The Moderating Role of Habit in the Relationship Between Ad Intrusiveness and Advertising Avoidance on Social Media

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Abstract

Digital advertising has become increasingly pervasive on social media, yet intrusive advertising may encourage users to avoid promotional content. This study examines the relationship between perceived advertising intrusiveness and advertising avoidance and investigates whether habit moderates this relationship. Drawing on Psychological Reactance Theory and habit theory, the study proposes that advertising intrusiveness is positively associated with advertising avoidance, while habit alters the strength of this relationship. Data were collected from 269 active social media users who used social media for at least two hours per day. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that advertising intrusiveness has a positive and significant relationship with advertising avoidance ($\beta = 0.570$, $p < 0.001$), while habit is also positively associated with advertising avoidance ($\beta = 0.245$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, the interaction between advertising intrusiveness and habit is negative and significant ($\beta = -0.119$, $p = 0.005$), indicating that habit weakens the positive relationship between advertising intrusiveness and advertising avoidance. The findings highlight habit as an important behavioral boundary condition in understanding digital advertising avoidance and suggest that advertisers should minimize intrusive advertising formats while preserving users' control over their social media experience.

Keywords: ad avoidance; ad intrusiveness; digital marketing; habit; psychological reactance;

I. INTRODUCTION

Rapid technological advancements and the proliferation of digital marketing channels have transformed how consumers interact with promotional messages. Digital advertising has become increasingly ubiquitous across social media feeds, video platforms, and interactive applications. Although this expansion enables marketers to reach broader audiences and employ increasingly precise targeting strategies, the growing volume and frequency of advertising can also interfere with consumers' media consumption. One important consequence is advertising avoidance, which refers to actions taken by media users to reduce their exposure to advertising content (Cho & Cheon, 2004). Advertising avoidance has therefore become an important challenge for digital marketers because consumers may deliberately reduce their exposure to promotional messages rather than process them as intended. This phenomenon is particularly important because the effectiveness of digital advertising depends not only on the ability to reach target audiences but also on consumers' willingness to engage with and process advertising messages. When users develop tendencies to avoid advertisements, opportunities for marketers to communicate product information, build brand awareness, and influence consumer responses may consequently be reduced. Recent research has further demonstrated that advertising avoidance remains particularly relevant in social media environments, where users encounter advertising content alongside their regular social and informational activities (Chinchanachokchai & de Gregorio, 2020; Niu et al., 2021).

One prominent antecedent of advertising avoidance is perceived advertising intrusiveness. Advertising intrusiveness refers to the extent to which an advertisement is perceived as interfering with a consumer's ongoing media consumption, primary task, or

cognitive flow (Edwards et al., 2002; Ha, 1996). When advertisements interrupt ongoing activities or obstruct access to desired content, consumers may perceive the interruption as a threat to their freedom of choice. This mechanism is consistent with Psychological Reactance Theory (PRT), which proposes that individuals are motivated to preserve their behavioral freedom when they perceive that it is being restricted (Brehm, 1966). In digital environments, intrusive advertising may therefore generate negative responses and motivate consumers to restore their perceived freedom through avoidance behaviors, including ignoring, skipping, closing, or scrolling past advertisements (Baek & Morimoto, 2012; Seyedghorban et al., 2016). Empirical studies have continued to identify perceived intrusiveness or invasiveness as an important antecedent of advertising avoidance, including in native advertising and social media advertising contexts (Chung & Kim, 2021; Niu et al., 2021; Ham et al., 2022). These findings establish advertising intrusiveness as an important explanation for consumers' tendency to avoid digital advertising. The issue becomes particularly relevant in social media because advertisements are frequently presented within content streams that users access primarily for entertainment, communication, and information-seeking purposes. Consequently, promotional messages that interrupt these activities may create a mismatch between users' immediate expectations and advertisers' communication objectives. However, although the relationship between advertising intrusiveness and advertising avoidance has received considerable attention, less attention has been given to the behavioral conditions that may change the strength of this relationship. Existing studies have largely emphasized cognitive and affective mechanisms underlying advertising avoidance, including irritation, annoyance, perceived goal impediment, and threats to autonomy (Cho & Cheon, 2004; Niu et al., 2021; EssaTayeb et al., 2024). At the same time, repeated interaction with digital platforms can foster habitual patterns of behavior that require relatively little conscious deliberation (Wood & Neal, 2009). Habit refers to behavioral patterns that develop through repetition and become increasingly automatic in response to recurring contextual cues (Limayem et al., 2007; Wood & Rünger, 2016). In the context of digital advertising, prior research has shown that habit can influence users' ad-skipping behavior, particularly as users become accustomed to recurring advertising formats and develop established responses to them (Belanche et al., 2017). Nevertheless, this literature does not fully explain whether habit changes the strength of the relationship between perceived advertising intrusiveness and advertising avoidance. This distinction is important because habitual media-use behavior may shape how consumers respond to advertising interruptions beyond their immediate evaluation of the advertising stimulus.

