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Consumer Reactions to Social Media Advertising in Poland

This study explores consumer perceptions and interactions with social media advertising, examining the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies across various platforms. Conducted with 100 Polish respondents, the research investigates how consumers engage with online advertisements, focusing on factors such as content relevance, advertisement format, and emotional response. The findings reveal that social media users encounter advertisements daily, predominantly for clothing, cosmetics, and electronics. Despite the ubiquity of these ads, consumers often find them less engaging, with a significant portion expressing annoyance and a tendency to block or ignore marketing content. Text-based advertisements were found to be the least attractive, while short video formats demonstrated greater potential for capturing audience attention. YouTube emerged as the most memorable advertising platform, suggesting its unique effectiveness in brand communication. Most notably, consumers reported minimal persuasive impact, with few feeling motivated to purchase or recommend advertised products. The study recommends strategic redesign of social media advertising, emphasizing video-based content, targeted personalization, and platform-specific engagement techniques. By addressing consumer preferences and reducing negative emotional responses, marketers can potentially improve the effectiveness of their digital advertising approaches.

Keywords: regional economy, EU, Poland, advertisement, social media, consumer reactions, Adblock, purchase decisions

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Introduction

In today's world, the popularity of social media continues to grow. They are becoming an integral part of people's lives, serving as sources of entertainment and information. Many companies are choosing to use social media as an

advertising channel, which can offer numerous benefits to organizations. This raises an important question: what should a social media advertising message look like to be effective and successful in sales?

Advertising and Social Media – Definition of Key Terms

According to Article 22(1) of the Civil Code, a **consumer** is defined as a natural person making a legal transaction with an entrepreneur that is not directly related to his/her business or professional activity [1].

The Dictionary of Polish Language defines **advertising** as such an activity that encourages potential customers to use a service or purchase a product [2]. Advertising can also be defined as a paid, consistent with the law and good principles of morality, and impersonal form of obtaining market information by an enterprise, non-commercial organizations, and individuals that enables them to present a rich range of products and services to customers [3, p.28]. Furthermore, advertising significantly influences purchasing decisions and other behaviors of the target audience [3, p.28]. Advertising enables communication with the company's surrounding environment in a simple way and is an important component of the marketing structure, which can very clearly influence the behavior of consumers within their specific group [4, p. 309].

The Dictionary of Polish Language defines **social media** as online and mobile technologies that enable contact between users registered on them through the exchange of information, knowledge and opinions [5]. Social media is a form of information transfer that involves the use of websites or applications accessible to a wide range of Internet users who form a network with each other [6, p. 1]. One of the fundamental concepts of social media is to allow users to connect with a specific group, making it easier to stay in touch and exchange information — such as texts, photos, and videos — among the group's members. Each user is given the opportunity to create their personalized profile where they can share content of their choice [7].

However, the use of social media is not limited to the activities described above. More and more companies are choosing to establish a social media profile for sales activation purposes, particularly through advertising messages. Before a company decides to set up such a profile, it should conduct a thorough analysis to determine its activity profile, as well as the products or services it intends to offer to social media users.

It is also important to identify both the current and desired customer profiles in order to select the social network that is most popular among a group of such customers [6, pp. 3-4]:

Facebook is one of the most popular social networks, founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. The platform allows users to post photos, videos, graphics, links to external sites and conduct live broadcasts on their profiles. In addition, users can exchange messages with each other or create groups and events [8].

Instagram is a platform designed for sharing visually appealing content — primarily photos, but also graphics and videos. It was created for users of mobile devices (mainly smartphones). Each user has a profile, where the content they share appears, as well as their "feed," where they can see content shared by other users if he or she follows their profile or a particular hashtag [9].

TikTok is a platform that initially permitted users to create videos with durations of 15 or 60 seconds. In 2021, the developers of the application expanded its capabilities by introducing the option to produce videos of up to 3 minutes in length. As part of using the application, users are able to enhance their recorded videos by applying a variety of effects and sounds. The most important part of the application is the "For You" section, which features new content added by other users on a daily basis [10].

YouTube is a video-sharing platform owned by Google. It allows users to upload and watch videos and music for free. Additionally, users can comment on and rate each piece of content as well as create personalized playlists and channels [11].

Snapchat is a platform that enables users to share photos, videos, and messages with others. The unique feature of this platform is that shared content disappears after it has been played/viewed, thereby preventing its accumulation [12].

Twitter is a social media platform that allows users, referred to as "tweeters," to publish concise messages, known as "tweets," of up to 280 characters. Texts that appear on this platform are often quoted in traditional media, particularly when authored by notable individuals such as politicians, celebrities, and owners of large corporations [13].

Literature Review

The literature on consumers’ social media activities and their responses to advertisements posted on such platforms is extensive, featuring numerous researchers’ own studies and their interpretations.

Time engagement of consumers on social media. In 2018, researchers Hilde A. M. Voorveld, Guda van Noort, Daniel G. Muntiga and Fred Bronner [14] examined consumers’ time engagement in social media and the impact of a particular social network on consumer responses. The authors observed distinct differences among the social media platforms they examined regarding various engagement dimensions (see Table 1).

