Siber International Journal of Digital Business (SIJDB)

DOI: https://doi.org/10.38035/sijdb.v3i1 https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Interactive Digital Advertising as a Strategy to Increase Brand Awareness, Engagement, and Purchase Intention in Local **Startups: A Conceptual Study**

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Abstract: The development of digital technology has encouraged local startups to adopt more effective and efficient marketing strategies. One increasingly used approach is interactive digital advertising, which enables two-way communication between brands and consumers. This conceptual article aims to examine the role of interactive digital advertising in increasing brand awareness, consumer engagement, and purchase intention. By integrating various previous research findings, this article develops a conceptual framework that demonstrates the relationship between interactive digital advertising and brand awareness, consumer engagement, and purchase intention. This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of sustainable marketing literature and serve as an initial reference for researchers in conducting future empirical research.

Keyword: Interactive Digital Advertising, Brand Awareness, Consumer Engagement, Purchase Intention.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has transformed the way companies, including local startups, market. While advertising used to be one-way, interactive digital advertising has now emerged, enabling two-way communication between consumers and brands. According to research by Ohme et al. (2021), interactive advertising can significantly increase consumer attention, message comprehension, and engagement compared to traditional advertising. This suggests that local startups can leverage interactive digital advertising as a means to compete in an increasingly competitive market.

In the attention economy, consumers are bombarded daily with thousands of advertising messages from various media. Therefore, a creative approach is needed to help

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brands stand out amidst the information noise. One example is the use of advergames on digital platforms, which has been shown to increase the duration of consumer engagement with a brand. As explained by Keogh (2024), this strategy can create a more immersive experience, so that ads are not just glanced at but also leave a stronger impression.

Furthermore, interactive digital advertising plays a crucial role in increasing brand awareness. Brand awareness is the initial stage in consumers' decision-making process, enabling them to recognize and remember a brand. Research by Rahman and Andini (2023) found that digital advertising has a positive influence on brand awareness, which in turn increases consumer purchase intention. Thus, brand awareness can be understood as a mediating variable linking digital advertising strategies to consumer behavior.

Consumer engagement is also a crucial aspect of interactive digital advertising. According to Malthouse and Calder (2019), engagement encompasses the consumption, contribution, and creation of content by consumers in the digital environment. When consumers actively engage, whether through liking, commenting, or sharing content, their emotional connection with the brand is strengthened. This emphasizes that interactive advertising goes beyond simply conveying a message and encouraging direct consumer participation.

Ultimately, the primary goal of any marketing strategy is to create purchase intention. Based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model framework (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), consumers who engage in message processing through the central channel are more likely to develop a positive attitude toward the brand, ultimately increasing purchase intention. Empirical research by Chatterjee et al. (2003) also shows that multimedia features in online advertising contribute significantly to increasing purchase intention.

For local startups, interactive digital marketing strategies are highly relevant due to their limited resources. Interactive digital advertising offers a relatively inexpensive, creative, and effective solution for brand recognition, building consumer engagement, and driving purchase intention. Therefore, this conceptual study is crucial to provide a theoretical and practical understanding of the role of interactive digital advertising in increasing brand awareness, engagement, and purchase intention, particularly for local startups.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a conceptual study method based on literature review. This conceptual study was chosen because the main objective of this research is to formulate a theoretical relationship between interactive digital advertising, brand awareness, consumer engagement, and purchase intention in the context of local startups. According to Snyder (2019), conceptual research functions to integrate theory and previous research findings in order to build a new understanding of a phenomenon. Therefore, this study does not collect primary data through surveys or interviews, but rather utilizes secondary data from scientific articles, journals, books, and publications related to digital marketing.

The data collection process was conducted through searching various academic sources using databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Scopus. The selected literature focused on research relevant to the topics of interactive digital advertising, brand awareness, consumer engagement, and purchase intention, both in global and local contexts. According to Kitchenham & Charters (2007), a systematic literature review allows researchers to filter, evaluate, and integrate various existing studies to produce a more comprehensive conceptual framework.

The data obtained was then analyzed using content analysis techniques. Content analysis allows researchers to examine similarities, differences, and patterns of findings from various existing studies, allowing for clearer relationships between variables (Krippendorff, 2018). Thus, this method not only describes the results of previous research but also contributes a conceptual model that can serve as a reference for future empirical research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interactive Digital Advertising

In digital marketing literature, "interactivity" is understood as the characteristic of a media/advertising format that allows the audience to control, communicate in two directions, and receive a rapid/synchronous response from the system or advertiser. One of the most influential frameworks defines three core dimensions: active control, two-way communication, and synchronicity (Liu & Shrum, 2002; Liu, 2003). This framework emphasizes that interactivity is not simply the presence of buttons or technical features; what is crucial is the user's perception that they can control the experience and interact reciprocally with the brand, with minimal response time. Similar findings emerged in the development of the perceived interactivity scale by McMillan & Hwang (2002), which focused on measuring the direction of communication, user control, and response time/speed as factors shaping the perception of interactivity in the context of online advertising.