The role of habit is particularly relevant in social media environments because habitual use may influence consumers' responses to advertising interruptions in different ways. Strong habitual engagement may make users less sensitive to individual advertising interruptions as they become accustomed to the platform environment. In contrast, habitual browsing may also facilitate established behavioral responses to unwanted content. Thus, when an advertisement interrupts an established browsing routine, users may rely on learned behavioral tendencies rather than engage in extensive conscious evaluation of the advertisement. The resulting response may depend on the degree to which habitual media use alters the relationship between perceived intrusiveness and avoidance. This perspective suggests that consumers' responses to advertising interruptions cannot be understood exclusively through the characteristics of advertising messages, as individual behavioral patterns may also play a role in shaping avoidance responses. Examining habit as a moderator therefore provides an opportunity to identify whether habitual media-use patterns attenuate or intensify consumers' avoidance responses to intrusive advertising. Building on these arguments, this study draws on Psychological Reactance Theory and habit theory to examine consumer responses to intrusive digital advertising. PRT provides the theoretical basis for understanding why perceived advertising intrusiveness is associated with advertising

avoidance through perceived threats to behavioral freedom (Brehm, 1966). Meanwhile, habit theory explains how repeated behavioral patterns can become increasingly automatic through repetition and contextual cues (Limayem et al., 2007; Wood & Rünger, 2016). By positioning habit as a moderator, this study examines whether habitual media-use behavior changes the strength of the relationship between advertising intrusiveness and advertising avoidance. In addition to its moderating role, examining the direct relationship between habit and advertising avoidance also provides a broader understanding of how established media-use patterns are associated with consumers' responses to digital promotional content. Accordingly, this study addresses three hypotheses: (H1) Ad Intrusiveness is positively associated with Ad Avoidance; (H2) Habit is positively associated with Ad Avoidance; and (H3) Habit moderates the relationship between Ad Intrusiveness and Ad Avoidance.

The novelty of this study lies in examining habit as a behavioral boundary condition in the relationship between advertising intrusiveness and advertising avoidance on social media. Rather than treating advertising avoidance solely as a response to consumers' conscious cognitive or affective evaluations of advertising, this study considers how repeated media-use patterns may alter the strength of this relationship. The study therefore connects the reactance perspective on advertising intrusiveness with a behavioral perspective on habit, providing a more nuanced explanation of advertising avoidance in social media environments. This approach also broadens the discussion of digital advertising avoidance by considering the possibility that consumers with different levels of habitual media engagement may respond differently to similar advertising interruptions. From a managerial perspective, the findings provide insights for digital advertisers and media planners regarding the importance of considering consumers' habitual media-use patterns when designing advertising formats. In particular, understanding how habit shapes responses to intrusive advertising may support the development of less disruptive, contextually relevant, and seamlessly integrated advertising experiences. Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of consumer behavior in digital advertising environments by examining how advertising characteristics and habitual media-use behavior jointly relate to advertising avoidance.

