

## Advertisement Perception and Generations: Comparison between X, Y, and Z Generations

### Reklamlara Yönelik Algı ve Kuşaklar: X, Y ve Z Kuşaklararası Karşılaştırması

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#### Abstract

The advertising industry and generations are in continual interaction. From past to present, advertisements have been organized for ages. The perceptions and ads have changed on the axis of technological developments. By advertising throughout the traditional media, the messages flow accordingly one-way communication model. However, today's new media opportunities, such as social media, originate a model based on bidirectional communication and more interaction. Combining the changing perception of people in daily life practice, consumption habits, and lifestyles with technology led to the formation of a diverse audience. It is defined as generation Z. Generation Z is a generation that grew up in a period when technological developments were more diversified than the previous two generations (X, Y) and consequently had a more technological aptitude. However, the X generation, who lived in the analog era, and the Y generation, who experienced both analog and digital periods, have been attempting to adapt to the new era, non-isolated from technological developments. Therefore, three generations have been analyzed in this context by conducting qualitative research, and advertising and intergenerational perception have been comprehended. Those generations demand adaption to this new-tech period. Obtaining data were subjected to content analysis, and three themes have been achieved: Concerns about current circumstances, the inconvenience of ads, and advertising and public relations: digitalization of the profession.

#### Anahtar Kelimeler:

Sosyal Medya,  
Reklamcılık,  
Kuşaklar,  
Algı,  
Dijitalleşme.

#### Öz

Reklamcılık sektörü ve kuşaklar sürekli etkileşim halindedir. Geçmişten günümüze reklamlar, kuşaklara ve onların algılarına yönelik olarak düzenlenerek teknolojik gelişmeler ekseninde değişim geçirmiştir. Geleneksel medya araçlarıyla yapılan reklamlar daha çok tek yönlü bir iletişim modeli ile gerçekleşmişken, günümüz yeni medya olanakları, özellikle sosyal medya, iki yönlü iletişim ve daha çok etkileşim üzerine kurulu bir modeli mümkün hale getirmiştir. Gündelik hayat pratiğinde insanların değişen algısının, tüketim alışkanlıklarının ve yaşam tarzlarının teknoloji ile birleşmesi, Z kuşağı olarak tanımlanan oldukça yeni ve farklı bir kitlenin oluşmasına neden olmuştur. Z kuşağı, teknolojik gelişmelerin öncül iki kuşağa (X,Y) göre daha çok çeşitlendiği bir dönemde doğan ve büyüyen, bundan dolayı da teknolojik yatkınlığı daha fazla olan bir kuşaktır. Ancak büyük oranda analog dönemi yaşamış X kuşağı ile hem analog hem de dijital dönemi deneyimlemiş Y kuşağı, yine de teknolojik gelişmelerden soyutlanmamış, aksine yeni döneme adapte olmaya çalışmaktadırlar. Dolayısıyla üç kuşak da bu kapsamda irdelenmeye çalışılmış ve yürütülen nitel bir araştırma ile reklamcılık ve kuşaklararası algı derinlemesine anlaşılmasına çalışılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda elde edilen veriler içerik analizine tabi tutulmuştur. Analiz sonucunda, "Mevcut Duruma İlişkin Kaygılar", "Reklamların Rahatsız Ediciliği" ve "Reklamcılık ve Halkla İlişkiler Mesleğinin Dijitalleşmesi" temaları elde edilmiştir.

## Introduction

Individuals require information and interaction for involvement, essential need fulfillment, and survival. Individuals are informed and surrounded by brands, products, and services through advertisements (Munsch, 2021; Demirtas, 2020; Chappuis, Gaffey, & Parvizi, 2011; Qualman, 2012). That reveals that the advertising industry impacts individuals' thoughts and perceptions of society (Cepni-Şener & Uğurhan, 2019: 50). Individuals exposed to advertising are consciously or unconsciously affected. Individuals who have experienced comparable circumstances throughout the identical period and who have been influenced by related technological and economic developments may also manifest similar attitudes, thoughts, and tendencies. However, advertisements' production and progress have developed over the years, and in this case, it has completely changed the advertising perceptions of generations. The cultures, lifestyles, life perceptions, and relations with the technology of individuals of different age groups have changed and transformed in parallel with the developments in information communication technologies (Belek, 1999: 36).

Although advertisements' expectations, perceptions, behaviors, and perspectives change depending on time, individuals born on similar dates have common cultural characteristics that reveal the concept of generation. Advertisements have undergone a rapid change and transformation, especially in parallel with new communication technologies. This change and transformation may affect the target audience and form associations in the minds. Studies on the effects of indifferent advertisements on generations reveal that perceptions may vary (Munsch, 2021; Demirtas, 2020; Cepni-Sener & Uğurhan, 2019). Earlier analyses generally compare two or more generations in terms of behavior, attitude, and perception within the scope of advertisements and generations. In a study, the evaluation of the job of advertising professionals from different generations was discussed (Yoon-Joo Lee, 2017; Neves, 2018; Loroş & Helgeson, B, 2013; Ting & Ernest-Cyril, 2012; Yaman & Erdaş, 2021). Examining these studies shows differentiation between advertising and the generations that create or are exposed to them (Jungner, 2021).

