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Entertainment Motivation Based Social Network Banner Advertising Acceptance: The Mediating Role of Entertainment Belief

Dr. IMRAN ANWAR MIR
Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology, Islamabad.
Email: imrananwarmir@fuuast,edu.pk
Tel: +923315546717

Dr. SHAHID IQBAL
Department of Psychology, Abdul Haq Campus,
Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science & Technology
Tel: +922130020948916

Dr. RAZI SULTAN SIDDIQUI
DHA Suffa University, Karachi, Pakistan.
Email: razi_sultan@yahoo.com

Abstract

Social media have changed users' entire approach to social interaction. Specifically, social network sites have become a favorite location for social contact and activity. The revenue of several social network firms like Facebook comes from advertising. The current research assesses the mediating role of belief about social network advertising as entertaining between users' entertainment motivation and their attitude toward social network advertising as well as ad click behavior. Via an online survey, data were collected with 275 Facebook users in Pakistan. Results revealed users' entertainment motivation to use social network sites as a multidimensional construct. Belief about social network advertising as entertaining plays a partial mediation between users' entertainment motivation and their attitudes toward social network advertising. Similarly, it plays a partial mediation between users' entertainment motivation to use social network sites and their social network banner ad click behavior. Attitudinal mediation between users' entertainment motivation to use social network sites and their social network banner ad click behavior was not supported. Findings of the current research can be used in designing effective social network banner ads.

Key Words: *Entertainment Motivation, Social Network Sites, Banner Advertising, Beliefs, Attitudes, Ad Click Behavior.*

Introduction

Social media have revolutionized the approaches to social interaction. Today, people use social media to communicate and interact with each other (Appel, Grewal, Hadi, & Stephen, 2020). Specifically, social network sites (SNS) like Facebook have become the favorite place for social interaction (Mir, 2021). Besides users' social interaction, firms use SNS to conduct business activities such as advertising (Dwivedi, Ismagilova, Rana, & Raman, 2021; Mir, 2017). Most importantly, the revenue of several SNS businesses

like Facebook comes from advertising. SNS Firms publish ads of businesses on their websites, and in return, earn money (Trusov, Bodapati, & Bucklin, 2010; Mir, 2018). The key task of their management is to ascertain that users like SNS banner advertising. SNS users typically endorse SNS banner ads that are pertinent to their SNS engagement motivations (Mir, 2014; Taylor, Lewin, & Strutton, 2011). Past research (e.g., Alsalem, 2019; Han, 2020; Mir, 2017; Naqvi, Jiang, Miao, & Naqvi, 2010; Park, Chen, & Cheng, 2021; Rajani & Solanki, 2016) acknowledges entertainment seeking as a key user motivation to use SNS; for instance, Facebook. Most of the prior research (e.g., Al Haj Eid, Nusairat, Alkailanic, & Al-Ghadeer, 2020; Gaber, Wright, & Kooli, 2019; Han, 2020; Mir, 2017) assessed the link between users 'entertainment motivation for using SNS and their attitude towards SNS advertising. The mediating role of users' belief that SNS banner advertising is entertaining has rarely been examined.

The current research aims at assessing the mediation of SNS users' belief of SNS banner advertising (SBA) as entertaining between their entertainment motivation and attitude towards SBA. Similarly, its mediation between users' entertainment motivation and their SNS banner ad-click behaviour is assessed. Entertainment seeking is a vital intrinsic user motivation to engage in SNS (Reinecke, Vorderer, & Knop, 2014). Belief is defined as a descriptive thought that people hold about other people, products, advertising etc. (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Several online and social media studies (e.g., Mir, 2012; Wang & Sun, 2010) identified perceived entertainment as an important users' belief about banner advertising. Importantly, SNS users' belief of SBA as entertaining predicts their attitudes toward SBA (Mir, 2015). The current research theorizes users' acceptance or approval of SBA in terms of SNS users' attitude towards SBA and their SNS ad-click through behaviour. Attitude can be defined as an assessment to perform behavior. It may be favorable or unfavorable (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). However, users' positive assessment towards online banner advertising is futile if it does not trigger ad click behavior (Briggs & Hollis, 1997). Ad click behavior indicates a user's deliberate action. When a user clicks the SNS banner ad, he or she is redirected to ad sponsor's homepage. There users can buy the products or collect more information (Mir, 2014). Importantly, advertisers pay to SNS firms when users click SNS banner ads (Farris et al., 2010).

