Customer Engagement in Instagram: the Mediating Role of Perceived Advertising Value

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Abstract. As of 2021, about 86% of Malaysian population were active in using social media. This study aims to investigate the factors driving Malaysian customer engagement on Instagram. We attempt to fill the research gap by examining the mediating role of the perceived value of advertising aside the direct predictors on customer engagement. Data was collected from a sample of 219 Instagram users in Malaysia. The findings revealed that informativeness and credibility have a significant impact on customer engagement and customer perceived value of advertising acts as a mediator in the relationship between two independent variables (informativeness, credibility of advertisement) and customer engagement. Overall, the study provides evidence and understanding of the impact of Instagram in shaping customer engagement by exploring the mediating role of customer perceived value.

1   Introduction

The development and transformation of digital marketing (i.e., social media) bring significant impact on marketing and branding approaches in creating value to the customers [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]. As of January 2021, there were 4.66 billion active internet users worldwide, accounted 59.5 percent of the global population [6]. As reported [7], Malaysia ranks 5th in the world for social network penetration recently, and there are approximately 28 million active social media users in Malaysia as of 2021 which accounted 86 percent of Malaysia population [8]. Instagram is one of the social networking media that allows users to showcase digitally created content with friends and families. Correspondingly, this social networking application has the highest per-follower interaction rate among all social media platforms [9,10]. Thus, the implication of social media advertising via Instagram and its influences should not be undervalued [11]. Notwithstanding the myriad preference of Instagram among the younger generation, study on the factors influencing customer engagement on Instagram remains unexplored [11].

In the digital economy, customers are socially connected with one another in horizontal webs of communities. To effectively engage with a community of customers, businesses started to recognize the importance of social networking services in connecting with the netizens who create ratings, post comments and express their feelings and opinions about brands (12, 13, 14). Despite past studies revealed the amount of social media content related to branding and marketing in various platforms climbed by 35%, but the degree of content interaction and engagement has declined by 17%

[15]. Moreover, most of the research on customer engagement focused on studying it among Facebook users [16, 17, 18] or examined customer engagement in general [11] without choosing a specific network or platform. Hence, this study aims to explore the factors influencing customer engagement in Instagram. Customer perceived advertising value was specifically introduced as a mediator, and its mediating function was further demonstrated.

2 Literature Review

Advertising value is a metric for measuring the effectiveness of advertisements and used to gauge customer satisfaction and engagement with the product or service being advertised [2, 19]. In an increasingly high-tech world, high-touch interaction is becoming the new differentiation while online businesses have taken up a significant portion of the market in recent years [3, 4]. According to [22], in a highly connected world, people have more favorable attitudes toward digital (web-based) advertising, such as social media (i.e., Instagram) than traditional advertising. Also, content-based advertising in digital (or social) media was found more effective than traditional advertising since the former exclusively targets customers who have expressed an interest in learning more about a certain product, service, or brand. Indeed, social media advertising able to generate higher value compared to traditional irritative advertising in traditional media [19, 20]. Particularly, people like to share valuable information with others to form personal connections. Likewise, when customers find a valuable product information in advertisement, they will share it with their social network friends, lead to higher engagement with the social media advertisement.

2.1 Informativeness and Perceived Value of Advertising

The ability of an advertiser (business) to deliver valuable and vital information about a product or service that is relevant to the target audiences is known as informativeness of advertising [23]. Interactivity feature in the social media brand pages can boost the informative value of advertisements [3]. Likewise, most customers utilize social media to obtain complete and up-to-date information about a brand, and the informativeness of commercials, is believed to influence customer perceived value toward the advertisements, both traditional and digital [19, 21]. Thus, informativeness is critical in capturing the customer's attention, establishing exposure to, and creating a favorable impression of the advertisement regardless of whether traditional or online advertising is used [18, 24]. Hence, the following hypothesis was stipulated:

H1: There is a positive relationship between informativeness of advertising and customer perceived value of advertising in Instagram.

2.2 Entertainment Features and Perceived Value of Advertising

Advertisement's entertainment elements refer to its ability to provide diversion and meet audiences' aesthetic needs [25, 26]. Advertisers using entertaining content to satisfy audiences' hedonistic pleasure, escapism, and emotional release in which en-

hance the perception of advertising value [27]. In the social media advertising context, entertainment value has been proven as an important construct that influence customers' perceived value as well as their engagement on the advertisement [17]. In fact, customers are more likely to attend to the online advertisements that was fun, with enjoyment and amusement features [20]. Furthermore, prior studies on social media marketing found that majority of social media users join social media sites expected to be entertained, amused, and relax [3, 20]. Therefore, online pages (in Instagram) with entertaining content will get more favorable rating (i.e., higher perceived value) from social media users, and they are more likely to return to a social media platform [16]. Thus, we hypothesized that:

H2: There is a positive relationship between entertainment feature of advertisement and customer perceived value of advertising in Instagram.