II. METHOD

This study employs an explanatory cross-sectional survey design to examine the moderating role of Habit in the relationship between Ad Intrusiveness and Ad Avoidance in social media environments. The research model consists of Ad Intrusiveness as the exogenous predictor, Habit as the moderating variable, and Ad Avoidance as the endogenous outcome variable. All constructs were measured using multi-item instruments adapted from established scales and assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 5 = "Strongly Agree." Ad Intrusiveness was measured using four items adapted from Edwards et al. (2002) and Li et al. (2002), capturing the extent to which advertisements are perceived as disruptive or intrusive to users' ongoing media consumption. Habit was measured using five items adapted from the Self-Report Habit Index (SRHI) developed by Verplanken and Orbell (2003) and applied in habitual technology-use research by Limayem et al. (2007). The items were contextualized to capture the automatic and routine nature of users' social media browsing behavior. Ad Avoidance was measured using four items adapted from Cho and Cheon (2004), capturing users' tendency to reduce exposure to digital advertising through avoidance behaviors. Minor modifications in item wording were made to ensure contextual relevance to contemporary digital and social media environments while retaining the underlying meaning of the original scales.

Data were collected electronically using Google Forms and distributed through multiple online social media communities. The target population comprised active social media users

who were regularly exposed to sponsored and embedded digital advertisements. Because a definitive sampling frame was unavailable, purposive sampling was employed. Participants were required to meet two eligibility criteria: (1) being at least 18 years old and (2) actively using digital or social media platforms for a minimum of two hours per day. Prior to the main survey, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with 30 respondents to assess item readability and face validity. Based on the pilot test, minor wording adjustments were made where necessary to improve clarity. The main survey subsequently obtained 269 complete and valid responses, which were retained for the final analysis. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed that their responses would be used solely for academic research purposes. Respondent anonymity was maintained throughout the data collection process. The presentation order of selected measurement items was also counterbalanced as a procedural measure to reduce the potential for common method bias.

Data analysis was conducted using WarpPLS to estimate the proposed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) model. PLS-SEM was employed because the study examines a predictive structural model involving latent constructs and a moderating relationship (Hair et al., 2021). The analysis involved assessment of the measurement model followed by assessment of the structural model and hypothesis testing. The measurement model was evaluated in terms of indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Indicator reliability was assessed using outer loadings, with values above 0.708 considered satisfactory. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability, with values above 0.70 considered acceptable. Convergent validity was assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with a minimum threshold of 0.50. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT).

The structural model was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), variance inflation factor (VIF), and hypothesis testing. Collinearity was assessed using VIF values to determine whether multicollinearity among the predictor constructs could affect the structural model estimates. Hypotheses were tested using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples, a two-tailed test, and a 5% significance level. A t-value greater than 1.96 was considered statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.05$. To examine the moderating role of Habit, an interaction term between Ad Intrusiveness and Habit was incorporated into the structural model. The interaction effect was evaluated based on the significance and direction of the interaction coefficient. A significant positive interaction coefficient indicates that Habit strengthens the relationship between Ad Intrusiveness and Ad Avoidance, whereas a significant negative interaction coefficient indicates that Habit weakens the relationship. Simple slope analysis was subsequently used to illustrate the nature of the significant interaction effect.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

The research model was empirically evaluated using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) based on 269 valid responses (N = 269). The measurement model was first assessed for indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, followed by assessment of the structural model and hypothesis testing.

The measurement model demonstrated satisfactory indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, and convergent validity across all latent constructs. As presented in Table 1, all indicator loadings for Ad Intrusiveness (X1–X4) ranged from 0.819 to 0.876, Habit (MOD1–MOD5) ranged from 0.762 to 0.867, and Ad Avoidance (Y1–Y4) ranged from 0.870 to 0.912. All indicator loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.708.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were 0.718 for Ad Intrusiveness, 0.678 for Habit, and 0.797 for Ad Avoidance, all exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.50 and thereby supporting convergent validity. Internal consistency reliability was also satisfactory, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.869 to 0.915, rho_A values ranging from 0.878 to 0.917, and composite reliability values ranging from 0.910 to 0.940, all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70.

