading virally. In the post-sale process, they can be used for recall, encouraging repeat purchases, and promotion. Regarding the sale moment, an advergaming can influence if a consumer, having played the advergaming and having the brand imprinted in their perception, recognizes and purchases the advertised product/service while shopping for a different purpose.

Strategic planning is necessary when preparing an advergaming, as well as ensuring it is created at the right time, for the right platform, and targeted at the correct audience. If proper planning is not done, the likelihood of eliciting the desired consumer behavior may decrease, may not occur at all, and can even lead to negative outcomes.

There are other considerations when preparing an advergaming. Having excellent design and graphics is not enough. The user experience and game narrative should be well-crafted, and behaviors that unnecessarily

interrupt the game should be avoided. In this regard, game flow criteria can be effective in preparing advergames. Advergame arises from the combination of advertising and gaming. "Game Flow" criteria describe the considerations and designs needed in the development of digital games. Accordingly, preparing advergames with game flow criteria can lead to consumer behavior in the desired direction and effective marketing.

Advergame can be used for positive image positioning. However, there are also advergame applications intended to negatively position a brand. These works, known as antiadvergames, are generally carried out by competitors, activists, and performers aiming to damage the brand's image. Antiadvergames, spreading virally/WOM, have the potential to seriously harm the brand. In short, advergames are used to positively position a brand, while antiadvergames are used for negative brand positioning.

Digital games can be said to encompass various positive and negative effects. They are used for various purposes. Sometimes they are a tool to manipulate religious and national sentiments, sometimes to enhance the quality of education, and sometimes as a tool in brand communication. Depending on the purpose of use, they can be diversified even more. Advergames in digital games are prepared for communication, advertising, and marketing purposes. However, some businesses do not disclose their advergames as advertising. Additionally, negative thoughts and research about advergames are present in the literature. There are findings suggesting that certain advergames, especially in the food sector, advertise harmful levels of sugar, fat, and salt-containing foods. Parents generally have a negative view of digital games, and advergames fall within this negative perception. As a precaution, media literacy and its sub-branch, advertising literacy education, play an important role. Besides necessary training for children, monitoring the games they engage with under parental supervision can be beneficial. Examples of this monitoring include checking the content of the game, its age-appropriateness, and what PEGI labels it has. In addition to focusing on games, directing children to different activities can also be beneficial.

In this context, digital games encompass many purposes. Advergames are prepared for advertising, marketing, and building good relations. The effect of advergame applications on players' purchasing behavior is the subject of this study. In the scope of this topic, research has been conducted to measure its effect on players. Generally, in the literature, it is seen that advergame applications have a positive effect on purchasing behavior. However, it is not a rule that a player will always buy the product they encounter in a game they have played. But if a player likes the advertisement of the encountered brand or finds the brand in the game they have played to be fun and friendly, they can share the brand with their surroundings, allowing viral spreading. Thus, even if they do not purchase themselves, they can introduce the brand to others and facilitate their purchases. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate whether players perceive the brand as fun and friendly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Today, it is observed that technology, communication, and transportation networks have developed and continue to evolve. The majority of participants have indicated that they use the internet for playing games, entertainment, and spending time on social media. Brands use gamification methods on social media (like\share\tag a friend) to offer their followers the chance to win giveaways. For example, a brand might offer the chance to win a bag full of chocolates to those who like, share, and tag a friend in a post.

For brands, the following study could be conducted in relation to advergaming applications: Offering a prize in a controlled environment to a few players who score the highest points in an online advergaming application could contribute to viral spread and also facilitate high-level brand communication.

From a researcher's perspective, the following study could be conducted on advergaming applications: A focus group study could be organized where a specific audience is promised a reward upon reaching a certain goal after playing an advertisement game, such as offering a biscuit product as a reward. These rewards can vary in form; they could be in-game rewards (money-points, game items), out-of-game rewards (products\services), or a combination of both in-game and out-of-game reward promises.

Another potential research topic related to advergaming could be to measure and compare the attitudes towards the brand between participants who received a reward and those who did not.

Ethics Statement

"This article complies with the journal's writing rules, publication principles, research and publication ethics rules, and journal ethics rules. The author bears responsibility for any violations related to the article." Since this article was conducted through document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, it does not require ethical board approval.

Author's Contribution Rate Statement: The contribution rate of the first author in this study is 100%.

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