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VIRTUAL VS REAL: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON CGI AND GUERRILLA ADS

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Araştırma Makalesi

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Abstract

This qualitative research explores the dynamic relationships between artificial intelligence (AI) and digitalization in the advertising industry. Rapid improvements in digital technologies have transformed advertisement design, positioning AI as a major revolution in the advertising industry. AI enables companies to analyze big data to reveal customers' demographic attributes and create customized ads that meet their expectations. Such attempts are known as data colonialism, yet CGI ads (computer-generated imagery) have proven more effective than non-digital ads. This qualitative research explores intergenerational perceptions of the effectiveness and emotional impact of The North Face's CGI ads compared to its guerrilla ads. Two CGI and two guerrilla ads were selected and analyzed through qualitative content analysis. To enrich and reinforce findings, a focus group research has been conducted. Consumers' reactions toward the chosen advertisements were examined based on cognitive and affective advertising models. Findings confirmed that CGI ads were more effective, compelling and understandable. Y and Z-generations also claimed that CGI ads enhanced consumer engagement with products, encouraged them to share their emotions on social media, and tailored their perceptions positively towards the products staying longer in customers' minds.

Keywords: Digital Era, CGI Ads, Guerrilla Ads, Artificial Intelligence, North Face.

SANAL VE GERÇEK: CGI VE GERİLLA REKLAMLAR ÜZERİNE KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR ÇALIŞMA

Öz

Bu nitel araştırma, reklam endüstrisinde yapay zeka (AI) ile dijitalleşme arasındaki sürekli değişen etkileşimleri araştırmaktadır. Dijital teknolojilerdeki hızlı gelişmeler, yapay zekayı reklam endüstrisinde büyük bir devrim olarak sunarak reklam tasarlamanın doğasını değiştirmiştir. Yapay zeka, şirketlerin büyük verileri analiz ederek müşterilerin demografik özelliklerini ortaya çıkarmasına ve müşterilerin beklentilerini karşılayacak şekilde özelleştirilmiş reklamlar tasarlamasına olanak tanımaktadır. Bu tür girişimler veri sömürgeciliği olarak adlandırılsa da, yine de, CGI reklamlarının (bilgisayar tarafından oluşturulan görüntüler) kullanımının dijital olmayan reklamlardan daha etkili olduğu kanıtlanmıştır. Bu nitel araştırma, The North Face'in CGI reklamlarının gerilla reklamlarıyla karşılaştırıldığında tüketiciler üzerindeki etkililiği ve duygusal etkisine ilişkin nesiller arası algıları araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. İki CGI ve iki gerilla reklamı seçilmiş ve içerik analizi yoluyla analiz edilmiştir. Bulguları zenginleştirmek ve güçlendirmek için bir odak grup araştırması yapılmıştır. Tüketicilerin seçilen reklamlara yönelik tepkileri, reklamın bilişsel ve duygusal modellerine göre incelenmiştir. Bulgular, CGI reklamlarının daha etkili, ilgi çekici ve anlaşılır olduğunu doğruladı. Y ve Z kuşakları ayrıca CGI reklamlarının tüketicinin ürünlerle etkileşimini artırdığını, katılımcıların reklam ile ilgili duygularını sosyal medyada paylaşmaya teşvik ettiğini ve ürünlerin müşterilerin akıllarında daha uzun süre kalmasına yönelik olumlu anlamda şekillendirdiğini doğruladı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijital Çağ, CGI Reklamları, Gerilla Reklamları, Yapay Zeka, North Face.