Facebook received the most points in all categories (or “dimensions”), which means its high potential. In addition, it is noteworthy that consumers believe that this platform provides them with a lot of entertainment (enjoyment, satisfaction, relaxation). Twitter is considered to be the service that best informs its users about news. It also achieved the second highest score in the criterion of “negative emotion related to content”, which perhaps means that it distracted its users and may have caused sadness related to what is happening in the world. YouTube allows users to relax and spend a moment alone with them-

selves. In the “topicality,” or relevance, dimension, it received the second highest score, indicating that YouTube users use it to fill their free time and to, stay up to date. Snapchat scored highest in “social interaction” and “entertainment” criteria. It allows users to share anything and interact with other users regarding pre-publicized materials. It is considered to be entertaining, pleasant, enjoyable. Instagram achieved the highest score in the “pastime” dimension, reflecting that users engage with the platform during their leisure time to browse content that allows them to be informed and “up to date.” When developing an advertising message for a social media platform, it is essential to consider which criteria it will influence. Based on the findings, one can select the appropriate social media platform. For example, if the advertising message emphasizes the “entertainment” dimension, it would be advisable to consider placing it on platforms such as YouTube or Snapchat [14].

Effectiveness of advertising activities in social media. In 2017, researchers Joanna Szulżyk-Cieplak, Aleksandra Puchtel and Agata Płęcha examined which advertising activities carried out by brands using social media influence respondents’ purchase decisions. The survey showed that the most effective was passing on a discount coupon (39.5%) and publishing information about a special offer (34.5%). Attention

Table 1. Social media engagement with the different platforms

[%]	Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	Snapchat	Instagram
Entertainment	16.13	8.04	24.65	25.77	20.44
Negative emotion related to content	14.83	16.42	3.38	4.35	7.94
Negative emotion related to platform	5.09	2.41	0.78	0.97	0.29
Pastime	22.57	12.64	14.98	16.76	26.19
Stimulation	7.32	7.02	11.61	6.70	11.67
Identification	11.40	8.41	3.18	9.21	7.15
Practical use	5.59	5.94	8.61	3.24	5.46
Social interaction	28.56	14.67	5.61	27.79	16.19
Innovation	2.10	3.47	1.02	5.71	3.66
Topicality	27.56	39.29	16.60	17.52	23.24
Empowerment	2.46	1.65	1.93	6.37	3.23
Sum of all dimensions	143.61	119.96	92.35	124.39	125.46

Source: Based on [14, p. 45]

was also paid to publishing information about emerging new products on offer (32.0%).

On the other hand, among the least effective were such activities as recommendation of a well-known person and encouraging participation in contests. Socio-demographic data also impacted the detailed results (for example, for a pupil/student it is important to publish information about a special offer, while for a pensioner it is important to receive a discount coupon). These findings suggest that companies developing advertising campaigns on the Internet via social media should tailor the relevant advertising activities mentioned above as the most effective, taking into account socio-demographic data in order to enhance effectiveness [15].

Comparison of social media advertising and traditional advertising. In 2014, researcher Agnieszka Szewczyk [16] conducted a study to compare the effectiveness of social media advertising (Facebook) with traditional advertising (Google AdWords). Examining the click-through rates of advertisements that redirected users to landing pages, Facebook advertising was found to be only half as effective as advertising on Google AdWords in generating user clicks. During the broadcast of the ad on Facebook, there were 67 different actions related to the displayed ad (clicks, likes, shares). The advantage of this type of action over a traditional click is that if a user likes or shares a post, it remains visible on their profile for a longer period of time and reaches a wider audience, including the user's friends. The researcher, taking into account various measurable factors, reached the conclusion that Facebook was the undisputed winner, outperforming its competitors by more than eight times in the final analysis. Any advertisement should have an impact on its audience, and consumers on social media are particularly eager to share tailored advertising content. This type of advertising goes from being unattractive to being interesting to the audience. Therefore, it can be concluded that the advertising messages on social media successfully fulfill their primary objective, while shaping consumers' opinion of the brand and influencing their purchasing decisions [16].

Research Methodology

The objective of this study is to determine how consumers respond to marketing activities

implemented through social media, the popularity of which is growing from year to year. The research was conducted in January 2023 using a diagnostic survey, a questionnaire, via the Internet, and with the participation of 100 respondents. The target group was residents of Poland who use social media. The respondents varied in socio-demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education, and place of residence.

The central research hypothesis was that consumers mostly ignore advertising on social media platforms, which does not exclude its influence on their purchasing decisions.

The study also aimed to verify the following supporting hypotheses:

- Consumers are most likely to be exposed to ads for cosmetic products and clothing.
- Consumers believe that social media ads are tailored in a moderate way.
- Consumers believe they encounter advertisements on social media every day.
- Consumers tend to ignore social media ads.
- Consumers consider graphic advertisements to be the most engaging.
- Consumers regard a text post on a social network to be the least interesting form of advertising.
- Consumers prefer personalized, tailored advertisements.
- Consumers install Adblock to avoid display of social media advertising.
- Consumers close the pop-up/browser window, mute the audio or turn off the application.
- For advertisements that they find appealing, consumers:
 - › get curious and click on the link;
 - › click the "like" option, comment or share the post.
- Consumers are looking for an opportunity to skip advertisements fast.
- Consumers find social media advertising annoying and believe it should be discontinued.
- Consumers mostly remember the advertisements they saw the same day or day before.
- Consumers do not wish to see those advertisements again.
- Consumers mainly recall advertisement examples from the social networking site "YouTube."

