

## **Emotional Dissonance and Its Relationship of the Recipient's Behavior in Interactive Advertising**

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### **Introduction:**

Advertising plays an important role in influencing ideas and beliefs and seeks to change them within the recipient as it works to direct behaviour towards everything that is new and different and helps in making appropriate decisions, and because advertising is developing very quickly to keep pace with technology, new ways have emerged to present advertising messages, which are interactive advertising that rely on modern, advanced and most effective techniques and methods to attract the attention of the recipient and they meet his/her desires and needs faster than traditional methods, this helps designers to create unconventional advertising messages that keep pace with the age, technology and the nature of the audience to which the advertisement is directed by achieving persuasion, this results in changing ideas, attitudes and behaviours in order to deal with the emotional dissonance that occurs to the recipient as a result of conflicting attitudes and beliefs with the resulting behaviour to reach the highest levels of impact on the recipient's behaviour and change it to suit the new attitude presented during the advertising message and work to remove the feeling of turmoil and anxiety resulting from emotional dissonance.

### **Research Problem:**

#### **The research problem trying to answer the following questions:**

- 1) How to deal with emotional dissonance and achieve a response to the advertising message?
- 2) Do interactive advertisements achieve a degree of persuasion that affects the behaviour of the recipient?

### **Research Aims:**

#### **The research aims to:**

- 1) Identifying the concept of emotional dissonance and knowing the factors that affect it and their effectiveness in interactive advertisements.
- 2) Take advantage of emotional dissonance to create an advertising message that achieves persuasion in the new attitude and helps in changing the behaviour of the recipient.

**Research Assumptions:****The research assumes:**

- 1) There is a direct relationship between the emotional dissonance and the behaviour of the recipient that it affects, so we find that the stronger the emotional dissonance in the advertising message the greater the motivating factor to change the behaviour and take decisions that reduce this feeling.
- 2) The possibility of creating new advertising messages through the use of modern methods and techniques in interactive advertisements that deals with the emotional dissonance that the recipient is exposed to.

**Research Importance:**

The importance of this research is to study the concept of emotional dissonance and how to take advantage of this situation that infects the recipient by creating innovative advertising messages that use the interactive method to achieve persuasion and seek to change behaviour to suit his psychological attitudes and remove the feeling of dissonance.

**Research Methodology:**

The research follows the descriptive approach to know the role of emotional dissonance in influencing the behaviour of the recipient through interactive advertisements.

**The concept of emotional dissonance:**

Emotional dissonance is a psychological condition that results from conflicting beliefs in the recipient's mind and a contradiction between what the individual perceives and the action he performs. The social psychologist (Leon Festinger) is the author of the theory of dissonance, describing it as a dissonance between attitudes and behaviours, it is a state of tension, disturbance and mental stress that leads to a state of discomfort that the individual suffers when he holds more than one belief or idea or produces contradictory reactions to its attitudes.

The main goal of studying emotional dissonance is the need to end the state of contradiction between behaviour and belief either by changing the attitude or influencing the behaviour to reach a state of equilibrium.

**Methods that help remove the feeling of emotional dissonance:**

The methods of dealing with emotional dissonance are summarized through the following:

- 1) **Changing beliefs:** the individual changes his thoughts and beliefs to suit the behaviour and remove the dissonance.
- 2) **Behaviour change:** When the individual performs actions that contradict his beliefs he feels a state of anxiety and guilt, so the individual seeks to change his behaviour to remove the feeling of dissonance.
- 3) **Adding a new belief:** It consists in adding new information that matches the action or behaviour that the individual performs, so that the belief and behaviour become compatible.

This does not prevent the existence of a group of individuals capable of changing their behaviours but they need a strong motive, and when the individual realizes that he has changed one of his beliefs and others, he feels some kind of pain and its degree varies according to the

importance of this belief, if the strength of the new belief is equal to what was before but incompatibility intensifies the dissonance, and because individuals by nature tend to find a match between their beliefs, opinions and behaviours when there is a conflict between beliefs and behaviours, probably the belief that the individual changed will be calmed and the behaviour will be changed to suit the newly established belief.