Table 1. Measurement model evaluation for validity and reliability (N = 269)

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach's α	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Ad Intrusiveness	X1	0.819	0.869	0.878	0.910	0.718
	X2	0.842				
	X3	0.851				
	X4	0.876				
Habit	MOD1	0.800	0.881	0.882	0.913	0.678
	MOD2	0.867				
	MOD3	0.844				
	MOD4	0.762				
	MOD5	0.840				
Ad Avoidance	Y1	0.870	0.915	0.917	0.940	0.797
	Y2	0.912				
	Y3	0.902				
	Y4	0.886				

Notes: Indicator loadings above 0.708, Cronbach's α, rho_A, and composite reliability values above 0.70, and AVE values above 0.50 indicate satisfactory measurement model quality.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). The HTMT values among the three substantive constructs were below the conservative threshold of 0.85, with values of 0.739 for Ad Intrusiveness–Ad Avoidance, 0.463 for Habit–Ad Avoidance, and 0.379 for Habit–Ad Intrusiveness. These results indicate satisfactory discriminant validity among the constructs.

Collinearity was subsequently assessed using the variance inflation factor (VIF). The inner VIF values for Ad Intrusiveness (1.157), the Ad Intrusiveness × Habit interaction term (1.049), and Habit (1.163) were all below the recommended threshold of 5.0, indicating that collinearity was not problematic in the structural model.

Assessment of the structural model indicates satisfactory explanatory power. The coefficient of determination (R^2) for Ad Avoidance was 0.502, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.496, indicating that the model explains 50.2% of the variance in Ad Avoidance. The remaining variance is attributable to factors outside the proposed model. The effect size (f^2) analysis indicates that Ad Intrusiveness has a large effect on Ad Avoidance ($f^2 = 0.564$). In contrast, Habit has a small effect ($f^2 = 0.104$), and the interaction effect between Ad Intrusiveness and Habit also has a small effect ($f^2 = 0.031$).

Table 2. Structural Model Assessment (N = 269)

Endogenous Construct	R^2	R^2_{adj}	Predictor Construct / Relationship	VIF	f^2	Effect Size Rating

Ad Avoidance	0.502	0.496	Ad Intrusiveness → Ad Avoidance	1.157	0.564	Large
			Ad Intrusiveness x Habit → Ad Avoidance	1.049	0.031	Small
			Habit → Ad Avoidance	1.163	0.104	Small

Notes: *R^2 = coefficient of determination; R^2adj = adjusted coefficient of determination; f^2 = Cohen's effect size. Small = 0.02–<0.15; medium = 0.15–<0.35; large ≥0.35.*

Hypothesis testing was conducted using a 5,000-subsample bias-corrected bootstrapping procedure with a two-tailed significance level of 5%. As reported in Table 3, Ad Intrusiveness has a positive and significant relationship with Ad Avoidance ($\beta = 0.570$, $t = 12.816$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. This indicates that higher perceived advertising intrusiveness is associated with stronger advertising avoidance. Habit also has a positive and significant relationship with Ad Avoidance ($\beta = 0.245$, $t = 5.380$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2. Furthermore, the interaction between Ad Intrusiveness and Habit is negative and statistically significant ($\beta = -0.119$, $t = 2.779$, $p = 0.005$), supporting H3. The negative interaction coefficient indicates that Habit weakens the positive relationship between Ad Intrusiveness and Ad Avoidance. The simple slope analysis further illustrates this moderating pattern, with the relationship between Ad Intrusiveness and Ad Avoidance becoming less steep as Habit increases.

Table 3. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis / Structural Path	Original Sample (ß)	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
Ad Intrusiveness → Ad Avoidance	0.570	0.044	12.816	<0.001	Supported
Habit → Ad Avoidance	0.245	0.046	5.380	<0.001	Supported
Ad Intrusiveness x Habit → Ad Avoidance	-0.119	0.043	2.779	0.005	Supported

Notes: β = standardized path coefficient; SD = standard deviation; t = bootstrapped t-value; $p < 0.05$ indicates statistical significance.