This study aims to understand individuals' perceptions from different generations, producers and consumers, and previous studies. For this purpose, we collected the research data by in-depth interview technique, one of the qualitative research methods. The sample group consists of X, Y, and Z generation individuals. The study does not include silent, baby boomers, and alpha generations. Due to some restrictions, these generations were excluded, such as reaching difficulty, obtaining data inability, and infection risk in the COVID-19 pandemic. Since these generations are considered risky groups, these age groups' curfew is another reason for exclusion. Six participants consist of the study's X, Y, and Z generations. Qualitative studies focus on the richness of the data rather than on many samples. In qualitative research, the quality of the sample is essential, not the quantity. In other words, in qualitative research, the richness of the data to be obtained from the sample, the sample containing a large number of samples but repeating the same data is preferred (Baltacı, 2018: 268).

## **Advertising Throughout the Traditional Media**

Advertising is a written, visual and audial production produced through purchasing space and time to promote oneself to exploit a brand, product, or service and attract the individuals to the product, service, and brand. One of the aims is to convince the target audience to buy, use and try the brand (Hessari et al., 2019). Advertisers use numerous broadcasting channels for these purposes. The advertising industry has progressed continuously in parallel with information communication technologies, creating new advertisement channels.

### ***Television Advertising***

Television, a very effective medium for the masses, has a strategic impact on advertising (Tayfur, 2013: 113). Realistic and impressive representations of the products can be presented in the advertisement with the interaction of image and sound. Recently, television advertisements have an audience regardless of age, gender, income, or education level. Being prime-time TV programs, soap operas are popular; individuals are exposed to commercials more than any other device. Thus, this brings TV ads to an inevitable position in which it is the most expensive method (Kasim, 2004) to broadcast. In addition, there are disadvantages such as low selectivity, consecutive ads, collection of limited attention, and distrust of television advertisements (Belch & Belch, 2018: 379-382). However, it is not an appropriate medium for addressing different consumer profiles; advertising costs per person decrease because many people watch. However, given the characteristics of the consumers, special consumer groups are also discussed through programs aimed at generally homogeneous consumers. For instance, related products may be advertised in sports programs, particularly football. However, reaching a specific audience with television advertisements is still not at the desired level (Brassington & Pettitt, 2005: 314). However, although television commercials broadcast during prime time reach more people than other times of the day, it has been revealed by various studies that people pay more attention to the content of advertisements broadcast during prime time (Kelley, Sheehan, & Jugenheimer, 2015: 149).

### ***Radio Advertising***

Radio broadcasts are accessible and attainable at any moment; radio broadcasting on mobile phones, computers, cars, and televisions. Anyone at home, workers, civil servants, and students, can effortlessly access radio broadcasts (Topsumer & Elden, 2020: 41). As a matter of the Mozart effect listening to the radio can boost the efficiency of the work since radio is mostly a background media, and doubts arise about whether advertisements are listened to (Sharp, 2013: 403). Digital analytical methods may determine which commercial, radio channel, and time-regional zone received the most ranking.

### ***Newspaper-Magazine Advertising***

In newspaper advertising, publishing must be in sections that attract the target audience's attention. For instance, advertisements for cosmetic products shall be placed as the most attractive part of the journal for related consumers, particularly women. (Topsumer & Elden, 2020: 36). Inter-generational differences and print media reading

habits of different age groups affect the reaching rate of newspaper ads. According to some researchers, young people between the ages of 13-and 19 are not interested in reading newspapers. The techniques used to encourage young people to read newspapers cannot strengthen the loose bond (Sissors & Baron, 2010: 48). While people aged 45 and over are the most loyal newspaper readers, those between 30-and 44, the most alluring group for advertisers, read fewer comparatively (Shimp & Andrews, 2013: 319).

A new product is polished on promotional activities in terms of its compelling features, and promotional activities are adequate for the experiment and purchasing. Hence, new products are predominantly promoted in newspapers, and old products are less likely to appear in newspapers (Mooradian, Matzler, & Ring, 2014: 378). Magazine offers a suitable environment for prestige-themed advertisements due to its print quality. However, since the publication periods of the magazines are long, it loses their feature of being a suitable medium for commercials on current issues (Topsumer & Elden, 2020: 37-38). After the magazines are published, they remain in such areas as at home, in hairdressers, beauty salons, and in dentists or doctors' offices. The audience reads them during their waiting periods when they visit these places (Shimp & Andrews, 2013: 322). Most magazines operate targeting areas of interest for the demographic or psychographic segments of the market. In this respect, magazines are suitable for advertisers who have targeted niche markets (Cappo, 2003: 66).