2.3 Credibility and Perceived Value of Advertising

The credibility of advertisement can be described as the believability, trustworthiness, and honesty of the advertisement [23]. [25] suggested that advertisement credibility can be classified; (1) the advertiser credibility: whether a company is a trustworthy source of information; (2) the advertisement content: if the customers regard the information in the advertisement as reliable or trustworthy. Customers' perceived value of advertising was influenced by both message credibility and advertiser credibility. [21] found that the believability of an advertisement directly predicts the consumers' appraisal of the advertising value and led to customers' engagement on the (green) advertisement. Similarly, previous research also found the significant direct impact of credibility on customers' attitudes toward social media advertising [25, 26]. Consistently, we hypothesized that:

H3: There is a positive relationship between credibility of advertisement and customer perceived value of advertising in Instagram

2.4 Perceived Value and Customer Engagement

Customer engagement refers to a series of actions that customers take on brand message on social media platforms, such as commenting, liking, sharing with others, and uploading user-generated content [10]. Social media has become an ideal platform for customer-generated content and brand or product-related promotion due to its interactive feature turn inactive viewers into active participants [28]. Survey conducted by [29] revealed that when a person has a positive attitude about an online commercial, he or she is more likely to share it with friends and family on social media. People appreciate sharing valuable information with others to form personal connections and networking [4]. Likewise, when customers find a 'useful' or 'interesting' product information, they will share it with their social network friends. Hence, it was hypothesized that:

H4: There is a positive relationship between customer perceived value of advertising and customer engagement in Instagram.

2.5 Mediating Roles of Perceived Value

Van-Tien Dao et al. [23] discovered that perceived value of advertising served as a mediator along the direct path between the independent variables and customer engagement in social media advertising. The perception of valuable advertising content was found influencing the degrees of sharing intention and purchase intention [30]. Similarly, previous research [22, 25] found that perceived advertising value mediated the frequency and usage of social media sites. This leads to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

H5: Customer perceived value mediates the relationship between (a) informativeness, (b) entertainment features, (c) credibility of advertisement on customer engagement in Instagram.

Figure 1 depicts the research model of this study:
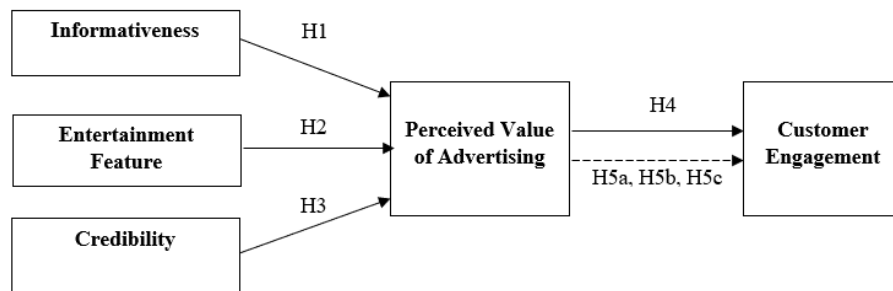
H5a, H5b & H5c: Mediating Effect

Fig. 1. Research Model

3 Research Method

This study focuses on the quantitative aspect, cross-sectional study since most of the research studies undertaken for academic courses are time-constrained, and a self-administrated questionnaire will be used to collect primary data. In this paper, the data collected are quantified to identify the relationship between independent variables (i.e., advertisement's informativeness, entertainment feature and credibility), mediating variable (i.e., customer perceived value of advertising) and dependent variable (i.e., customer engagement).

The sampling frame for this study is represented by young adults aged 18-44 who have an Instagram account and reside in Klang Valley. The GPower software revealed a sample size 128, however in the present study, 219 sets of questionnaires were collected through the convenience sampling method employing an online survey via Google form. Majority of the respondents were aged between 18 to 24 years (64%, n=141). The subsequent respondents consist of those between the age of 25-34 years old (30%, n=65); 35-44 years old (5%, n=11); and 45 and above (1%, n=2). Also,

66% (n=146) are students, 24% (n=52) of the respondents are employed full-time, 4% (n=9) employed part-time, self-employed and unemployed make 2% (n=5) each, and 2% (n=4) of the respondents have retired. In terms of the Instagram daily usage, 28% (n=62) log into Instagram five times a day, 26% (n=56) check in Instagram page more than ten times a day, 23% (n=51) log in up to ten times a day and 11% (n=23) of the respondent log in Instagram less than one time a day, 12% (n=27) rarely use Instagram (one-two times a day).