Therefore, the advertisement takes advantage of this situation by creating new and innovative advertising ideas to attract the attention of the recipient and motivate him to be convinced to change his behaviour to conform to his beliefs or create a visual shock by showing the results and consequences of his wrong behaviours.

### **The concept of behaviour:**

It is the reactions that are issued by individuals due to the pressures that they are exposed to and they also affect the psychological state so he responds by solving problems, satisfying needs and desires or making appropriate decisions, and it can be defined as a set of decisions made by the individual to buy or use a product or a particular service that satisfies his ever changing needs.

Consumer behaviour is defined as a human behaviour that is affected by psychological, social and economic factors. It is a mental and physical activity carried out by the individual as a result of his motives, it includes a process of evaluating products and services and making a comparison between competing products to reach the best of them. This term means all the interactions of the individual with the product or service if it is a choice, purchase or evaluation. Therefore, companies and institutions are interested in studying the motives of the recipients to know the forces that drive their behaviour towards buying or refraining from it, and because the recipient is the cornerstone of modern marketing activity so companies and institutions are interested in studying the needs and desires of consumers for their success and increasing their sales which gives them the ability to survive, continue and earn loyalty to its customers.

### **The relationship of emotional dissonance to behaviour:**

The theory of dissonance depends on knowing the individual's motives, thoughts and attitudes and studying the psychological state he is going through to find appropriate solutions for different situations by making a change in the behaviour of individuals to conform to their beliefs. The advertisement takes advantage of the topics that infect the individual in this situation and works to direct an advertising message that confirms his attitudes and urges him to produce reactions (behaviour) that are compatible with the attitude and create a sense of harmony and balance.

We find that when the individual feels uncomfortable while performing a different experience or behaviour that threatens his beliefs a state of emotional dissonance arises due to the difference that the individual perceives between what must be done which is the rule on which he was brought up and what the individual did not always do which is meant by the opposite behaviour, so he faces difficulty in changing these previous behaviours. Therefore, emotional dissonance has a function of warning and notification when the individual realizes the incompatibility.

As the emotional dissonance reflects the state of permanent conflict between the internal side of the individual and the resulting behaviour, so it requires the individual to use methods to manage feelings and more effort, control and skill until the state of dissonance is reduced.

**Some of the psychological sides that advertising uses to influence the recipient's behaviour and reduce the strength of emotional dissonance:**

**1) Instincts:** Instinct is the main engine of human behaviour and requires a response to the stimulus. It is an innate and psychological readiness that drives the individual to the process of perceiving and feeling emotional for certain situations and motivates the recipient to make a specific decision in order to satisfy his desires. The survival instinct is one of the instincts that man cares about so he advertises by urging the recipient to preserve his life and avoid many diseases to which he may be exposed.

**2) Emotions:** They are psychological emotions that address the emotional side of the individual that affects feelings more than the mind and thinking. When these feelings are positively aroused then it is a successful step to attract the attention of the recipient towards the advertisement and the advertised product, so the institutions clarify the negative results that can occur through the elements of a shocking visual impact on the recipient and begins to make decisions towards it.

**3) Subconscious mental tricks:** Freud believes that one of the basic factors that determine the behaviour of the recipient is unconscious factors. Actions are produced as a result of addressing the mind in an indirect way. Therefore, advertisers resort to using hidden messages in advertisements to address the unconscious. This can be achieved through the use of invisible elements in a way directly but it affects his decisions and makes him take actions that commensurate with it. This method is followed when a new product is presented in the market and they wait for the recipients to accept this new thought.

It becomes clear that there are some psychological aspects that result in some actions and behaviours that make the advertisement benefit from it to get rid of the state of dissonance and the contradictory feeling of the recipient by influencing the psychological attitudes to obtain compatible actions. Advertising directs advertising messages to change behaviours and make decisions that are compatible with attitudes and beliefs.