### ***Outdoor Advertising***

Outdoor advertising environments, which are the oldest advertising channels, have enabled advertisers to convey messages about their brands, companies, and products to the masses as people spend time outdoors. As is known, billboards, posters, stickers placed or drawn on the wall, illuminated, animated commercials are outdoor advertisements. These advertisements have advantages such as conveying the message desired immediately, displaying how nearby the sales points are, and directing the consumers to purchase. Such a medium is unsuitable for advertisements where long and detailed messages are transmitted (Ozdemir-Yaylaci, 1999: 178).

### ***Other Traditional Advertising Media***

Cinema, direct mailing, point of sale advertising materials (P.O.P), and fairs are among the traditional media tools. Cinema, similar to television, appeals to both the eyes and the ears, yet it may reach fewer audiences (Topsumer & Elden, 2020: 48). In the cinema, commercials are shown before or during the break. Since it is impossible to leave or change the channels in cinema, which are the weaknesses of television ads, this situation is seen as a strength (Blythe, 2006: 106). The direct mailing technique, which is materials delivery such as price lists, catalogs, sales letters, and brochures to consumers, has some advantages. Such as being selective in the target audience, directly reaching the target audience, providing detailed information, and flexible format. Besides, some disadvantages, such as its high cost, are unnoticed if the target audience is uninterested and outdated customer address information (Ozdemir-Yaylaci, 1999: 178). P.O.P has frequently been applied in supermarkets and influences consumers' purchasing behavior. P.O.P.s are in supermarkets and affect the consumer's purchasing behavior visually,

aurally, and experimentally. Media such as P.O.P are diversified, such as inserts, puppets, mannequins, and moving cards. Even though different brands resemble one another on the shelves, consumer preferences are complex, and consumers choose based on many other factors such as price, packaging, and quality. The advertisement in the sales place is supported by the personnel promoting the products, and the consumer will be affected more positively (Babacan, 2008: 248-249). Fairs are another advertisement that may attract the attention of the target audience. Materials such as multi-vision shows, catalogs, and brochures are used for advertising works at fairs. Fairs support the customization or personalization of advertising so that exhibitor information that will come to the fair may be determined in advance, and advertisements can be prepared accordingly (Tayfur, 2013: 178).

## **Post-Digitization Advertising**

### ***Digitalization and Internet Advertising***

As steam engines and electricity have profoundly affected all sociological and economic structures, so does the development of computers and the internet. The use of binary number systems and internet networks in areas, increasingly, has launched the digitalization process. Embracing digital systems instead of analog systems show the reflections in advertising. The advertising industry, which has been conducting the traditional media for ages with digitalization, started using mobile devices such as personal computers (laptops), phones, and tablets. It has shifted widespread to interact with the entire world with only one mobile device and internet connection. Recently, digitalization brought a structure from which individuals represent themselves to a virtual world with users representing individuals. Consequently, advertising in the digital environment has heightened controversy.

Television, they have transformed the media and advertising world in the 1950s. The internet had a tremendous impact on all forms of communication (Cappo, 2003: 70). The use of websites is generic for internet advertising. While institutions or individuals may use the website as an advertising tool, websites with heavy visitor traffic can likewise mature channels for different advertisements. In internet advertising, commercials are diversified as banners, pop-ups, rich media, content sponsorships, search engine ads, classifieds, advertorials, profile ads, affiliate programs, and targeted ads. Finally, electronic mail is used as an advertising tool. Internet as an advertising medium; offers many advantages such as interactivity, the use of multi-media applications, being inexpensive compared to other media, access to geographies, and reaching audiences through websites determined according to the target audience's interests. In addition to their advantages, internet advertisements also have some disadvantages as security problems and e-mails sent without permission (Elden, 2018: 263-270).

### ***New Media, Social Media, and Social Networking***

In a general view, new media is often confused with social media and social networking concepts (Penn, 2019). New media defines the platforms formed by traditional media tools' different purposes, methods, techniques, and new technological possibilities. Social media is a mechanism based on web 2.0 technology that focuses on

socializing, as the name suggests (Southren, 2013). The most popular of these are social networks. Social networking requires an internet connection based on interactions and is a system that works with a browser, program, or application. Prominent social network establishments such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter appear as practical social media tools for the number of domain users and the representation rate of official and private institutions. However, it is a delusion to deem that social networks are the only social media establishments. Concerning the new media, media possibilities are considered regardless of whether they use the internet that stands against the traditional (Valentini & Kruckeberg, 2012). This order can be organized schematically: New Media>Social Media>Social Networks.