A key debate in interactivity research distinguishes between actual interactivity (the number/type of interactive features available) and perceived interactivity (the extent to which the audience perceives the experience as truly interactive). Studies of global brand websites have shown that adding interactive features does not automatically increase perceived interactivity; certain characteristics are more important determinants of user perception (e.g., ease of feedback, enabling navigation, and social elements) (Voorveld et al., 2011). In other words, experience design and functional relevance are often more powerful than simply "piling on features." The conceptual distinction between actual and perceived interactivity is also emphasized by Wu (2005) and theoretically discussed by Sundar (2004), who advocates modeling the effects of interactivity on audience cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes.

In the context of advertising effects, interactivity is related to users' flow (engrossment/immersion) when exploring brand content. Research on brand websites shows that flow is a psychological mechanism that explains how interactivity drives cognitive (number/type of thoughts about the product), affective (attitude toward the site/brand), and conative (behavioral intentions) responses (van Noort, Voorveld, & van Reijmersdal, 2012). This means that interactive digital ads designed to trigger a sense of control, rapid feedback, and meaningful participation are more likely to elicit flow and ultimately influence downstream metrics such as engagement and purchase intent.

The indicators commonly used to measure digital advertising interactivity (perception/psychometric level and feature/technical level) are:

1. Active Control

Describes the extent to which users feel they can control the advertising experience (e.g., selecting flow/info, play/pause, swipe/drag, and customization). Examples of frequently used perceptual items: "I feel I can control what happens in this ad/site," "I can easily direct my own experience." This dimension has its roots in the scales of Liu (2003) and McMillan & Hwang (2002). At the feature level, it is reflected in enabling navigation, filters, skip/seek, and personalization options.

2. Two-Way Communication

Reflects the audience's ability to provide feedback and receive responses (chat, comments, polls, quizzes, CTAs that open dialogue channels, chatbots). At the perceptual level, common items include: "This ad/site makes it easy for me to communicate with the brand," "I can provide feedback and receive responses." This dimension is a key pillar in the definition of interactivity (Liu & Shrum, 2002) and the interactivity perception scale (McMillan & Hwang, 2002).

3. Synchronicity/Responsiveness

Assesses the perceived speed (delay) and relevance of the system/brand's response to user actions (e.g., instant animation/feedback, minimal loading, and contextual automated responses). Example items: "Responses to my actions happen quickly," "The system responds in a timely manner." This dimension consistently appears in Liu's (2003) scale and is considered crucial in shaping perceptions of interactivity (Sundar, 2004).

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is the level of consumer ability to recognize and recall a brand in various consumption situations. Keller (1993) defines brand awareness as "the ability of consumers to recognize or recall a brand as belonging to a particular product category," which serves as a gateway for the brand to enter the consumer's consideration. Within the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) framework, brand awareness is the most basic foundation that must be built before a brand can grow associations, loyalty, and brand equity (Keller, 2013).

Psychologically, brand awareness can be divided into two main dimensions: brand recognition (the ability to recognize a brand when presented as a cue) and brand recall (the ability to recall a brand without a direct cue). Aaker (1996) asserted that the higher the level of brand awareness, the more likely the brand is to be considered in the purchasing decision-making process. Empirical research also shows that brand awareness has a significant influence on consumer purchase intention and preference, both in global markets and in local startup contexts (Hutter et al., 2013).

In the digital era, brand awareness is increasingly influenced by consumer interactions on social media and interactive advertising. Bruhn et al. (2012) found that communication via social media can strengthen brand awareness through active consumer engagement, such as liking, commenting, and sharing content. Therefore, modern marketing strategies place brand awareness as a key variable in building consumer engagement and purchase intention.

Based on the literature (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2013; Rossiter & Percy, 1987), brand awareness can be measured through several indicators, namely:

1. Brand Recognition

Describes a consumer's ability to recognize a brand when it appears in the form of a logo, slogan, or packaging. Example item: "I immediately recognized this brand when I saw its logo."

2. Brand Recall

The ability of consumers to recall a particular brand without the aid of external cues. Example item: "When I think of this product category, brand X comes to mind first."