**Interactive Advertising:**

Interaction can be defined as a specific action that occurs between two or more things that produces a mutual effect, while interactive advertisements are one of the most important promotional activities that achieve goals in the advertising communication process. It is a two-way communication process between the advertiser and the recipient in which the individual interacts and participates in order to achieve a degree of understanding through the exchange of information and opinions resulting in responses and reactions consistent with the advertising message, and the aim of which is to notify the recipient that he is part of the brand he is marketing for and this helps in making the recipient more interactive with it.

Because of the emergence of modern technologies that interactive methods have been relied upon as different ways to present the advertising message and their effectiveness increases as a result of progress. This is evident through the development of the advertising idea presented to

the recipient and the adoption of a system that has the ability to develop the participation of the recipient and achieve a higher degree of interaction and communication. Therefore, we note the continuous increase in the use of interactive advertisements as a means of communication with the public to achieve multiple goals, including strengthening the relationship between the recipient and the brand and influencing his behaviour and purchasing decisions.

### **Interactive advertising properties:**

- 1) **Interactivity:** It is a feature that made the recipient has the ability to exchange information, control, modify, and express his opinion, so he has a role in the advertising message so he participates and does not receive negative feedback.
- 2) **Multimedia:** The addition of multimedia in advertising such as audio and video is one of the factors that increased the effectiveness of interactive advertising and helps to attract the attention of the recipient.
- 3) **Personalization:** It is a feature that made the recipient feels that the media is directed to him by addressing him and paying attention to his personal desires, so he interacts with the advertisement.

### **Some of the methods that interactive advertising depend on to deliver the advertising message:**

- 1) **Surprise method:** Sometimes it reaches shock in delivering the advertising message which is an attempt by the designer to address the feelings and emotions of the receiving audience to urge them to have positive reactions towards the advertisement.
- 2) **Dramatic method:** It depends on the style of drama and representation in presenting the advertising idea.
- 3) **Realistic method:** This method is used to address the audience about some different indicative issues.
- 4) **Emotional or human method:** It depends on addressing the recipient's human feelings and emotions.

### **Interactive advertising features:**

- 1) It is considered a more effective method than using traditional advertisements.
- 2) Interactive advertising helps produce immediate responses and reactions from recipients.
- 3) It works to establish the advertising message in the minds of the recipients.
- 4) It has the ability to communicate the largest number of information to the recipients.

### **Factors affecting the effectiveness of the interactive advertising message:**

There are factors that affect the ability of the advertising message to influence and change, they can be divided into:

- 1) **Environment:** It is all the surrounding social and economic conditions that help the advertising message to change or influence, they are all external forces and influences that also can affect the recipient, as happened last year with the emergence of the Corona virus (Covid-19) which affected all societies economically. Thus, it affected the type of the advertising message that was presented which is to urge the electronic system in all fields so that the

message could change the attitudes of the recipients to suit the new thought and then work to change the behaviour, and the environment is also intended as the selection of sites and places that the advertiser can benefit from to place advertising ideas and the recipient can interact with what is being presented.

**2) The advertising medium:** it includes factors related to the variety of means and their credibility such as social media which has become one of the important ways of marketing for various products and services and is compatible with the age and helps to make quick purchasing decisions and responses through the interaction of the recipient with them.

**3) Advertising message:** It is the message's ability to persuade, be attractive, and diversified, can be repeated and satisfy the recipient's needs. At the present time, advertisers have tended to use advertisements that motivate the audience to interact with them by taking advantage of new technologies that attract the audience until they interact with the advertisement after achieving persuasion with the advertising message.

**4) Recipient:** Since individuals differ in their culture and experiences, the response of recipients to the same advertising message can change due to their social, psychological and economic status when they are exposed to the message.