- After recalling an example of an advertisement, consumers find that it was quite interesting.
- Consumers come to the conclusion on the basis of the sample advertisement that they were not convinced to buy the product or service.
- Consumers would not recommend an advertised product or service to their friend.
- Consumers remember advertisements that catch the ear.

Research Results

The largest number of respondents use social media platforms such as Youtube (90%), Facebook (89%) and Instagram (80%). Conversely, Twitter is the least utilized platform, attracting only 30% of users. Furthermore, a significant proportion of respondents encounter the highest volume of advertising on YouTube (at least one in two users mention this portal).

When answering the question whether the advertisements displayed on social media resonate with their interests, the respondents

were asked to rate the relevance on a scale from 1 (*definitely no*) to 5 (*definitely yes*) (see Figure 1). About one in three users feel that advertising is not tailored to their interests (37%, including 14% — “definitely no”, 23% — “rather no”).

When answering the question whether they prefer advertisements to be relevant to their interests, about three out of four respondents indicated that they would like advertisements in social media to match their interests (78%, including 51% — “definitely yes” and 27% — “rather yes”), as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 3 summarizes responses to the question about the groups of products or services, whose advertisements the respondents encounter most frequently. Nearly every respondent indicates that they encounter advertising on social media on a daily basis (93%). Most respondents encounter advertisements for products and services such as:

- Clothing, accessories, jewelry — 79%.
- Cosmetic products — 69%.
- Electronics (consumer electronics/appliances) — 52%.

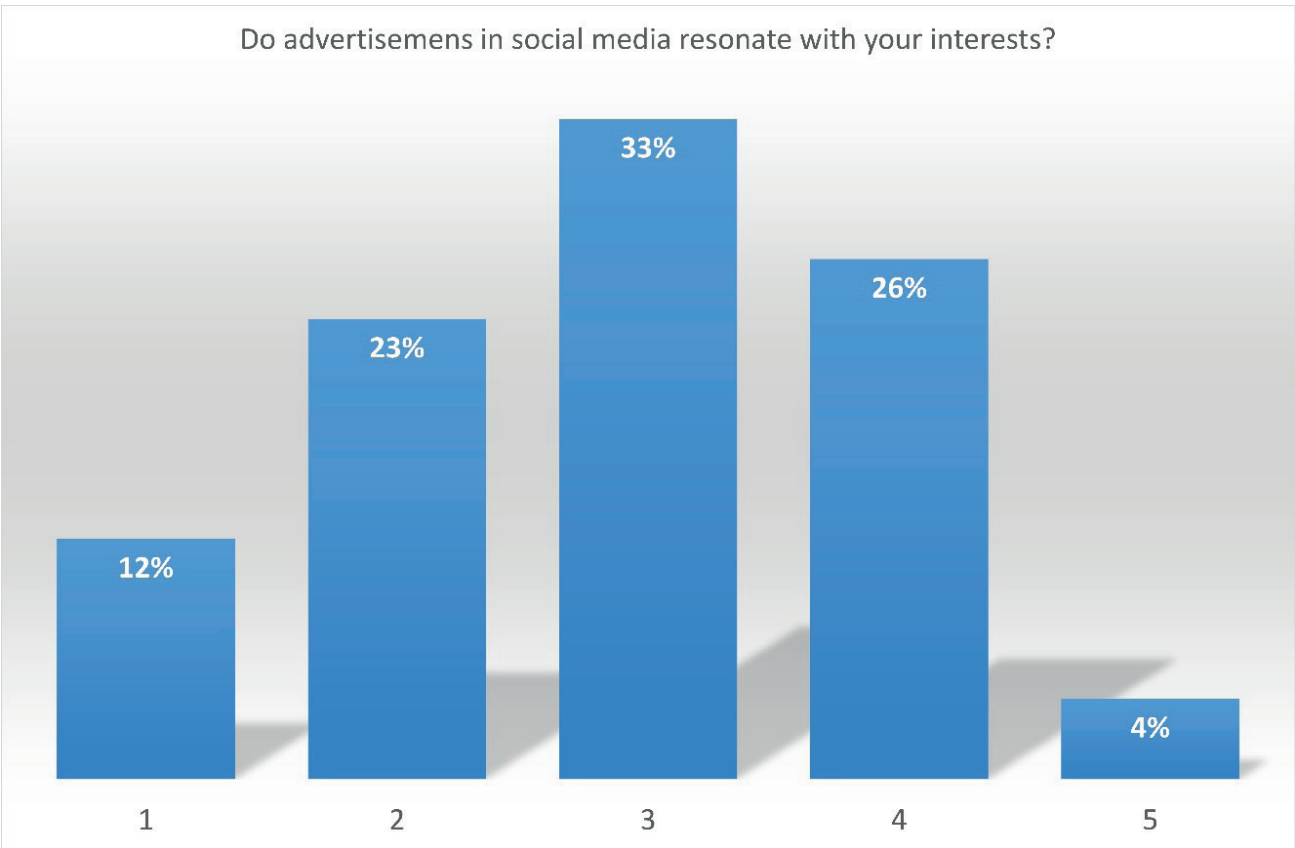


Fig. 1. Relevance of social media advertising to consumers’ interests; 100 responses