### ***Social Media Advertising***

In social media, ads are convenient for determining the target audience's preferences, easy segmentation, and boosting efficiency accordingly to expectations and requirements. Corporations may interact with the consumers and appeal to the target audience through social media advertisements (Todi, 2008: 7). Besides its new facilities, it may be conducted as the traditional media. A message can be transferred from one point to many as one Twitter message is transmitted to its audience (followers). The audience may be impressed by opinion leaders by their profiles on blogs, podcasts, twits, and their posts, stories, video posts, and snaps so that ads can be seen. Social media usage lets corporations know consumers' behaviors on social media and product/service usage and satisfaction information. In addition, companies can encourage social networking and community building based on user-generated content. These sites also allow customers to reach the same age groups and exchange information about the product and the company (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008: 241).

Advertising on social networks consists of texts, images and photographs, videos, audio, and formats containing combinations. Each platform on social media may restrict these advertising models in different forms by various rules. E.g. while more followers or page likes can be targeted with a video ad published on Facebook, similar advertising work on Instagram - although the same company affiliates with both platforms - does not permit such targeting.

More clearly, the same ad appears with the like button on Facebook, while this button is not allowed on Instagram (Facebook, 2021). Therefore, looking at each platform separately for new advertising models is necessary. In general, it is possible to rank advertisements on social networks as follows:

- \* Image Ads
- \* Carousel Ads
- \* Product Ads
- \* Collection Ads
- \* Interactive Ads
- \* Lead Form Ads
- \* Video Ads
- \* Text Ads
- \* Others

## **Advertising, Generation, and Perception**

Many factors such as developing technology, living standards, and perspectives differentiate between generations. However, the dates and names regarding the generational classification may vary among the sources. Differences in change and development within societies affect different time intervals (Celik, 2014: 5-7). The idea of classifying people according to generations first appeared in the USA. In this context, significant changes and relations are based on the essential reference for the early classifications (Kinter, 2020). The list of the generation typical in use is as follows (Celik, 2014; Adiguzel, Batur, & Eksili, 2014; Korelciner, 2018; Toruntay, 2011; Sullivan, Forret, Carraher, & Maiminero, 2009):

- Silent Generation/ Traditional (1920-1945)
- Baby Boomers (1946-1965)
- Generation X (1966 - 1980)
- Generation Y (1981- 1994)
- Generation Z (1995-2012)
- Alpha Generation (After 2012)

A crucial requirement for the engraving advertising process is perceiving and interpreting the messages sent to the target audience. Effectiveness is beside the mark in advertising projects where the news is unattainable to the target audience. Hence, it is required to use accurate time and technological facilities to reach the desired target audience. The technology usage, culture, and language of the society in which all cohabit with the spirit of the time shape individuals' perceptions are crucial. However, regardless of the period, individuals are generally born, grow up, receive an education, and live their own lives by getting a job. However, from the perspective of consumer behavior, many definitions in the literature explain the perception. In such a definition, it is understood that perception expresses the whole process in which an individual becomes aware of the environment and interprets it following their reference frame (Walters & Bergies, 1989: 333). A person's frame of reference consists of his past experiences, beliefs, likes-dislikes, prejudices, emotions, and other psychological reactions of unknown origin. Advertising is affected by three factors covering the perception process (Solomon, 2017). Firstly is to expose and express how often the individual encounters a stimulus. The second is attention to stimuli, adversity, and more specificity. As stated in Weber's law (Todorovic, 1997), the ability of the individual to detect changes in stimulus intensity initially establishes a strong relationship. Interpretation involves taking meaning from the stimulus.

Moreover, sense-making refers to the meaning given to sensory stimuli. Individuals may perceive the equivalent experience, although their explanations may be radically distinctive. Circumstances such as experiences and conditions of contemporary time affect individuals' perceptions. The wars of the silent generation period have deeply affected consumption habits. Numerous attitudes and thoughts changed during the transition of a period when frugality was accurate to X, Y, and Z generations. Therefore,

the meanings these generations derive from advertisements differ from one another. In a general framework, each generation was born into ideal technological opportunities than its successor. Consequently, the X generation is tenderer to the messages from the traditional media, the Y generation is used to the new media opportunities and older media, and the Z generation is not missing messages on social media. Different periods induce various conditions, and that triggers another perception.

Generation X's period is a stage where developments have been experienced in many fields, particularly education, health, economy, and technology. The advertisements and consumption culture have risen to be active. In the successive Y generation period, the world began to be digitalized. The merger of computers, telephones, and the internet is when technological convergence exists. Generation Z's period is on digitalization is at its peak. Thus, digital transformations are on the agenda. Within the speed of technology, they are seen as hard-to-please, individual citizens of the world without borders.