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the current research are as follows:

1. To examine the mediation of belief about SBA as entertaining between users' entertainment motivation and their attitudes toward SBA.
2. To examine the mediation of belief about SBA as entertaining between users' entertainment motivation and their SNS banner ad-click behavior.

Literature Review on Entertainment Motivation

Entertainment seeking is a key user motivation to use SNS like Facebook (Alsalem, 2019; Han, 2020; Mir, 2017; Naqvi, et al., 2020; Park et al., 2021; Rajani, & Solanki, 2016). It is defined as users' desire to gratify their emotions by engaging in some activity (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010). According to Ryan and Deci (2000), users receive entertainment gratification while engaging in an activity, such as using Facebook. Literature shows entertainment as a multidimensional construct. According to Vorderer, Klimmt, and Ritterfeld (2004), the underlying dimensions of entertainment motivation are enjoyment, pleasure, fun, and escapism. Muntinga, Moorman, and Smit (2011) discovered four dimensions of entertainment motivation. They include escapism, emotional relief, enjoyment, pass time, and sexual arousal. Ruggiero (2000) identified escapism and enjoyment as underlying dimensions of entertainment for using media. The

current research follows Mir's (2017) multidimensional perspective on users' entertainment motivation for using SNS. According to this model, entertainment motivation contains enjoyment, relaxation, social escapism, and pastime dimensions.

Enjoyment is an important user motivation to use SNS (Basilisco & Jin, 2015; Hossain, 2019; Hossain, Kim, & Jahan, 2019; Orchard, Fullwood, Galbraith, & Morris, 2014). Enjoyment refers to the users' experience of feeling joy, happiness, and excitement while engaging in an activity (Monsuwe, Dellaert, & de Ruyter, 2004). Several prior studies, such as Wang, Jackson, Wang, and Gaskin (2015), Sharma and Verma (2015), and Wijesundara (2014), discovered *relaxation* as a vital motivation to engage in SNS. Muntinga et al. (2011) defined relaxation motivation as users' desire to feel relax from daily routine. According to Bosshart and Macconi (1998), media content helps people to relax mentally. Various earlier researches (e.g., Arora & Agarwal, 2020; Mir, 2017) acknowledged *social escapism* as a key motivation to participate in SNS. Heatherton and Baumeister (1991) define a user's escapism motivation as his or her desire to escape the undesirable self. When a user fails to meet social standards and demands, he or she engages in an activity to escape the painful self. Social issues, worries, and problems cause strain. To get rid of this strain, people attempt to escape reality (Katz, Gurevitch, & Hass (1973). Earlier research (e.g., Alhabash & Ma, 2017; Kircaburun, Alhabash, Tosuntaş, & Griffiths, 2020; Mir, 2017) finds *pass time* as a significant user motivation for using SNS. Pass time is users' attempt to browse content on SNS when they have nothing better to do (Muntinga et al., 2011).

Theoretical Framework

The current research employs Katz (1959)'s version of 'uses and gratifications (UG) theory' to explicate the mediating role of users' belief of SBA as entertaining between entertainment motivation for using SNS and user attitudes toward SBA and their SNS (e.g. Facebook) banner ad click behavior. UG theory is a useful theoretical framework to identify users' motivations for using SNS (Hossain, 2019; Kircaburun et al., 2020; Plume & Slade, 2018). UG theory has also been found effective to explain the relationship between users' SNS motivation and their approval of SBA (Mir, 2018). The key question that uses and gratifications theory poses is why people use media (Katz, 1959) or what are their media usage motivations (Jere & Davis, 2011). SNS gratifications research (e.g., Alsalem, 2019; Han, 2020; Naqvi, et al., 2020; Park et al., 2021) identified entertainment seeking a significant users' SNS motivation. Mir (2017) proposed that entertainment motivation to use SNS includes enjoyment, relaxation, social escapism, and pass time dimensions. Burnkrant (1976) and Kunda (1990) theorized that motivations trigger beliefs and beliefs in response influence attitudes. The current research proposes that belief about SBA as entertaining mediates the association between users' entertainment motivation for using SNS and their attitude towards SBA (See Figure 1). This postulation is also supported by Zhou and Bao (2002) who found that perceived entertainment mediates the associations between entertainment motivation to use internet and users' attitudes toward internet advertising. Furthermore, the current research advances that belief about SNS banner advertising as entertaining mediates the association between users' entertainment motivation to use SNS and their SNS (e.g. Facebook) banner ad-click behavior (See Figure 1). Wang and Sun (2010) and Mahmoud (2013) support this theorization. They found that users' belief about online advertising as entertaining has a mediating effect on their ad click behavior. Specifically, the following hypotheses are suggested:

H1. Belief about SBA as entertaining mediates the link between users' entertainment motivation for using SNS and their attitude towards SBA.
H2. Belief about SBA as entertaining mediates the link between users' entertainment motivation for using SNS and their SNS banner ad click behavior.