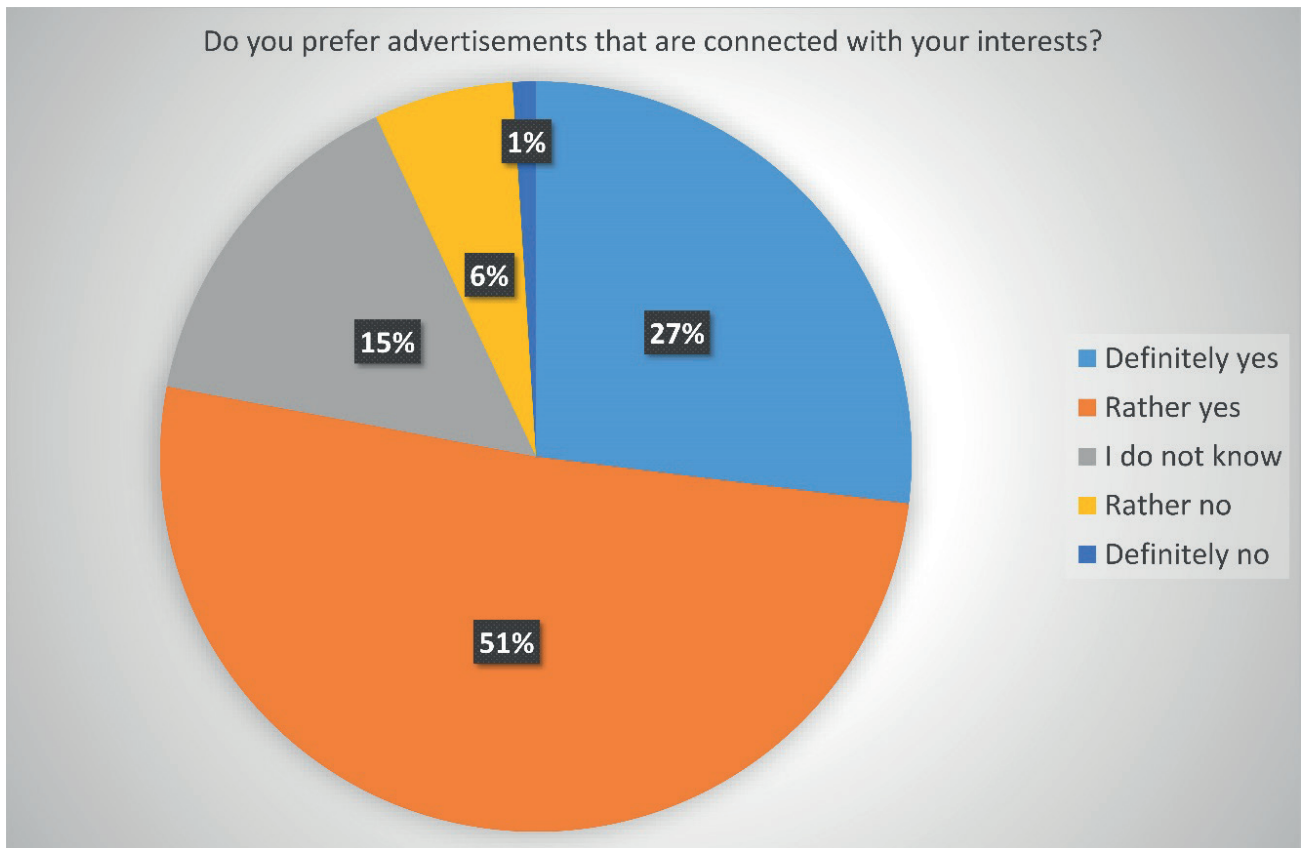


Fig. 2. Consumers' expectations concerning the relevance of social media advertising to their interests; 100 responses