### Methodology

Some researchers have investigated the subject of generations and advertising in the literature. In these studies, the association ads and generations are commonly examined (Ting & Run, 2012; Loroz & Helgeson, 2013; Mallalieu, Palan, & Laczniak, 2005; Harker & Wiggs, 2000). The research examines the relationship between new media and advertising in intergenerational differences. Ads are predicted to have different perception dimensions between the three known generations (X, Y, and Z). In this context, this difference was revealed with a qualitative study. *Qualitative research* is defined as "a study in which qualitative data collection techniques such as observation, interview, and document analysis are used. A qualitative process is followed to reveal perceptions and events realistically and holistically in the natural environment" (Yildirim & Simsek, 2008: 39). The obtained data results from focus group interviews are qualitative research methods. Accordingly, there shall be interaction and participation in focus groups. According to gender equality, the same amount of male and female participants has been reached. According to the purposeful sampling method, the sample group consists of 6 individuals from each generation to cover the X, Y, and Z generations. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that affects many points globally, the interviews with the sample group were conducted face-to-face following the mask, social distance, and hygiene rules. Ethics committee approval of the study was obtained before the interviews.

The sequel, digital transformation, and the new industrial revolution (Industry 4.0) reveal how advertisements on traditional and digital media tools affect individuals. According to Merriam (2015: 87), the questions in semi-structured interviews are generally flexible, and data are collected particularly from the participant. In this context, semi-structured interview questions are how the researcher can ask additional questions throughout the interview method, which starts under the questions prepared by the researcher (Karasar, 2004: 165). The data collection tool used in the study is a semi-structured interview form. In this context, open-ended questions were determined. According to these questions, the answers are recorded. The recorded data were analyzed by content analysis.



## Findings

Within the scope of the research questions, the interviews obtained from the participants (coded as X1, X2, Y1, Y2, Z1, Z2) were examined in detail using the content analysis method. As a result of the examination, three themes were reached (Table 1).

**Table 1.**  
*Themes and Subthemes*

	<b>Main Themes</b>	<b>Sub-Themes</b>
<b>Theme 1:</b>	Concerns about current circumstances:	Anxiety, Information bombardment, Screen-slavers, Privacy.
<b>Theme 2:</b>	The inconvenience of ads:	Pop-up ads, Ad duration, Blocking ads, Guerilla marketing/advertising.
<b>Theme 3:</b>	Advertising and public relations: digitalization of the profession:	Advertising design of artificial intelligence, Algorithmic background of social media ads, Empowering public relations.

### ***Theme 1: Concerns about Current Circumstances***

The expansion of the internet network exposes individuals to more information bombardment. The information flow is inevitable for individuals. There is information flow at many points, such as receiving and transmitting information, socializing, and corporate and individual affairs. This study aims to understand the perception of intergenerational advertising, hence concerns about the current circumstances obtained from the participants' thoughts on this theme. The expansion of technological possibilities has created new opportunities in advertising. Thanks to mobile devices, it has become technically effortless to reach and influence target audiences. As a product of this facilitation, new advertising models have emerged. Many new areas such as social networks, search engines, and websites have emerged where advertisements are broadcasted. Therefore, individuals who spend time on the internet are exposed to an information bombardment as traditional media advertisements were on the streets. The participants' concerns about this situation were recorded according to the findings obtained within the theme's scope.

As a result of the interviews, four sub-themes are gathered under this theme. These are anxiety, information bombardment, screen-slavers, and privacy. Below, the details of these sub-themes are as follows.

### **Anxiety**

Regarding this sub-theme, the participants from generation X stated that they were faced with a sense of anxiety in the face of new technologies.

“Well, I got to admit that I still do not know how to use these things (showing her smartphone) as you guys do. It is still quite difficult for me to adapt to it. Once I heard that, they listened to us and generated an ad accordingly. Isn’t that weird? I think it is kind of scary. When exactly do they listen? Do we know? ... No! That kills privacy.” (X1) “... I think that, too. They say it is monitoring your movements over the internet. I guess they will watch us with their guns in the future. I read 1984 by George Orwell. A big brother was watching each step of yours. Dystopian, but it is real now. God save all of us.” (X2)

Moreover, the generation Y expressed its concerns regarding this period as follows:

“First of all, I can say that these devices are up to you. If you switch it on, then it’s launching to what it got to do! There is no such device that can watch your steps before you let it. Let’s say you download an application on your phone. Do you read all the small prints, all conditions? I guess no! But when it comes to complaining about the situation you’re in, you shout! I do scare about the future because we cannot be as fast as these devices do. I feel like it reads my mind to show me an ad. However, at last, I know that if I don’t use it, they cannot track either.” (Y2)

Participants from generation Z did not express any opinion on this situation. Based on the observations during the interviews, it can be said that individuals from generation Z have no concerns about this situation. However, as can be seen, individuals from the X and Y generations express their concerns, albeit in different amounts. This circumstance relates to a consequence of their conditions and life experiences.