B. Discussion

The findings indicate that Ad Intrusiveness has a positive and significant relationship with Ad Avoidance ($\beta = 0.570$, $p < 0.001$), with a large effect size ($f^2 = 0.564$), supporting H1. This finding indicates that consumers who perceive digital advertisements as more intrusive tend to exhibit stronger avoidance behavior. The result is consistent with Psychological Reactance Theory (PRT), which proposes that individuals are motivated to protect their behavioral freedom when they perceive that it is being restricted or threatened (Brehm, 1966). In digital and social media environments, advertisements that interrupt ongoing activities, obstruct access to desired content, or interfere with users' media consumption may be perceived as unwanted constraints on their control over the media experience. Such perceptions can encourage consumers to restore their sense of control by reducing exposure to advertising through behaviors such as skipping, closing, ignoring, or scrolling past advertisements. This finding is also consistent with previous research identifying perceived intrusiveness or invasiveness as an important antecedent of advertising avoidance in digital and social media contexts (Edwards et al., 2002; Baek & Morimoto, 2012; Niu et al., 2021; Chung & Kim, 2021). Thus, the present finding reinforces the relevance of the reactance perspective for explaining consumers' avoidance responses to intrusive advertising in contemporary social media environments.

The findings also show that Habit has a positive and significant relationship with Ad Avoidance ($\beta = 0.245$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2, with a small effect size ($f^2 = 0.104$). This result suggests that users with stronger habitual media-use patterns tend to exhibit greater advertising avoidance. The finding can be understood through the concept of habit as a behavioral pattern that develops through repetition and becomes increasingly automatic in response to recurring contextual cues (Limayem et al., 2007; Wood & Neal, 2009; Wood & Rünger, 2016). In social media environments, repeated exposure to similar advertising formats and recurring browsing situations may contribute to established behavioral responses toward unwanted promotional content. This interpretation is consistent with Belanche et al. (2017), who demonstrated that habit is relevant to users' ad-skipping behavior in interactive advertising environments. Therefore, the present findings suggest that advertising avoidance is associated not only with consumers' perceptions of advertising intrusiveness but also with habitual patterns of media use.

More importantly, the results demonstrate that Habit significantly moderates the relationship between Ad Intrusiveness and Ad Avoidance ($\beta = -0.119$, $p = 0.005$), supporting H3, with a small effect size ($f^2 = 0.031$). The negative interaction coefficient indicates that Habit weakens the positive relationship between Ad Intrusiveness and Ad Avoidance. The simple slope analysis further confirms this pattern, showing that the relationship between Ad Intrusiveness and Ad Avoidance is strongest at lower levels of Habit and becomes less steep as Habit increases. This finding is noteworthy because it indicates that habitual media-use behavior does not simply amplify users' reactions to intrusive

advertising. Instead, stronger habitual behavior appears to reduce the extent to which perceived intrusiveness translates into additional avoidance. One possible interpretation is that repeated and familiar engagement with a social media environment may make users' responses to individual advertising interruptions less dependent on their momentary perception of intrusiveness. In other words, habitual users may have established patterns of continuing their media activity despite individual advertising interruptions, thereby reducing the marginal influence of perceived intrusiveness on avoidance. This interpretation is consistent with the broader conceptualization of habit as behavior that becomes increasingly automatic through repetition and contextual stability (Limayem et al., 2007; Wood & Rünger, 2016). Importantly, the result should not be interpreted as indicating that habit eliminates advertising avoidance. Rather, the positive direct relationship between Habit and Ad Avoidance alongside the negative interaction effect suggests that habit has a positive direct association with avoidance while simultaneously weakening the incremental effect of advertising intrusiveness on avoidance.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings contribute to the advertising avoidance literature by positioning Habit as a behavioral boundary condition in the relationship between Ad Intrusiveness and Ad Avoidance. Previous research has primarily emphasized cognitive, affective, and motivational explanations for advertising avoidance, including perceived intrusiveness, irritation, goal impediment, and threats to consumers' autonomy (Cho & Cheon, 2004; Niu et al., 2021; EssaTayeb et al., 2024). The present study complements these explanations by demonstrating that habitual media-use behavior can alter the strength of the relationship between an advertising stimulus and consumers' avoidance response. The findings therefore connect the reactance perspective, which explains avoidance as a response to perceived restrictions on behavioral freedom, with the behavioral perspective of habit, which emphasizes repeated actions and contextual cues. The significant moderation effect provides a more nuanced explanation of advertising avoidance by showing that the relationship between perceived advertising intrusiveness and avoidance is not uniform across users with different levels of habitual media use.