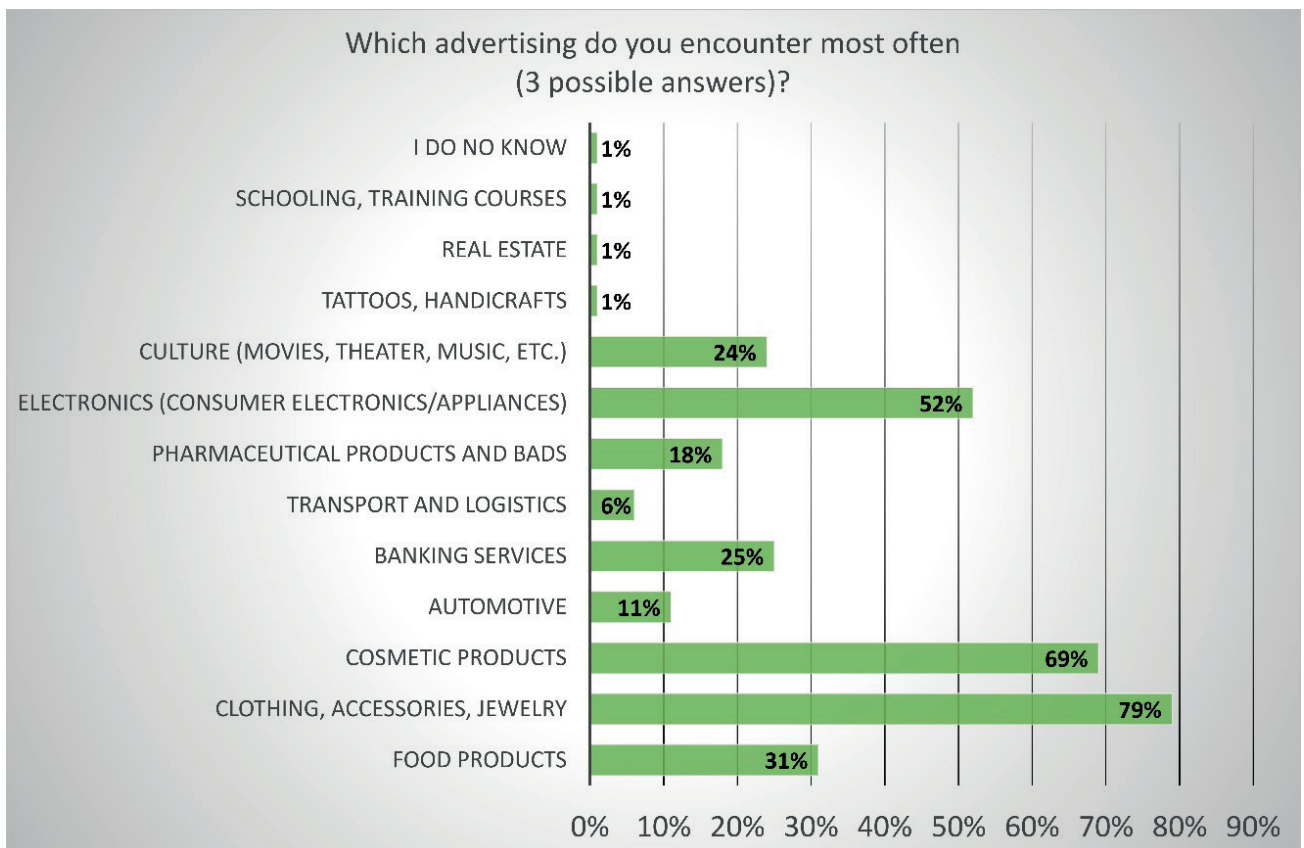


Fig. 3. Frequency of products consumers encounter in social media advertising, by product group

About three out of four consumers skip advertisements on social media very often. In contrast, nearly 97% of respondents indicate that they generally skip ads. More than 90% of respondents believe that social media advertising is sometimes annoying, as shown in Figure 4, presenting responses to the question whether social media ads are sometimes annoying.

Figure 5 demonstrates consumers' responses to the question if they would prefer that advertising be withdrawn from social media. Most social media users (60%) say that advertisements should be removed from these platforms. One in four users expresses no definitive opinion on this issue. Conversely, one in six respondents believes that advertising should not disappear from social media platforms.

One in two social media users utilizes a so-called "AdBlock" to avoid advertisements.

In the next part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to describe an advertisement that was recently memorable to them.

Every other consumer mentioned a sample advertisement from Youtube. Some also point-

ed to such platforms as: Facebook (19%), TikTok (18%) and Instagram (15%).

One in three social media users note that this advertisement was made in the form of a video. A small portion, however, pinpoint graphics (13%) and a link to an article about the product/service (11%).

About 60% of consumers saw the advertisement for the first time in the month of the survey. Four out of five respondents believe they saw that advertisement again.

The most frequently advertised products were clothing, accessories, and jewelry (30%), food products (13%), and beauty products (12%).

Figure 6 summarizes responses to the question to what extent they found the ad interesting, where the participants were asked to rate their interest on a scale from 1 to 5. 38% of consumers think the commercial was interesting. In contrast, 36% of consumers say it did not interest them. 26% of consumers have no definitive opinion on the matter.

A survey reveals that two out of three social media users did not find the advertisement persuasive in promoting the product or service.