3. Top of Mind Awareness

The brand position that first comes to mind when consumers are asked about a product category. This indicator is important for measuring a brand's market dominance.

4. Brand Familiarity

The level of consumer familiarity with a brand is based on experience or exposure. According to Alba & Hutchinson (1987), the more frequently a consumer is exposed to a brand, the higher their level of familiarity and brand awareness.

Consumer Engagement

In modern marketing, consumer engagement is understood as the level of cognitive, affective, and behavioral involvement of consumers with a brand across various channels, particularly digital. Brodie et al. (2011) define engagement as "a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand) in service relationships." This means that engagement is not only about physical interaction, but also about the consumer's emotional and intellectual involvement with the brand.

This concept is increasingly important in the digital media era, where consumers are not only passive recipients of messages, but also play a role as creators and disseminators of brand content. Hollebeek et al. (2014) emphasize that consumer engagement is a multidimensional construct that includes three main aspects: cognitive (consumer attention and thoughts towards the brand), affective (feelings and emotions related to the brand), and behavioral (consumer's actual actions, such as commenting, sharing content, or making purchases).

In the digital realm, engagement is often explained using the COBRA (Consumers' Online Brand-Related Activities) framework, which divides consumer involvement into three levels: consumption (consuming brand content), contribution (providing feedback, comments, likes), and creation (creating and sharing brand-related content) (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011). This framework emphasizes that engagement is not just about exposure, but involves active participation that can strengthen consumers' relationships with brands.

Empirical research supports the critical role of engagement in marketing outcomes. For example, Vivek et al. (2012) found that consumer engagement increases brand loyalty and advocacy, while Dessart et al. (2016) demonstrated that engagement on social media can foster emotional connections that strengthen purchase intentions. Thus, consumer engagement can be considered a crucial bridge between exposure to interactive digital advertising and consumer attitudes and behavior.

Based on the main literature (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Vivek et al., 2012; Dessart et al., 2016), consumer engagement indicators can be detailed as follows:

- 1. Cognitive (Cognitive Engagement)
 - Cognitive engagement refers to the extent to which consumers pay attention, think, and mentally focus to a brand or advertisement. This is demonstrated through high consumer attention to the message, curiosity to learn about the product, and active thinking about the value the brand offers (Brodie et al., 2011). For example, consumers who take the time to read advertisement details or compare products demonstrate high cognitive engagement.
- 2. Affective (Emotional/Affective Engagement)
 - The affective aspect describes the emotional engagement that arises when consumers interact with a brand. This can take the form of feelings of joy, enthusiasm, or even pride when connected to a particular brand (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Consumers with strong emotional bonds tend to feel closer to the brand and demonstrate emotional loyalty, for example, feeling excited when the brand launches a new product.

3. Behavioral Engagement

The behavioral dimension is reflected in consumers' concrete actions in response to interactions with brands. This includes likes, comments, shares on social media, positive reviews, or even creating brand-related content (Vivek et al., 2012). These activities demonstrate deeper consumer engagement because they actively participate in and influence others' perceptions of the brand.

- 4. COBRA Framework (Consumption, Contribution, Creation)
 - a. Consumption: The initial stage when consumers simply consume content provided by the brand, such as reading posts or watching video advertisements. At this stage, consumers are still passive (Muntinga et al., 2011).
 - b. Contribution: At this stage, consumers begin to engage by providing feedback, such as liking, commenting, or sharing content with their networks. This participation signifies more active engagement.
 - c. Creation: The highest level of engagement occurs when consumers create their own brand-related content, such as creating video reviews on YouTube, posting testimonials, or producing creative memes about the brand. This activity demonstrates that consumers are not just users but also brand ambassadors who voluntarily promote the product.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is an important construct in consumer behavior that describes an individual's tendency to purchase a product or service based on their experience, attitude, and perception of the brand. According to Schiffman & Kanuk (2007), purchase intention is the stage of inclination before making a real decision, where consumers show interest and the possibility of purchasing a particular product.

Ajzen (1991), through his Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), explains that purchase intention is influenced by three main factors: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This means that the more positive a consumer's attitude toward a product, the greater the influence of their social environment, and the higher their perceived control over the purchase, the stronger the purchase intention.

In the context of digital marketing, purchase intention is often influenced by exposure to interactive advertising, brand awareness, and consumer engagement. According to Dodds et al. (1991), positive perceived value and a strong brand image will drive consumers to have higher purchase intentions. Another study by Pavlou & Fygenson (2006) emphasized that trust and comfort in using digital platforms also influence consumer purchase intentions, particularly in e-commerce and local startups.