Most of the items employed to measure the constructs (i.e., informativeness, entertainment features, credibility and perceived value) are adapted from [23] study and the questions pertaining to customer engagement were adapted from [11]. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. The numerical data received from the respondents was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and SmartPLS. The PLS-SEM method has been widely used in social science research [31, 32, 33]. SEM is a versatile modelling tool that may be used to do multivariate statistical analyses such route analysis, regression analysis, and factor analysis [34, 35]. Internal consistency, convergent and discriminant validity, as well as coefficient of determination (R^2) and path coefficients, were utilised to evaluate the reflective measurement and structural models for this study using Smart PLS.

4   Results

Preliminary analysis was conducted to verify the collected data and to ensure the data used is complete and valid. Data normality test using a Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that all variables have significant values less than 0.05, meaning that the data is not normally distributed. Hence, supporting the use of PLS-SEM [34]. Prior to data analysis, Harman's single-factor test was used to detect the presence of common technique bias. The findings demonstrate that the most significant single factor only contributed 24% of the variance in the data, which is less than the 50% threshold for item covariance. As a result, common method bias was not a problem in our investigation.

When constructs have an average variance extracted value of 0.5 and above, convergent validity is sufficient [36]. The convergent validity of the measurement model is assessed in this study by looking at its average variance extracted value (AVE). Furthermore, each construct's composite reliability (CR) must be greater than 0.7 for the measurement model to have acceptable internal consistency dependability [34]. Table 1 outlines the outcomes of the variables' validity and reliability analysis. The findings indicate that all loadings value are greater than 0.708, all constructs have AVE ranging from 0.531 to 0.628, exceeded the suggested threshold value of 0.5 and the composite reliability for each construct was above 0.7, ranging from 0.715 to 0.886. Hence, the study's measurement model has shown adequate convergent validity and high level of internal consistency reliability.

Table 1. Result of convergent validity

	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR
Informativeness	3	0.723 – 0.796	0.541	0.778
Entertainment Feature	4	0.715 – 0.821	0.593	0.853
Credibility	3	0.722 – 0.812	0.531	0.715
Perceived Value	3	0.798 – 0.845	0.628	0.835
Customer Engagement	7	0.756 – 0.845	0.568	0.886

Notes: CR = Compostite relaibility; AVE = Average variance extracted

In addition, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion was used to testify the discriminant validity of potentially overlapping concepts. According to [36], a threshold value of 0.90 is recommended for the HTMT approach. A number greater than 0.90 suggests that discriminant validity is absent. Table 2 shows that all values are below 0.90 and are ranging from 0.463 to 0.812. Therefore, the discriminant validity of all the items in the model was achieved.

Table 2. Result of discriminant validity

	CE	CRED	ENT	INFO	PV
Customer Engagement					
Credibility	0.463				
Entertainment Feature	0.611	0.624			
Informativeness	0.622	0.575	0.812		
Perceived Value	0.593	0.707	0.745	0.756	

Notes: CE =Customer Engagement, CRED=Credibility, ENT=Entertainment Feature,
INFO=Informativeness, PV=Perceived Value

As for the structural model, the path coefficient value was examined. The findings reported in Table 3 indicates that six out of seven direct relationships are significant. Informativeness (β=0.368, t=2.660, p<0.05), entertainment value (β=0.223, t=2.631, p<0.01) and credibility (β=0.364, t=4.119, p<0.01) significantly influence customer perceived value of advertising. In similar vein, informativeness of advertisement (β=0.215, t=2.496, p<0.05), credibility of advertisement (β=0.218, t=3.973, p<0.01) and customer perceived value of advertising (β=0.592, t=10.418, p<0.01) have significant direct impact on customer engagement in Instagram, but entertainment feature of advertisement does not (β=0.132, t=1.576, p>0.05) influence customer engagement

Table 3. Result of Path Coefficients

Correlations	Path Coefficient (β)	T-statistics	p-value
Informativeness → Perceived value	0.368	2.660	0.008*
Entertainment → Perceived value	0.223	2.631	0.001*
Credibility → Perceived value	0.364	4.119	0.000**
Informativeness→ Customer engagement	0.215	2.496	0.013*
Entertainment → Customer engagement	0.132	1.576	0.115
Credibility → Customer engagement	0.218	3.973	0.000**
Perceived value → Customer engagement	0.592	10.418	0.000**

Notes: **p-value < 0.001, * p-value < 0.05, ns = not signficant

As shown in Table 4, the bootstrapping analysis revealed that all of the indirect effects of INFO→CE (β = 0.484, t = 9.279), ENT→CE (β = 0.267, t = 6.431), and CRED→CE (β = 0.233, t = 7.294) are significant at t-values > 1.96 and p-value 0.05, implying the presence of mediating effects. Furthermore, zero does not appear in the 95 percent bias corrected bootstrap confidence interval for indirect effects. As a result, the presence of mediation effects is statistically significant, according to the researcher.