### **Information Bombardment**

Another state frequently expressed by the participants is constantly exposed to information bombardment due to advertisements. All participants similarly expressed this situation. Quotations for participant statements are as follows:

“... It constantly sends me a notification. For instance, I want to check the details when receiving a message. However, most friends send me a link, and I tap, showing me hour-long ads... So annoying! It’s a trap. I got hundreds of messages from firms. It is raining... Follow us, click that, and do it now! It is a trappy loop!” (X2) “Me and my wife, we love to watch a movie together. However, we could not afford Netflix, so that we found another source to watch the movie we liked. But guess what? It is full of bidding ads and slow. It stops every few seconds. Frustrating. Lots of messages, I mean thousands of... But no movie. And for somehow, ads do not go laggy.” (Y1) “I know... It is everywhere (meaning the ads). Popping up and do not let you play it. When I play PUBG-like games, this is what is happening. Send me those banners and notifications, I do not want to tap that, but it goes so sudden that I cannot escape it. It is so disturbing!” (Z2)

### **Screen-Slavers**

The thoughts that create this sub-theme were formed around the sense of participants’ mobile phones’, tablets’ and computers’ screen viewing duration. The controversial idea is that the time spent in front of the screen turns individuals into enslaved people. However, the X and Y participants directly expressed their opinion on this. Participants from generation Z stated this situation indirectly. Participant views are as follows.

“... I spent at least three hours on this. Five years ago, I did not have eyeglasses. Now, I have. Due to work conditions, we have to use all these devices. You have to; no other options. You have to be online and available 24/7. It’s contemporary slavery.” (X1). “Well, I have to admit that it was fun at the beginning. Technology and its facilities have taken me into it. But now, I feel like a dog with a leash. I feel like unleashing myself and throwing all the devices we have. But then I see a video on YouTube, and

it starts again.” (Y2) “I have to get online by 8 PM on Twitch to catch up with the followers. Till then, I got to watch tons of videos and stuff. My mom tells me that I am glued to this chair, and she resembles her childhood cows and sheep. She says that I tied down on my computer just like her village’s sheep.” (Z1)

### ***Privacy***

Privacy is generally a sensitive subject protected by law in most countries. Individuals mind privacy and avoid sharing their private information. Consequently, accumulating methods personal info throughout the process, when advertisements aired on mobile phones encounter the participants disturbs, particularly the participants from the X and Y generations. Participants from generation Z express no opinion on this situation.

“... They are listening to us... I am sure about it. Because when we talk about cars, the car ads are on my Facebook page. I read about it, as well. Some source says your smartphones are listening to you. No secret anymore! No private life! I do not care, but still unacceptable.” (X1) “Hopefully, there will be a strict law on this situation. Privacy has left the town ages ago. Being a member of any Facebook application kills your privacy. They collect any information of yours and sell it. It has been uncovered already. They sell those big data to the firms and use them to promote. Public relationist does this the most, I guess.” (Y2)

### ***Theme 2: The Inconvenience of Ads***

Ad models differ according to numerous different factors. For instance, ads can be grouped into three main groups for advertisers. These; are manufacturer advertisement, intermediary advertisement, and service business advertisement. In terms of the target market, it is divided into consumer, commercial and corporate. These examples can be more than that, product advertising, corporate advertising, direct-indirect advertising, emotional, thematic, personal, and collective. Regardless of the advertisement types, factors such as the ad’s location, the presentation style and the level of interest, the advertising message, and the interest status of the target audiences are efficient. During the interviews, the inconvenience of the ads is emphasized, along with triggering concerns about the current situation.

### ***Pop-up Ads***

First, the participants expressed their discomfort with the sudden appearance of the advertisements. Pop-up is an ad type that appears abruptly while seeking different content and negatively affects the comfort in technology use.

“... The most annoying side of these ads in websites they are popping up on you. So disturbing!” (X2) “I am using adblocker to avoid the ads. I had to. Because all of a sudden, you watch a commercial that comes out of nowhere, and most of them are out of the concept of the website. A bidding ad bumps up on a movie collection website... What is the connection?” (Y1) “I hate them. Adblockers are not working properly. And sometimes administrator of the website blocks the content you want to see if you use it.” (Z1)

### ***Ad Duration***

The duration of the ads was stated as an inconvenience element. Another disturbing aspect of unexpected advertisements is the duration. Durations affect the effectiveness of advertising messages. Therefore, correct timing is an indispensable condition for advertising. Participant views are as follows.

“... and I tap, and it shows me hour-long ads... So annoying! It’s a trap. I got hundreds of messages from firms. It is raining... Follow us, click that, and do now! It is a trappy loop!” (X2) “Those ads that have longer duration is so distracting me! No exception...” (Y1) “If you do not have a premium account, try listening to music list on YouTube. There are some Indian commercials, I do not know why they do show me that. Some of them take more than an hour-long...” (Z1)

### ***Blocking Ads***

Some ads can block the action. It is unaffiliated with adblockers that prevent from displaying the ads. This method, applied as lead advertising on social networks, embeds a survey, form, or transaction. Advertising continues to be displayed before this process is completed or closed. Participants expressed that they are also disturbed by such advertisements.