Based on the literature (Dodds et al., 1991; Spears & Singh, 2004; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007), purchase intention can be measured through the following indicators:

- 1. Interest in buying
 - Describes consumer interest in owning a particular product. Consumers who show interest typically perceive the product as meeting their needs and desires.
- 2. Desire to purchase
 - Indicates a consumer's emotional desire to purchase a product due to the brand's appeal, quality, or product image.
- 3. Preference over other brands
 - Describes a consumer's tendency to choose a particular brand over competing brands. This preference indicates a stronger level of attachment to the brand.

4. Future purchase intention

This indicator measures the likelihood of consumers to repurchase the product or consider the brand in their next purchasing decision.

Discussion

Interactive Digital Advertising on Brand Awareness

Interactive digital advertising is a form of marketing communication that utilizes digital technology to create an interactive experience between brands and consumers. Interactivity allows consumers to become not only passive recipients of information, but also active participants in the marketing communication process (Deighton & Kornfeld, 2009). Uses and Gratifications theory emphasizes that consumers use digital media to meet their needs for information, entertainment, and interaction. Therefore, the more interactive the advertisement displayed, the more likely consumers are to recognize and remember a brand (Katz et al., 1974).

Conceptually, interactive digital advertising strengthens brand awareness because it provides a two-way communication experience that increases consumer engagement. According to Keller (2013), brand awareness is formed through two main aspects: brand recognition (the consumer's ability to recognize a brand when they see it) and brand recall (the consumer's ability to remember the brand without assistance). Interactive advertising with personalization, gamification, and participatory content features increases the likelihood that consumers will recognize and remember a brand compared to traditional, one-way advertising.

Empirical studies support this relationship. Research by Lee & Cho (2020) found that interactive digital advertising significantly increases consumer brand awareness through engaging and participatory advertising experiences. Similarly, Calder et al. (2009) demonstrated that interactivity in digital media encourages consumers to feel closer to the brand, thereby increasing brand recall. Research by Oh & Xu (2003) also confirmed that interactive features in online advertising can strengthen brand memory because consumers are more actively involved in processing information.

Furthermore, Dehghani & Tumer's (2015) research on the effectiveness of YouTube advertising showed that interactivity in video content positively impacts brand awareness, especially among the younger generation. Meanwhile, Hamouda's (2018) research shows that interactive advertising on social media not only increases brand awareness but also builds stronger positive associations compared to conventional advertising.

Thus, it can be concluded that interactive digital advertising plays a crucial role in building brand awareness. Interactivity enables consumers to experience greater cognitive and affective engagement, ultimately strengthening their ability to recognize and recall a brand. This aligns with the view that interactivity-based digital advertising strategies not only expand the reach of a message but also deepen the quality of brand recall in consumers' minds.

Interactive Digital Advertising on Engagement

Conceptually, interactivity in digital advertising, which includes active control, two-way communication, and responsiveness, creates a participatory experience that encourages cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement in consumers (Liu & Shrum, 2002). When users feel in control of the flow of the experience and receive immediate feedback, they are encouraged to process the message more deeply and become "present" in the interaction, a

state close to flow (Hoffman & Novak, 2009). The COBRA framework asserts that interactive formats facilitate the transition from simply consuming brand content (consumption) to contributing (likes/comments) and finally to creating content (creation)—three levels that reflect the escalation of engagement (Muntinga et al., 2011). From a Uses & Gratifications perspective, ads that allow for exploration, personalization, and dialogue are better able to fulfill the motives of information, entertainment, and social interaction, thereby increasing the likelihood of engagement (Katz et al., 1974).

These theories align with empirical findings that the higher the perceived interactivity, the stronger the engagement. Calder, Malthouse, and Schaedel (2009) demonstrated that interactive online media experiences increase engagement and, in turn, strengthen ad responses. Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie (2014) empirically validated the engagement construct (cognitive–affective–behavioral) in social media and found that interactive brand experiences increased scores on all three dimensions. In the platform realm, Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013) demonstrated that interactive content (e.g., calls to action, questions, and quizzes) significantly boosted engagement metrics (comments, likes, shares) on a brand's Facebook page.

Cross-context evidence is also consistent. Ashley and Tuten (2015) found that interactive creative strategies (e.g., the use of dialogic calls-to-action, UGC, and gamification) were positively correlated with consumer engagement across various brand categories. Dessart, Veloutsou, and Morgan-Thomas (2016) demonstrated through scale measurements that meaningful interactions in digital brand communities increase emotional engagement and participatory action. Beyond social media, van Noort, Voorveld, and van Reijmersdal (2012) explained that interactive features on brand websites trigger online flow, which then increases cognitive, affective, and conative responses the three pathways at the heart of engagement. Additionally, Hamouda (2018) demonstrated in the tourism context that interactive advertising on social media triggers higher participation and engagement than conventional formats.