Users' attitude plays mediation between variables is well recognized in the marketing literature. For detail read MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch (1986). SNS research such as Arora and Agarwal (2020 and Mir (2017) indicates a significant relationship between entertainment motivation for using SNS and users' attitude towards SBA. Rodgers and Thorson (2000) offered that users' internet motivations could influence their attitude towards internet ads while attempting to satisfy their needs online. Users' positive attitude towards online ads may lead to their ad click behavior (Mir, 2014). Mir (2017) proposed a multidimensional model of users' SNS entertainment motivation, which includes enjoyment, relaxation, social escapism, and pass time dimension. Consistent with SNS gratifications theory and research (e.g., Arora & Agarwal, 2020; Mir, 2017), the current research offers that attitude towards SNS banner advertising plays a mediation between users' entertainment motivation to use SNS and their SNS (e.g. Facebook) banner ad click through behavior (See Figure1). Precisely, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H3. Attitude towards SBA mediates the link between entertainment motivation for using SNS and users' SNS banner ad-click behavior.

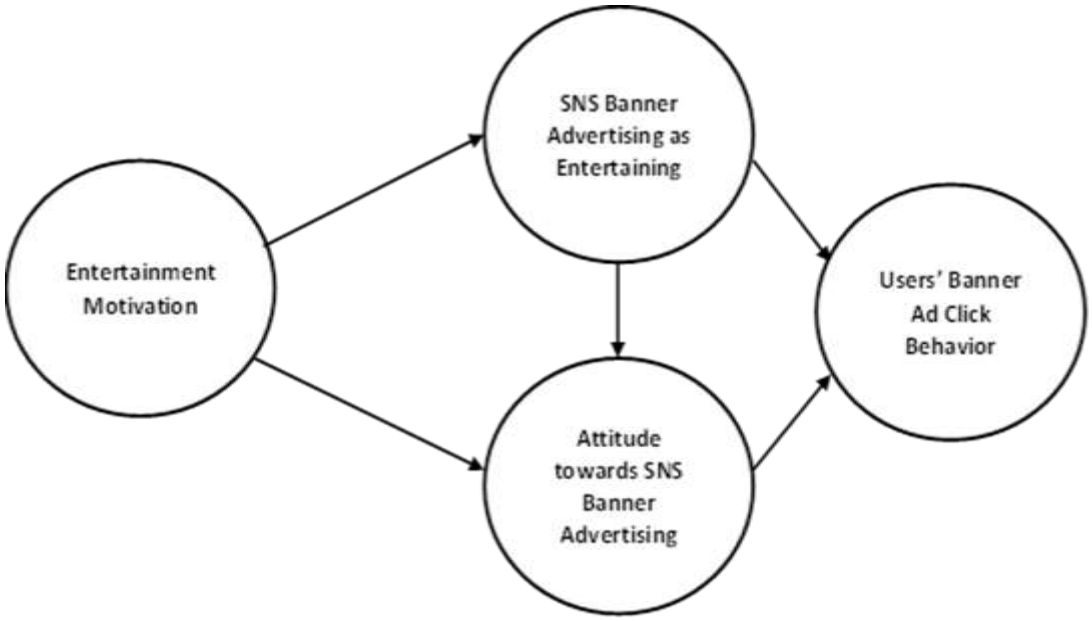

Figure 1. Proposed Model

Method

Data was collected from 275 Pakistani Facebook users. Via purposive sampling, those users were selected who had rich experience of using Facebook. The sampled users have been using Facebook for the last several years and were well-versed about social and commercial activities conducted on Facebook. Facebook is the number one SNS in Pakistan. Over 90 percent of internet users use Facebook in Pakistan (Statcounter GlobalStats, 2020). Sample size 275 was decided based on the criteria that > 200 cases is the precondition for rigorous statistical analysis (See Hoe, 2008). The 62.5 percent respondents were male and 37.5 female. Respondents' ages were between 18 to 45 years. Banner ads were focused because of their clear visibility on SNS (Mir, 2017). Data was gathered using an online survey.