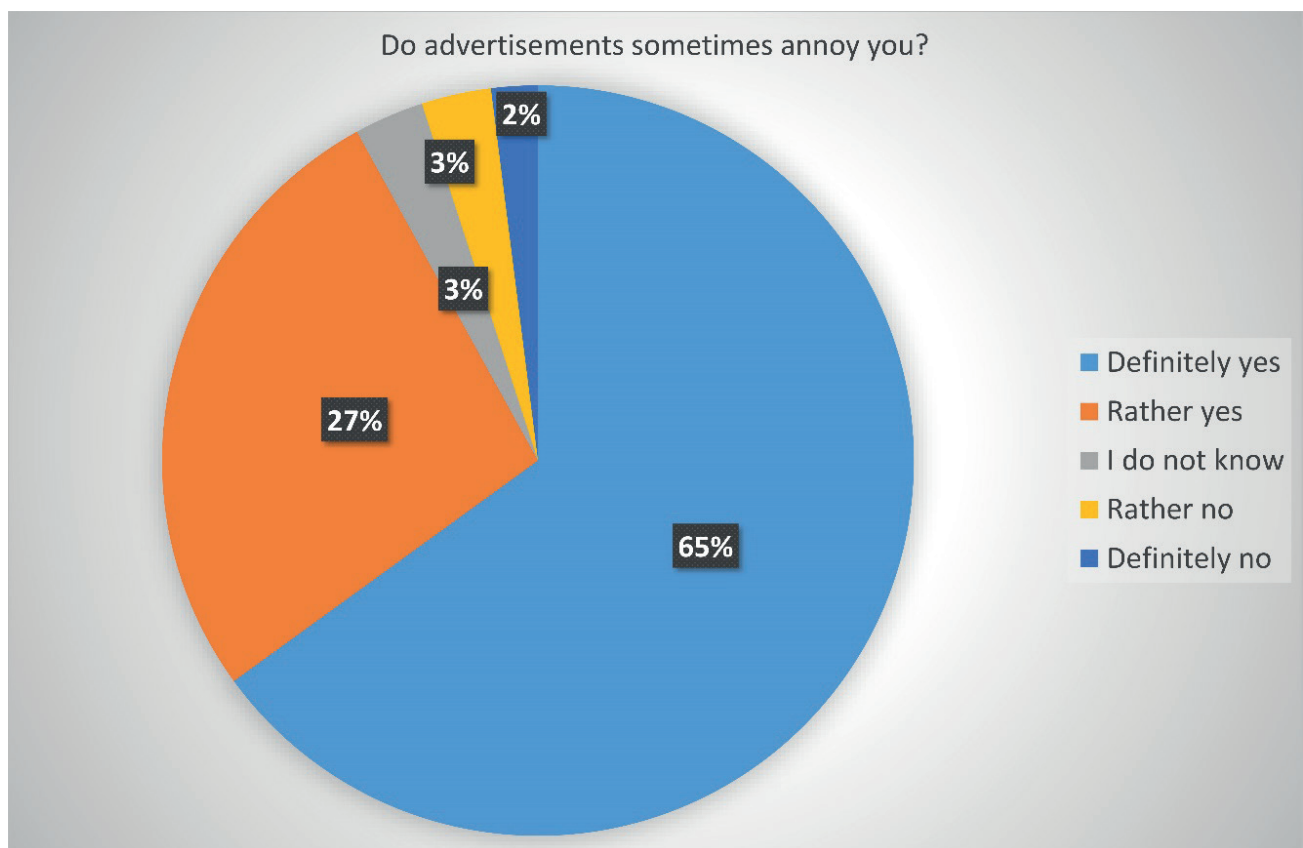


Fig. 4. Respondents' evaluation of their annoyance with social media advertising

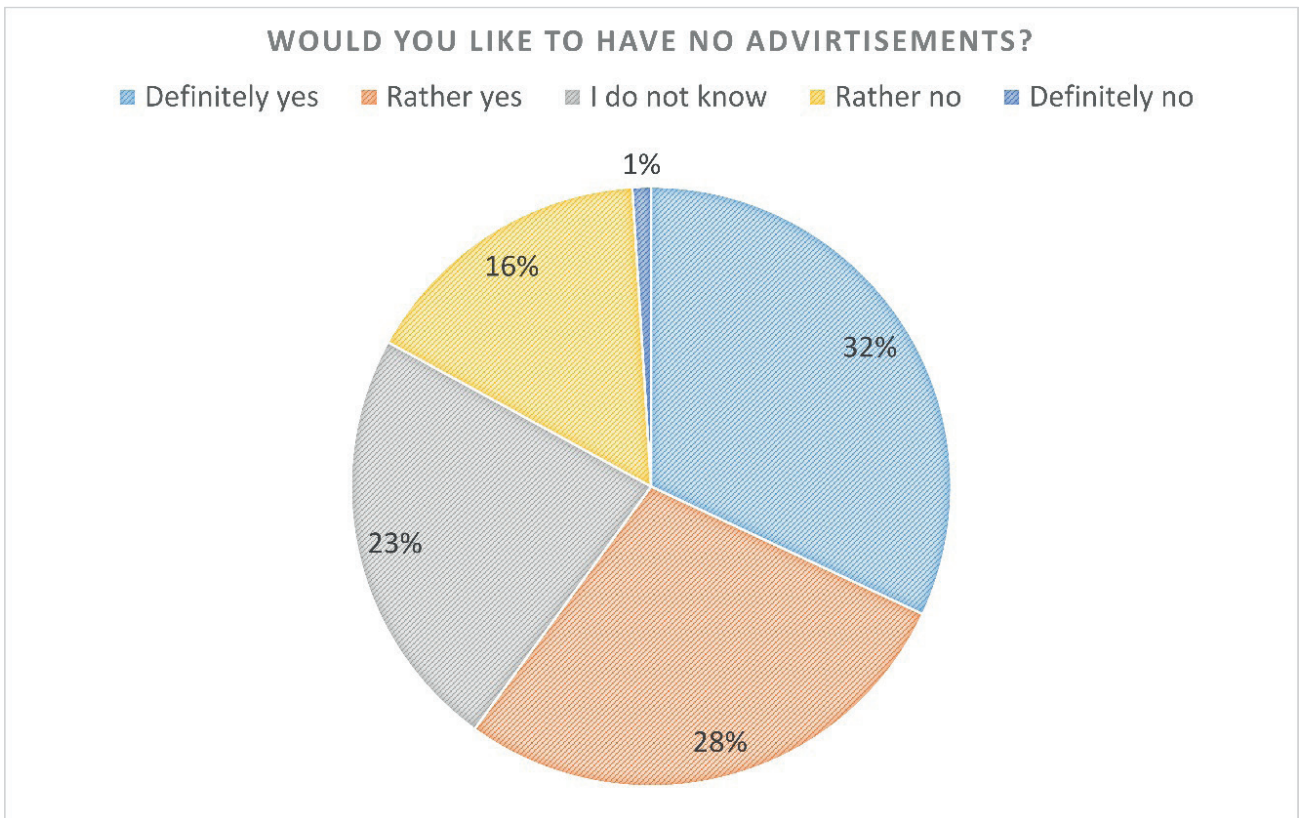


Fig. 5. Respondents' opinions regarding removal of advertising on social media platforms

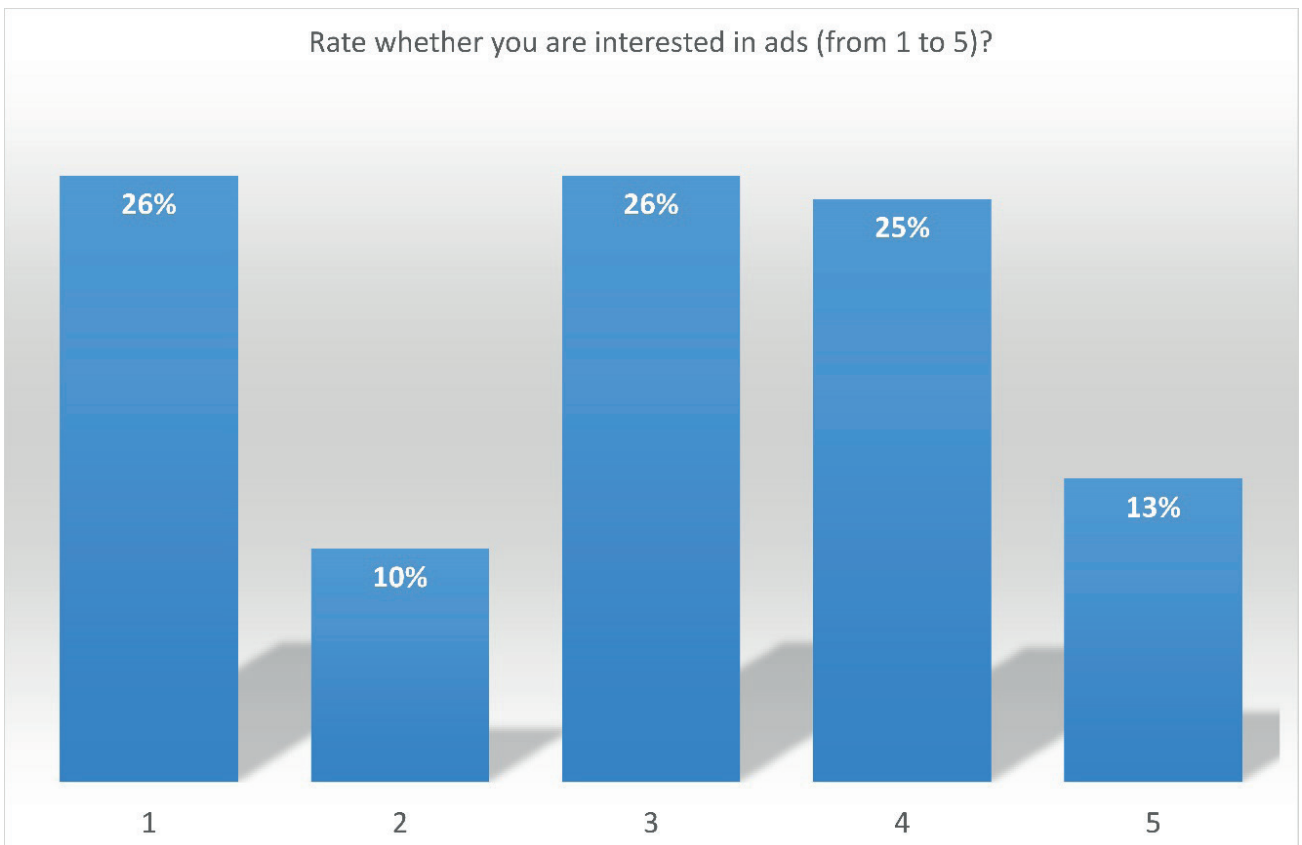


Fig. 6. Interest in social media advertising; 100 responses

Three out of four respondents reported that they did not engage with the advertisement in any manner after seeing it, did not interact with it, such as visiting the associated link, saving the page, commenting or sharing it, etc. Additionally, a majority of consumers indicated that they would not recommend this product or service to someone they know.