In summary, interactivity works as an engagement driver through two primary mechanisms: 1) the psychological sense of control, mental/emotional involvement, and flow; and 2) the behavioral ease of feedback and content co-creation that lowers barriers to participation. Because engagement has been shown to mediate various marketing outcomes (brand attitude, purchase intention), designing digital ads that are dialogic, user-controlled, and responsive is key to activating meaningful engagement.

Interactive Digital Advertising on Purchase Intention

Conceptually, interactivity in digital advertising, including active control, two-way communication, and rapid response, encourages deeper cognitive and affective engagement, thereby strengthening attitudes toward the ad/brand and leading to purchase intention. From the perspective of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), interactive features trigger central processing (high elaboration) because users feel "involved" in the advertising experience; when arguments and experiences are perceived as relevant, attitudes are stronger and more predictive of purchase intention (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Liu & Shrum, 2002). Meanwhile, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains that interactivity can improve attitudes (through enjoyable/valuable experiences), strengthen subjective norms (through social interactions and social cues on the platform), and increase perceived behavioral control (through ease/clarity of action), which together increase purchase intention (Ajzen, 1991). The psychological mechanism of flow also plays a role: immersive interactive experiences

increase enjoyment and engagement, which in turn fosters intention to try or purchase (Hoffman & Novak, 2009).

Empirically, numerous studies have shown that the more interactive the ad format, the higher the purchase intention. In social media, Duffett (2015) found that exposure to dialogic Facebook ads increased brand attitudes and purchase intentions among young consumers. Dehghani & Tumer (2015) reported that interactive elements (participation, sharing, and comments) in social media ads boosted purchase intentions through perceived value and enjoyment. In the tourism context, Hamouda (2018) demonstrated that interactive social ads increased perceived information quality and engagement, which in turn positively influenced purchase intentions. In a study of automotive brands, Hutter et al. (2013) found that user interaction with Facebook content (likes, comments, shares) increased brand awareness and purchase intentions, confirming that the path from interactivity \rightarrow engagement/awareness \rightarrow purchase intentions is mutually reinforcing.

Similar findings emerge across other digital formats. Calder et al. (2009) demonstrated experimentally that more interactive online experiences increase engagement and advertising effectiveness, including behavioral tendencies such as purchase intentions. Lee & Cho (2020) asserted that perceived interactivity (control, dialogue, responsiveness) increases attitudes toward the ad/brand, which then drives purchase intentions. In e-commerce environments, Pavlou & Fygenson (2006) demonstrated that interactive elements that strengthen trust and perceived control contribute to intention to transact, which is conceptually equivalent to purchase intention for products/services on digital platforms. Overall, this evidence is consistent with the predictions of the ELM and TPB: interactivity enhances the quality of experiences and social-cognitive cues, thereby strengthening purchase intentions.

By referring to the problem formulation, theoretical studies both empirically and conceptually, and discussions of the relationship between variables, the framework for thinking in this article is compiled as shown below.

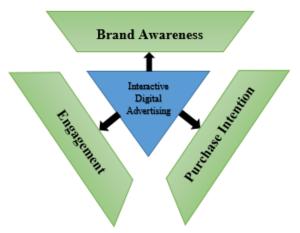


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

CONCLUSION

This conceptual study confirms that interactive digital advertising is an effective marketing communications strategy for building brand awareness, increasing consumer engagement, and driving purchase intention. The interactivity presented in digital advertising enables consumers to play an active role, not only as recipients of information but also as participants involved in the communication process. This makes it easier for consumers to recognize, remember, and build positive associations with brands. Furthermore, interactive

digital advertising can create engaging and relevant experiences for consumers, thereby strengthening emotional and cognitive bonds that ultimately increase purchase intention for local startup products or services. Thus, interactive digital advertising can be positioned as a key strategy in strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of startup businesses in the digital era.

This study is conceptual in nature and therefore limited to explaining the relationships between variables based on theory and previous research. The lack of empirical testing means that the generalizations of the study's results cannot fully represent actual conditions on the ground. Furthermore, this study does not consider other external factors, such as differences in consumer characteristics, types of digital platforms, and market dynamics that can influence the effectiveness of interactive digital advertising. Therefore, further research is expected to empirically test the proposed conceptual framework, incorporating primary data from consumers and local startups to produce more comprehensive and applicable findings.

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