Entertainment Motivation Measures, Source and Assessment

Entertainment motivation was measured using measures from Mir (2017). It assesses the multidimensionality of entertainment motivation. A 5-point Likert scale which varied from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), was used to collect responses of the respondents. To examine the good-fit of the SNS users' entertainment motivation assessment scale the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was executed. The entertainment motivation measurement model did not yield a good fit on the traditional χ^2 test (See Table 1). However, it fitted the data on the $\chi^2/df \leq 3$ (See Table 1). Entertainment motivation measurement scale also produced a good fit on model fitness indices (See Table 1). The CFA confirmed entertainment motivation to use SNS like Facebook is composed of four dimensions. Table 2 shows dimensions of entertainment motivation to use SNS (Facebook), their standardized estimates (β), standard error (SE), t, p, and α values.

Table 1 Entertainment Measurement Scale Goodness of Fit Information

Entertainment Motivation	Traditional Test (χ^2)	df	*p*	Alternate Test (χ^2/ df)	Model Fit Indices					
					GFI	IFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model Values	168.939	84	.000	2.011	.923	.90	.940	.924	.939	.061
Goodness of Fit Criteria	-	-	> .05	≤ 3	≥ .90	≥ .90	≥ .90	≥ .90	≥ .90	≤ .08

Table 2 SNS Entertainment Motivation CFA Results

Entertainment Motivation Dimensions	Measurement Scale	β	SE	t	*P*	*α*
Enjoyment	I use social network sites (i.e. Facebook) because I want to.					.827
	→ 1. enjoy	.630	-	-	-	
	→ 2. get some excitement	.792	.104	10.456	***	
	→ 3. be entertained	.766	.111	9.462	***	
	→ 4. have some fun	.791	.117	9.644	***	
Relaxation	I use social network sites (i.e. Facebook) because …..					
	→ 1. it helps me unwind	.639	-	-	-	.777
	→ 2. I want to chill out	.765	.132	9.706	***	
	→ 3. I want to alleviate anxiety	.695	.109	9.040	***	
	→ 4. I want to feel easy	.636	.117	8.099	***	
Social Escapism	I use social network site (i.e. Facebook) because I want to					
	→ 1. forget about school work and other things	.611	-	-	-	.810
	→ 2. escape to a fantasy world	.724	.116	9.138	***	
	→ 3. get away from pressures and responsibilities	.816	.135	9.434	***	
	→ 4. escape the reality	.738	.128	8.099	***	
Time Pass	I use social network site (i.e. Facebook)….					
	→ 1. to occupy my time	.694	-	-	-	.704
	→ 2. when I have nothing better to do	.579	.126	6.676	***	
	→ 3. to kill time	.659	.170	6.869	***	

Note: ***p < .001

Endogenous Variables' Measures, Source and Reliability

Users' belief about SBA was measured on three items adapted from Wang and Sun (2010). Users' attitude towards SBA was assessed on four measures taken from Taylor et al. (2011). Users' banner ad click behavior was measured using three items from Mir (2018). Users' responses regarding endogenous variables were noted on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To ensure the "interrelatedness of a set of items (See Schmitt, 1996, p. 350) measuring endogenous variables, their reliability was confirmed by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (α). Table 3 presents endogenous variables, measurement scale and alpha.

Table 3 Endogenous Variables, Measurement Scale and Alpha

Variable	Measurement Scale	α
SNS Advertising as Entertaining	1. Online social network (Facebook) banner ads are entertaining	.793
	2. Online social network (Facebook) banner ads are enjoyable	
	3. Online social network (Facebook) banner ads are pleasing	
Attitude toward SNS Advertising	1. Overall, I like online social network (Facebook) banner advertising	.765
	2. I deem online social network (Facebook) advertising very important	
	3. I would describe my overall attitude toward online social network (Facebook) banner advertising very favourably	
	4. My general opinion about online social network (Facebook) banner advertising is favorable	
Users' Ad-Click Behavior	1. I often click banner ads displayed on social network site (Facebook)	.812
	2. I often click social network sites (Facebook) banner ads	
	3. I often click banner ads displayed on my social network site (Facebook) profile	

Proposed Model and Hypotheses Testing

The model tested fitted the data on the χ^2 test. It was also supported by data on the alternate test of the χ^2 (i.e. $\chi^2/df \leq 3$) and model fit indices. Table 4 shows the model fit information.