From a managerial perspective, the findings indicate that advertising intrusiveness remains a critical consideration in social media advertising design. Highly interruptive formats, excessive promotional frequency, and advertising placements that interfere with users' ongoing activities may increase avoidance, particularly among users whose media-use behavior is less habitual. Advertisers and media planners should therefore prioritize advertising formats that are less disruptive, contextually relevant, and seamlessly integrated into users' media experiences. Native and value-oriented advertising may be particularly useful when they provide relevant information without unnecessarily interfering with users' primary activities (Chung & Kim, 2021; Ham et al., 2022). At the same time, the moderating role of Habit suggests that advertisers should recognize differences in users' behavioral patterns rather than assume that perceived intrusiveness produces an identical avoidance response across all users. Designing advertising experiences that preserve consumers' sense of control and minimize unnecessary disruption may help reduce avoidance and create a more user-centered social media advertising environment.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that perceived Ad Intrusiveness is positively and significantly associated with Ad Avoidance among social media users. The findings indicate that advertisements perceived as disruptive, intrusive, or interfering with users' ongoing media activities are more likely to encourage avoidance responses. This relationship highlights the importance of consumers' perceptions of advertising experiences in shaping their responses to digital promotional content. When advertisements interrupt users' browsing activities or interfere with their primary purposes for accessing social media platforms, consumers may

perceive such interruptions as restrictions on their freedom and control over their media experiences. Consequently, they may respond by ignoring, skipping, closing, or scrolling past advertisements. This finding reinforces the relevance of Psychological Reactance Theory in explaining advertising avoidance within contemporary social media environments, particularly in situations where promotional messages interfere with users' established media consumption activities. The findings further reveal that Habit has a positive and significant relationship with Ad Avoidance. This result suggests that habitual social media use is also an important behavioral factor associated with consumers' tendency to avoid advertising. Repeated engagement with social media platforms may establish relatively automatic browsing patterns, including habitual responses to advertising content. As users become accustomed to navigating social media environments, their interactions with advertisements may increasingly follow established behavioral tendencies rather than deliberate evaluations of each promotional message. In this regard, advertising avoidance should not be understood exclusively as an immediate reaction to perceived advertising intrusiveness, but also as a behavior associated with consumers' repeated media-use experiences. The positive direct relationship between Habit and Ad Avoidance provides an additional perspective on how habitual behavior contributes to consumers' interactions with digital advertising.