“You see a photo, and it is interesting. When you tap it to enlarge the view, you see a form in front of you...” (X2). “Lead ads, I know the name because we use it where I work, too. However, I do not like them; I know they have to use them to receive potential customers. Probably, our customer does not like our lead ads either...” (Y1). “I know that some of them are being offered if you want to make some purchase of that item. But some ads block you from seeing the content for a few minutes. So, you wait...” (Z1)

### ***Guerrilla Marketing/Advertising***

Guerrilla marketing or advertising refers to marketing and advertising campaigns implemented with unusual tactics and in unexpected places and at times. This type of advertisement receives attention to the message at once. It is used in both marketing and advertising activities. Among the participants, only generation Z expressed their discomfort regarding this situation.

“This can happen anywhere, anytime. When you visit a place, a message comes to your phone. When you view the message by mistakenly, it shows you long ads. It can be interesting for some but me, not even...” (Z1). “I like to watch the Flash mob but live it. I was waiting for the next train... And all of a sudden, a sound of music, dancing people around. I think that was cola ads or something. Did not wait until the end.” (Z2)

## ***Theme 3: Advertising and Public Relations: Digitalization of the Profession***

### ***Advertising Design of Artificial Intelligence***

Technology and digital transformation may cause a change in the field of advertising. Social network platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram use artificial intelligence to manage the advertisements (such as the business/content manager of Facebook). Firms such as Netflix and Google have additionally associated artificial intelligence and advertising. For instance, on Netflix, all the movie thumbnails are created by artificial intelligence. In this way, advertisements that appeal to the end consumer can be prepared in a much shorter time. Research participants stated that they were aware of such situations as follows.

“Ads are done by computer at this age. We all know that. I read an article ago that says computers and automatic programs create ads. Thus, I can say advertising as a vocation will disappear just like bank tellers in the past.” (X1) “All I can say is that all today’s professions will transform or be gone. Advertisers will also be transformed... Because ads are done by artificial intelligence already. Not only is it being created by them, but they are also deciding when, who, how... I mean how to represent it, where to put when to air the ad...” (Y2). “Well, I can say that I use some of them for my Twitch account. There

is a website you can create inexistent images before using them in your ad's thumbnail. For example, you tell the machine that you want a background of PUBG, and your pictures inside with the title of 'I hit the record!' and the machine creates a brand-new picture. It does not exist anywhere. The algorithm has thousands of pictures and uses them to create unique ones! ..." (Z1)

### ***Algorithmic Background of Social Media Ads***

Social media advertising system serves the ads to users through algorithms. Users are registered in the system with their demographic information, hobbies, and interests. The system uses the traffic, personal, and demographic information on social media to present a relevant advertisement to users. For instance, the social network algorithm displays second-hand sports car ads to a user who has recorded sports as a hobby in his profile and often visits second-hand car pages. Participants expressed their awareness regarding this as follows.

"I know that computers manage social media ads. Those computers can understand what you said. Like Siri! So, I am pretty sure that they are listening to us... I am sure about it. Because when we talk about cars, the car ads are on my Facebook page. I read about it, as well. Some source says your smartphones are listening to you. No secret anymore! No private life! I do not care, but still unacceptable." (X1) "If you follow up a page on clothing or fashion, the machine will display all the other alternatives for you. Just like Instagram's discovery tab." (Y2) "Sure, there is the artificial intelligence behind them. Otherwise, you cannot manage all these pieces of information. Billions of petabytes are being recorded each day. So..." (Z1)

### ***Empowering Public Relations***

The fact that advertising is affected by technological developments and can operate with fewer people makes the future existence of the profession questionable. However, there is no in-depth study on this subject yet. According to the participants, advertising will be abandoned. Thus, findings on the future of the advertising profession are obtained. Advertising will be transferred to robots and artificial intelligence, and instead, public relations professionals will advance to a higher level of position. Participant expressions for this are as follows.

"I think public relations will be more popular because people will need a more human-based system to communicate when robots surround us. Advertising and marketing may face automation soon. I mean, I am not an expert, just thinking..." (X1) "I think that future will be just like in the movie 'Back to the future.' In 2015, we passed the time that they come as 'future time,' and all the inventions in the movie were already invented back then. So, I can say that advertising will be a robot job, or maybe it will not be a physical robot. Just a bunch of code in the system. Communication and relationship management will be more important. Between companies and the customers will require to build up a relationship" (Y2). "I cannot say this will happen from now on. But I can say that the firms who use the relationship more than advertising will win." (Z2)

### **Conclusion**

This study determines the effects of advertisements on X, Y, and Z generations. According to the findings, X, Y, and Z generations are more highly influenced by new media advertisements than traditional media. The advertising perception of the X and Y generations is more noteworthy than the Z generation regarding the practices such as discount, product variety, reasonable price, and being influenced. It differs in terms of communication compared to new channels and traditional channels. In older media, messages are transmitted from one source to many people. The audience is passive in traditional media and has no control over information flow.