Although the short descriptions of the advertisements varied, one recurring description was that of the Shopee ad, which was characterized as annoying and irritatingly catchy.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that, when preparing an advertising message on the Internet, it is crucial to consider the specific type of product or service that a particular company wants to advertise. The hypothesis that the consumer most often encounters advertisements for cosmetic products and clothing was confirmed. It is essential to emphasize the importance of tailoring advertisements appropriately, as consumers demonstrate a preference for content that aligns with their interests. The study confirmed the hypothesis that the relevance is, in fact, moderate. It was observed that nearly every consumer encounters social media advertisements on a daily basis, which indicates their high marketing potential due to the ease of reaching customers. However, social media advertisements should be made more attractive to consumers, as they are mostly overlooked. The hypothesis regarding the most interesting form of advertising was not confirmed — the consumer prefers advertising in the form of a short video. Instead, it was established that text posts tend to be the least attractive form of advertising. A larger proportion of consumers are installing additional software to block ads from appearing while browsing social media. This is because a sizable portion of consumers find social media ads sometimes annoying, causing them to close the browser window, mute their sound, or disable applications. Therefore, it is necessary to design advertisements so that they do not cause negative emotions in social media users. This strategy will reduce the likelihood of users installing the aforementioned applications and make it possible to effectively reach the consumer. Social network users do not further interact with the post-

ed advertisements they encounter. To encourage greater interaction, it is advisable to implement strategies such as offering discount coupons for registering on the site. The hypothesis regarding the repetition of social media advertisements has not been confirmed — consumers see a commercial more than once. Notably, the majority of social media users are able to recall an advertisement viewed within a month. On the basis of this observation, it is recommended that marketing activities be planned for the short term, specifically within a one-month period (up to a month). The hypothesis that consumers are most likely to remember advertisements viewed on YouTube has been confirmed — this indicates its significant potential for advertising products/services as well as for planning branding activities. It is impossible to say conclusively whether the hypothesis proclaiming that consumers remember advertisements that were interesting to them has been confirmed as the results are too divergent. Most consumers believe that they were not persuaded to purchase a product or service, and do not feel inclined to recommend these products or services to a friend. Therefore, it is necessary to consider changing the form of social media advertising.

Based on what was written above, it can be concluded that positive reactions from consumers using social media are triggered by advertisements that resonate with their interests and are presented in the form of a video with a soundtrack that falls on the ear. Consequently, when creating an advertising message, it is advisable to consider placing it on YouTube, since advertisements from this platform are most likely to be memorable for consumers.

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Станклік Я., Бараньські Д.

Реакція на рекламу в соціальних мережах на прикладі Польщі

Автори дослідження вивчають сприйняття споживачами реклами в соціальних мережах та їхню взаємодію з нею, а також ефективність стратегій цифрового маркетингу на різних платформах. Проведене за участю 100 польських респондентів, у статті аналізуються їхні уподобання та сприйняття онлайн-реклами, зосереджуючись на таких факторах, як релевантність контенту, формат реклами та емоційна реакція на неї. Результати показують, що реклама в соціальних мережах стикається зі значними проблемами у залученні споживачів. Хоча майже всі (93%) користувачі соціальних мереж щодня стикаються з рекламою, причому найчастіше — з рекламою одягу, косметичних товарів та електроніки, дослідження підкреслює критичний дисбаланс між рекламними підходами та очікуваннями споживачів. Приблизно 78% респондентів висловили бажання отримувати більш персоналізований рекламний контент, орієнтований на їхні інтереси. Серед ключових спостережень — високий рівень уникнення реклами: приблизно 97% користувачів пропускають рекламу, а 50% використовують програмне забезпечення для блокування рекламних оголошень. Текстова реклама виявилася найменш привабливою, в той час як короткі відеоролики продемонстрували більший потенціал для привернення уваги аудиторії. YouTube виявився найбільш запам'ятовуваною та впізнаваною рекламною платформою, що свідчить про його маркетингову ефективність: 90% респондентів користуються цим сайтом, а половина з них згадують рекламу, яку вони там переглядали. Цікаво, що більшість учасників дослідження повідомили,

що реклама не має значного впливу на їхні рішення щодо купівлі або на ймовірність того, що вони рекомендуватимуть іншим рекламовані товари чи послуги. Отримані результати дають змогу глибше зрозуміти динаміку реклами в соціальних мережах. Автори статті підкреслюють важливість створення реклами, яка відповідає інтересам користувачів і не викликає негативної емоційної реакції, а також рекомендують адаптувати рекламні стратегії, робити акцент на відеоконтенті та зосередитися на специфічних для кожної платформи методах залучення, щоб покращити сприйнятливість споживачів та ефективність маркетингу в соціальних мережах.

Ключові слова: регіональна економіка, ЄС, Польща, реклама, соціальні медіа, реакція споживачів, AdBlock, рішення про покупку