Table 4 Model Fit Information

Proposed Model Tested	Traditional Test (χ^2)	df	*p*	Alternate Test (χ^2/ df)	Model Fit Indices					
					GFI	IFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model Values	7.125	4	.129	1.781	.993	.990	.978	.945	.989	.053
Goodness of Fit Criteria	-	-	> .05	≤ 3	≥ .90	≥ .90	≥ .90	≥ .90	≥ .90	≤ .08

Structural Model

The current research used a multidimensional model of users' entertainment motivation to engage in SNS. Thus, the structural model tested contained 11 paths (See Figure 2). The criteria of significant β, t > 1.96 or < -1.96 P < .001, 01 or .05 was utilized to measure the link between the variables. Enjoyment (β = .17, t = 2.517, p =. 012) and social escapism (β = .26, t = 4.372, p = .000) demonstrated a significant connection with SBA as entertaining. Conversely, relaxation (β = .12, t = 1.771, p = .076) and pass time (β = -.02, t = -.284, p = .777) demonstrated an insignificant relationship with SNS banner advertising as entertaining. The path statistics (β = .23, t = 3.717, p = .000) between SBA as entertaining and attitudes toward SBA

indicated a significant relationship. These results partially supported H1. Only enjoyment and social escapism were significantly related with SBA as entertaining. The path statistics (β = .39, t = 7.188, p = .000) between SBA as entertaining and users' banner ad click behavior indicated a significant relationship. These results partially supported H2. Enjoyment (β = -.06, t = -.845, p = .398), relaxation (β = .07, t = .997, p = .319), social escapism (β = .08, t = 1.248, p = .212) and pass time (β = .09, t = 1.507, p = .132) showed insignificant relationships with attitudes toward SBA. The path statistics (β = .22, t = 3.947, p = .000) between users' attitude towards SBA and their SNS banner ad-click behaviour revealed a significant association. Overall results rejected H3.