In contrast, communication in new media is bidirectional. With Web 2.0 technology, users can leave feedback on the information accessed. Therefore, the communication process is completed when the message is notified from the source to the receiver and then from the receiver to the original (Munsch, 2021; Topsumer & Elden, 2020; Elden, 2018; Ozdemir-Yaylaci, 1999). Likewise, the findings support this situation, and it is reflected in the advertising perceptions of the generations. For instance, the advertising perception of a person born in the 1960s and 1980s is not equal. In the light of past experiences, those two generations will be unaffected similarly by advertisements.

On the other hand, participants from generation Z are extra influenced by ads. This generation had not experienced the times when traditional advertising methods were more widespread. As is known, generation Z is more susceptible to technology compared to other predecessor periods. Therefore, it is plausible for them to interact deeper with technology. Their preference for the digital version of everything instead of printed media can be considered a result of this condition. Generation Z can obtain information more conveniently from channels, such as virtual books, newspapers, and magazines. Communication, socializing, shopping, and monetizing through social networks are prevalent. Therefore, generation Z is exposed to the advertisements shown on these channels and may be affected by them.

This result regarding generation Z is related to the first theme. It is concluded that exposure to emotional messages in advertisements affects the perception levels of the X and Y generations more than the Z generations. According to the themes, the Y and Z generations were more affected by the humorous structure in new media ads than ads with unusual and innovative ideas. In fact, according to some researchers, advertising activities that contain entertaining, extraordinary, and inventive-intellectual content change the advertising perceptions of X and Y generations more (Demirtas, 2020; Cepni-Sener & Ugurhan, 2019). This finding may be qualitatively significant or absurd according to the age ranges of the Y and Z generations rather than the X generation. The results support entertaining, surprising, and innovative ideas as effective digital communication and advertising components. Traditional channels' limits of space and time have disappeared in new media (Becan, 2013: 28). In a magazine or television advertisement, the editor organizes the content. Individuals lack the opportunity to reach the advertiser instantly by writing comments on these channels. However, the corresponding ad is broadcast over the new media, and the consumer may immediately share their thoughts via e-mail.

Nevertheless, they can comment on the ads where it has been shared. Through these shares, consumers may satisfy their curiosity and feedback on ads or products/services. Besides, the advertiser can respond to those comments made. However, consumers are

exposed to advertising for a limited time and in traditional advertising media. Larger equipment and investments are required for these channels. These devices are not portable. However, consumers can be reached 24/7 via mobile devices, and time and place limitations are eliminated. Another issue that concerns the X, Y, and Z generations is the length of the advertising message. Long messages are distracting, while shorts are more straightforward to detect.

Additionally, because the advertisement shall be attractive, the duration of the ad can also be considered by the Y generation. Similarly, the X generation is undesired excessive time on advertising durations. The 15-second requests for ad duration are led by the sites' ad skip times containing visual content. In the childhood and youth of the X generation, the access restriction and financial difficulties of the traditional advertising structure affected the effectiveness of the advertisement. It was insufficient to mobilize these masses. Ads are associated with the perception and attractiveness of the advertisements. These elements create selectivity in the advertising perception of all generations, especially the Z generation. Due to habits dating back to when radio was widespread, popular music, jingles, humorous language, and fame usage in ads affect the perception and memorability. Generation Z is more vulnerable to advertisements than X and Y generations regarding ad perception level. Generation X asserts that ads are pragmatic and manipulative of the feelings and thoughts of society. Generation Z generally prefers advertisements from influencers that provide information and internet resources. Thus, they consent to ads for both information and entertainment purposes.

On the other hand, generation Y prefers their groups on social media and the pages they follow accordingly. Contrarily, generation X applied to new channels when needed and acted by being affected by incoming messages. It has been observed that generation Z generally uses digital life as an entertainment element, such as shopping limitless, using social media for information, following campaigns, and contributing to language development with the help of foreign TV series and movies. Generation X participants stated that they use digital media for socializing purposes and advertisements of digital broadcasts according to their interests and needs or recommend them to their relatives. As a result, the X, Y, and Z generations prefer their contemporaries' communication gadgets following personal interests instead of the traditional understanding. Generally, a one-way flow of information is provided. The effortless accessibility, low cost, and identification of the target audience provided by the advertisements of the new generation communication channels enable the general interest to shift towards social media. It brings convenience to users' lives when encountering advertisements related to exciting products. In addition to its advantages, pop-up and banner ads occupy space in the site content, ads that are irrelevant to the user profile, and click-bait ads prompt users to exhibit an adverse perception of the ad.

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