Therefore, we note the impact on the recipients as a result of exposure to the advertising message as there is a relationship between the message and the behaviour of the recipient, and its results vary according to the social, psychological and cultural conditions of the individual. The advertising message can help create emotional dissonance in the recipient by adding new information that changes psychological attitudes or changes his behaviour by influencing his beliefs to obtain responses to different stimuli.

### **Reasons for emotional dissonance in the design of advertising messages and ways to deal with them:**

Advertising design depends on understanding the emotions, feelings, motives and psychological attitudes of the recipient to present an advertising message that increases persuasion and generates reactions compatible with it, and this comes through studying the theory of dissonance, the goal of the advertisement could be to create an excitement through emotional dissonance by creating a state of discomfort when presenting new information as a preliminary stage that makes him ready to accept the advertising message that helps him to get rid of this psychological tension after choosing from the available alternatives that satisfy his desires so he makes an appropriate response with the product, the service or the case and the advertisement can come in order to reach solutions to the problems facing the recipient so he changes his behaviour to suit his beliefs. Advertising messages are made to remove the feeling of emotional dissonance, so we find that:

- The more the advertising message is related to the future, the more the recipient suffers from a great deal of dissonance and the more his positive attitudes to buy the advertised product.

Sometimes the recipients are forced to agree to some of the offers presented in the advertising messages to avoid looking at them as unsophisticated people. This desire stimulates purchase or interaction towards the issue to eliminate the state of dissonance, and because the nature of the recipient always seeks to obtain the best products and services at the lowest cost thus making comparisons between what was chosen and other competing alternatives in the market before

and after making the decision, and because there is no perfect product or service, each of them has its advantages and disadvantages which makes the recipient in a state of dissatisfaction with the realization that there is a product that is superior to others after making the purchase, and this is one of the reasons for the occurrence of Emotional Dissonance.

It is possible that the individual will encounter ideas and beliefs that differ from the way he perceives them as a result of exposure to various advertising media or marketing influences, so advertisers resort to presenting an advertising message that attempts to convince the recipient that his life is not complete without their products or services by clarifying the contradictions between the ideal version and his real life that produces a feeling of dissonance because the individual wants to see himself in these ideal conditions but he cannot use these products or services at the present time, but with the repetition of the advertising message we can reach responses compatible with it, so emotional dissonance is a tool used by advertisers to persuade and influence the recipient and make decisions purchase of the advertised product or service.

When exposed to this, some choices appear that the individual can make which are either rejecting the advertising message and this is what people with a strong mind do, or the dissonance can be resolved by accepting the message and the behaviour is changed by purchasing the product or service, or the message is accepted and consequently changing the belief that the individual accepts his life as it is without the product or service presented in the advertisement.

We notice that the more convincing the advertising message the stronger the dissonance and the more insistent it becomes to change the behaviour of the recipient. Some companies use this method to market a lifestyle and mentality associated with the brand because they believe in it and supports it because the recipient wants to get this lifestyle or brand.

### **Results:**

- 1) Studying the psychology of the recipient and knowing his attitudes, desires and motives help the designer to create new advertising ideas that attract the attention of the recipient and achieve the goals of the advertising message.
- 2) Emotional dissonance depends on discovering the relationship between psychological attitudes and the recipient's behaviour.
- 3) Adopting the modern methods and techniques of advertising helps to attract the largest number of audience as it affects their behaviour and this confirms the effectiveness of advertising.
- 4) Interactive advertisements make the recipient part of the advertising message and help achieve its goals and respond towards it, as it develops a sense of loyalty towards the brand.

### **Recommendations:**

- 1) The advertising designer must pay attention to studying the psychology of the recipient to create new advertising ideas that achieve a response because of their compatibility with his attitudes, motives and desires.
- 2) The advertising designer must pay attention to the interactive style when presenting advertising messages for facility and speed of perception by the recipient.

3) Advertising agencies should search for the latest new technological methods in advertising design because it motivates the recipient to take appropriate decisions.

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