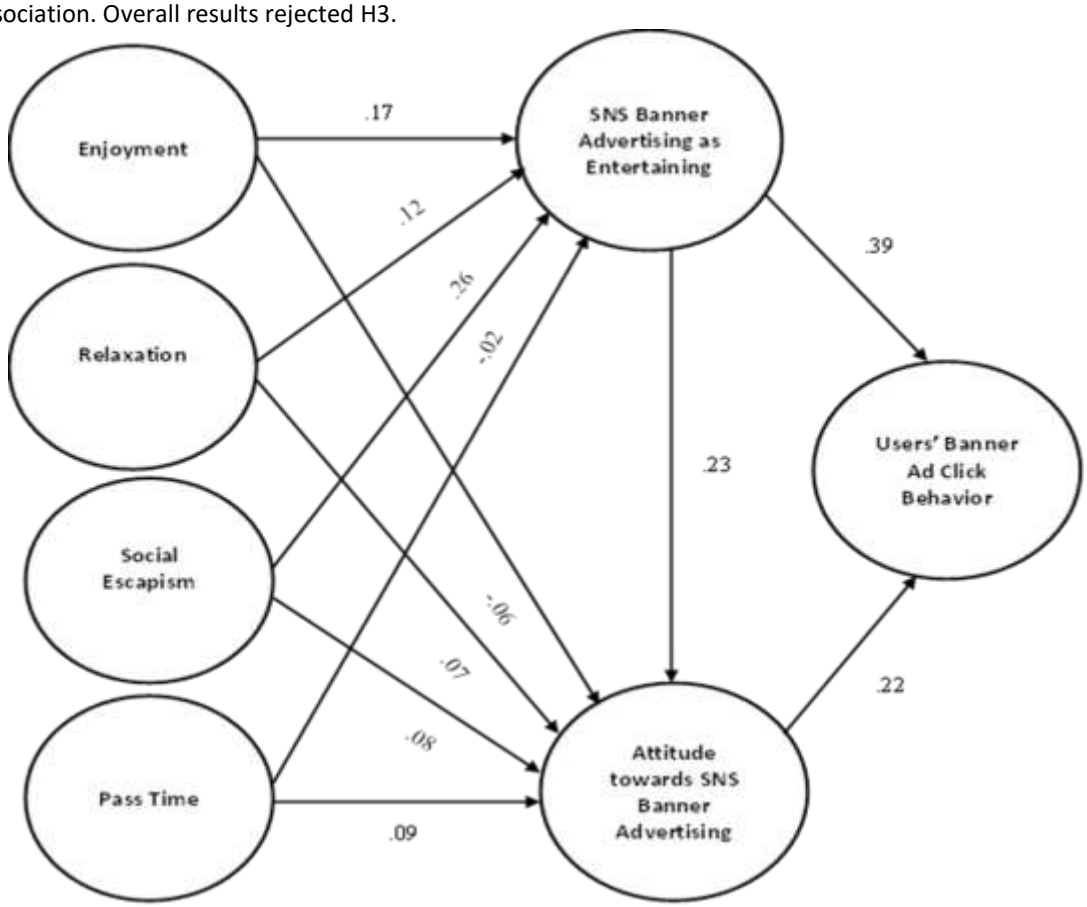

Figure 2. Structural Model

Discussion

SNS such as Facebook has become a hub for social interaction (Appel et al., 2020) and business activities (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Specifically, advertising is the most dominant business activity conducted on SNS like Facebook (Mir, 2018). It is the revenue generation source of social media corporations like Facebook. The key task of SNS management is to ascertain that users like SBA (Taylor et al., 2011). If SNS ads are consistent with users' motivations, it will affect their attitudes toward SBA positively (Mir, 2014). However, literature (e.g., Mir, 2015: Wang & Sun, 2010) shows that users' beliefs about SNS advertising form their positive attitude towards it. Beliefs carry the images of solutions for users' activated needs (Kunda, 1990). The current research examined the mediation of belief about SBA as entertaining between entertainment motivation and users' attitudes toward SBA and their SNS banner ad-click behaviour. The

current research took a multidimensional perspective of entertainment motivation (See Mir, 2017) because its diverse dimensions may have different impacts on users' attitudes and behavior (Bloch, Sherrell, & Ridgway, 1986).

The results revealed that beliefs about SNS banner advertising as entertaining mediates the link between users' entertainment motivation for using SNS and their attitudes toward SBA. This finding is consistent with online gratifications studies such as Zhou and Bao (2002). Yet, this argument was partially supported. Belief about SBA as entertaining mediated between enjoyment and social escapism motivations and user attitudes toward SBA. While relaxation and pass time dimensions showed no such effect. This finding is consistent with Bloch et al.'s (1986) argument that diverse dimensions of motivational constructs like entertainment motivation may influence user attitudes differently. Furthermore, results revealed that belief about SBA as entertaining played a partial mediation between users' entertainment motivation to use SNS and their SNS (e.g. Facebook) banner ad-click behaviour. Prior research supports this finding. For example, Touré-Tillery and Fishbach (2014) argued that diverse dimensional factors of motivational constructs may influence user behaviours differently. In addition, inconsistent with prior scholarship (e.g., Arora & Agarwal, 2020; Mir, 2017), the current research found that attitudes toward SBA do not mediate between users' entertainment motivation to use SNS and their SNS (e.g. Facebook) banner ad-click behaviour. As a whole, results endorsed the multidimensional perspective of entertainment motivation and mediating role of beliefs about SBA.

Conclusion

Entertainment seeking is a vital user motivation to engage in SNS. Importantly, entertainment motivation to use SNS is a multifaceted construct including enjoyment motivation, relaxation motivation, social escapism motivation, and pass time motivation. Taking a multidimensional perspective of entertainment motivation is necessary because its dimensions have dissimilar influences on users' beliefs and attitudes toward SNS banner advertising. Furthermore, belief about SBA as entertaining is a vital mediator. It plays mediation between SNS users' entertainment motivation and their attitudes toward SBA and SNS banner ad-click behavior.

Contribution in Theory and Implications

The current research contributed to the SNS gratifications theory and literature by theorizing and operationalizing the mediating role of users' belief about SBA as entertaining. Beliefs play a crucial role in forming users' attitudes toward online advertising (Wang & Sun, 2010) and influencing online ad click behavior (Mir, 2015). Entertainment motivational factors have dissimilar influences on users' beliefs and attitudes toward SBA. SNS firms and SNS advertisers should take this fact into account while designing SNS banner ads. SNS advertisers should improve the users' beliefs about SBA because they affect their attitudes and ad click behavior.

Limitations and Future Research Agenda

The current research addressed an important issue. Yet, there are some limitations of the current research. The current research used the data only from Facebook users. Future research should use data from Instagram and Twitter too. Furthermore, the current research focused on traditional banner advertising. Future studies should focus on non-traditional SNS advertising too. Moreover, future research should also extend the model presented in the current research beyond the ad click behavior. In addition,

researchers should replicate the idea presented in the current research in other cultural contexts to validate its practical implications.

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