More importantly, this study confirms that Habit significantly moderates the relationship between Ad Intrusiveness and Ad Avoidance. The negative interaction effect indicates that stronger habitual media-use patterns weaken the positive relationship between perceived advertising intrusiveness and advertising avoidance. This finding suggests that the extent to which consumers respond to intrusive advertisements through avoidance behavior may differ depending on their habitual engagement with social media platforms. Users with stronger habitual patterns may demonstrate a less pronounced increase in advertising avoidance when they perceive advertisements as intrusive compared with users with weaker habitual patterns. One possible explanation is that repeated engagement with familiar platform environments may establish relatively automatic browsing routines, making users' behavioral responses less dependent on their immediate evaluations of individual advertising interruptions. Nevertheless, this moderating effect should not be interpreted as evidence that habit eliminates advertising avoidance or makes consumers immune to intrusive advertising. Rather, Habit has two distinct roles in the proposed model: it is positively associated with Ad Avoidance directly while simultaneously weakening the relationship between Ad Intrusiveness and Ad Avoidance. This distinction provides a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between habitual media-use behavior and consumers' responses to digital advertising.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the advertising avoidance literature by integrating Psychological Reactance Theory with the behavioral perspective of habit. While Psychological Reactance Theory explains how perceived restrictions on behavioral freedom may encourage consumers to avoid advertising, habit theory provides an explanation of how repeated behavioral patterns may influence the strength of this response. By positioning Habit as a moderating variable, this study extends the understanding of advertising avoidance beyond the direct relationship between perceived advertising intrusiveness and avoidance behavior. The findings demonstrate that the relationship between advertising stimuli and consumer responses is not necessarily uniform across individuals, as habitual media-use patterns may function as a behavioral boundary condition. Accordingly, this study offers a more nuanced perspective on digital advertising avoidance by showing that consumers' responses are associated not only with their perceptions of advertising interruptions but also with the habitual nature of their engagement with social media platforms.

From a managerial perspective, the findings provide several important implications for digital advertisers, marketing practitioners, and social media media planners. First, advertisers should carefully consider the intrusiveness of advertising formats when developing digital promotional strategies. Advertising placements that interrupt ongoing activities, obstruct access to desired content, or create excessive disruptions should be minimized because these characteristics are associated with stronger advertising avoidance. Second, advertising content should be designed to align with users' interests, browsing contexts, and information needs. Contextually relevant and seamlessly integrated advertising may provide promotional information without unnecessarily disrupting the user experience. Third, advertisers should recognize that consumers differ in their habitual patterns of social media use. The moderating role of Habit suggests that users may respond differently to intrusive advertising depending on the strength of their established media-use routines. Therefore, advertising strategies should not assume that all social media users exhibit identical responses to promotional interruptions. Instead, marketers should consider behavioral differences when determining advertising formats, placements, and delivery approaches. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the importance of maintaining consumers' perceived control over their social media experiences. Advertising effectiveness should not be evaluated solely through exposure frequency or the ability to attract immediate attention. Excessive interruptions may undermine the quality of consumers' media experiences and encourage them to avoid promotional content. Consequently, advertisers should balance promotional objectives with consumers' expectations regarding convenience, relevance, and control. Providing advertising experiences that are informative, appropriately positioned, and minimally disruptive may help establish more favorable interactions between consumers and promotional messages. This approach is particularly important in social media environments, where advertising content competes with personal communication, entertainment, and information-seeking activities for users' attention. Despite these contributions, the findings should be interpreted in consideration of the research design and sampling characteristics. This study employed a cross-sectional survey and purposive sampling involving 269 active social media users who were at least 18 years old and used social media for a minimum of two hours per day. Therefore, the findings represent the relationships identified within the characteristics of the respondents and research context rather than establishing causal relationships between the examined constructs. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to investigate how habitual media-use patterns and advertising avoidance develop over time. In addition, subsequent studies could examine other potential factors that may explain consumers' responses to intrusive advertising, such as advertising irritation, perceived relevance, advertising skepticism, privacy concerns, perceived control, and social media fatigue. Further investigation across different social media platforms, advertising formats, and consumer groups would also provide opportunities to examine the applicability of the proposed relationships in broader digital advertising contexts.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of understanding advertising intrusiveness and habitual media-use behavior simultaneously when explaining advertising avoidance on social media. The significant positive relationship between Ad Intrusiveness and Ad Avoidance confirms the importance of minimizing disruptive advertising experiences, while the significant direct and moderating effects of Habit demonstrate that habitual media-use behavior represents an additional behavioral dimension in consumers' responses to digital advertising. By integrating the perspectives of psychological reactance and habit, this study provides theoretical insights and practical considerations for developing more relevant, less disruptive, and consumer-oriented social media advertising strategies.

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