Because the direct effect of the entertainment function on customer engagement was insignificant but the indirect influence was, a full mediation of customer perceived value was recommended. Consumer perceived value of advertisement, on the other hand, somewhat moediated the effect of informativeness and credibility of advertisement on customer engagement in Instagram.

Table 4. Result of Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis	Std Beta	*t*-value	P Value	5%	95%
INFO>PV>CE	0.484	9.279	0.000	0.284	0.744
ENT>PV>CE	0.267	6.431	0.000	0.155	0.465
CRED>PV>CE	0.233	7.294	0.000	0.185	0.314

Notes: INFO=Informativeness, ENT=Entertainment feature, CRED=Credibility, PV=Perceived value, CE=Customer engagement

5 Discussion and Conclusion

The study has revealed some interesting findings. Informativeness and credibility of advertisement were found to have a significant relationship with customer per-ceived value of advertising. This finding corresponds to the past study conducted by [18, 19], where if an advertisement fulfills the utilitarian needs, precisely in providing useful and sought-after information, the same advertisement will then be considered to be credible. This will eventually shape an overall positive perception among the customers.

Likewise, the perception of the relevancy and credibility of information in social media advertising tends to create value for customers. Advertisements that provide customers with relevant information about specific product benefits and comparative product information are regarded more valuable commercials [19, 21, 24]. Furthermore, previous research has shown that credibility has a significant positive impact on customers' attitudes toward social media advertising, particularly how they evaluate these ads [25, 26]. Credible online commercials, according to previous research, have a higher likelihood of generating positive advertising outcomes and play an important part in the evaluation of advertising value among social media users [23].

Despite the non-significant link between the entertainment feature of advertising and customer engagement, the entertainment aspect did influence customer perceived value, which shown a full mediation impact along the link between the entertainment feature of advertising and customer engagement. Similarly, when compared to the entertainment element, informativeness was found to have the strongest predictive potential toward online advertising value in a study conducted by [19].

Likewise, [19] recommend brands should focus on the informative feature to generate product awareness and increase the advertising value instead of producing content that has no relevance to the target audience. Moreover, [18] also revealed that the entertainment feature of advertisement is not considered as a key predictor in enhancing customer engagement of online advertising.

The current study also shows that customer perceived advertising value has a substantial association with customer engagement, which is consistent with earlier research [29]. Lutz [37] discovered that both cognitive and affective engagement might be linked to the customer's reaction to persuasive communication, and that both are drivers of attitude toward advertisement. Similarly, [30, 38, 39, 40] discovered that people have a natural tendency to form personal connections and enjoy sharing pleasant items or news with others. As a result, when online users find a commercial "interesting' or "worthy", they will share it with their social network. Lastly, the findings also revealed customer perceived value of advertising partially mediated the relationship between the informativeness and credibility of advertisement toward customer engagement. This finding is consistent with previous studies in justifying the mediating roles of customer perceived value of advertising [22, 23, 25].

This study provides new insights into understanding the determinants of customer engagement among Instagram users in Malaysia. Considering the reasonably high explanatory power of the model, this research has significant theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the findings of this study added knowledge to the existing literature with regards to customer engagement in online advertising, specifically among the Instagram users which remains unexplored beforehand. Adding advertising value perception as a mediator provide empirical evidence on the important of enhancing advertising value to increase the customer engagement in online advertising. Practically, understanding customer engagement toward online media is vital in today digital economy where majority of the world population are actively involved in digital or online marketing. Moreover, customers nowadays, are actively and socially connected with one another in horizontal webs of communities [9, 41]. The findings may be useful for online marketers to assess, develop and enhance their marketing

communications strategies to enhance customer engagement on the web pages and the brands.

As a conclusion, this study only includes the respondents from young generation which might not be generalizable to all Instagram users in Malaysia. Moreover, the present study focused only on the common predictors of online marketing, instead of specific factors related to the engagement in social media. Future researchers are recommend examining the predictors such as localization and customization of message on customer engagement, which contributes to a better understanding of this topic.

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