Extended Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) and digitalization have renewed the advertising industry with innovative tools like computer-generated imagery (CGI) and advanced AI-driven digital tools. Such alterations also enhanced consumer engagement and satisfaction, which in turn, attracted consumers to purchase products more easily. This comparative study explores the effectiveness of CGI ads and guerrilla ads in terms of cognitive and emotional impact, with a specific focus on The North Face's advertising campaigns. The study also discovers generational variances in consumer perceptions, mainly among Generation Y and Generation Z audiences. Generational distinctions highlight the need for advertisers to customize their strategies to meet the specific preferences of each cohort. For Generation Y, combining tangible, real-world experiences with digital elements could effectively address their dual exposure to traditional and modern media. On the other hand, concentrating on visually captivating, easily shareable and digitally accessible CGI advertisements better engage Generation Z and enhance brand retention. Recognizing these differences enables advertisers to design campaigns that not only grasp attention but also construct a deeper connection with their potential audiences. These connections lead to more effective and persuasive advertising outcomes. Moreover, AI's competencies in data analysis empower companies to modify advertisements to consumer preferences such as designing more personalized and impactful ads.

CGI was initially used for cinematic visuals but now it is being used to generate visually striking digital ads that captivate audiences easier and faster. Conversely, guerrilla advertising relies more on unconventional physical installations to surprise and engage consumers in real-world settings. Hence, the research aims to evaluate the advantages and limitations of guerrilla and CGI advertising in terms of consumer engagement, brand recall, and emotional meanings. A qualitative methodology was employed, utilizing thematic and content analyses on four North Face advertisements: two CGI and two guerrilla. Focus group discussions with Generation Y and Generation Z participants provided insights into their preferences and emotional reactions. The cognitive and affective frameworks of advertising were used to assess how these ads inform and emotionally engage consumers. Findings revealed that CGI ads were more effective in generating excitement and curiosity, utilizing elements like virtual displays on iconic landmarks (e.g., Big Ben and the Empire State Building). It was proved by the research that CGI ads evoked a "wow effect," making them memorable and shareable on digital platforms, mostly among Generation Z audiences. Additionally, immersive street setups in guerrilla ads were appreciated by Generation Y participants only for their creativity and physical engagement. The study also highlighted that guerrilla ads were limited in reaching broader audiences compared to CGI ads.

Generational differences were prominent in the research. For example, Gen Z preferred CGI ads for their innovative and shareable nature, aligning with their digital consumption habits, while Gen Y valued the physical and memorable aspects of guerrilla campaigns. Despite these preferences, both generations recognized CGI's superior ability to enhance consumer engagement and brand recall. The study further highlights the growing dominance of CGI in advertising due to its effectiveness in engaging modern and digitally oriented consumers. However, it also identifies challenges, including high production costs and ethical concerns related to data privacy and sustainability.

Consequently, when considering intergenerational distinctions among generations Y and Z, it is evident that these groups spend a significant portion of their time engaging with digital tools. In today's digital-oriented world, individuals are less likely to encounter traditional outdoor advertisements and are instead exposed to digital ads on their mobile devices. For companies aiming to reach this demographic, CGI advertisements are memorable and offer more precise targeting. As the study indicates, leveraging creative CGI ads is a more effective business advertising strategy. Nevertheless, it is vital to recognize varying preferences among different segments of the audience, as some consumers still value alternative forms of advertising, such as guerrilla advertising.

INTRODUCTION

Ever-changing technologies led to the integration of Artificial Intelligence into the advertising industry (Arbaiza et al., 2024). Such developments underline a dramatic shift in how businesses contact their customers. The interactions among artificial intelligence (AI) platforms and digitalization in general allow companies to better communicate with their customers at a maximum level (Abdelmissih, 2023). The digital era puts forward new technological tools such as AI to revolutionize the global advertising industry (Camilleri, 2023). AI-related improvements are proven to assist companies in analyzing big data to reveal demographic attributes of their customers to further design customized ads that in turn meet the expectations of their customers (Collier et al., 2020). However, the term "data colonialism" become a major discussion topic that concerns the unauthorized utilization of data obtained from the customers (Feng & Chen, 2022). The issue highlights data security, emphasizing that customers trust the company with their personal information, which is guaranteed to remain confidential and not shared externally.

Al's incorporation into advertising alters how businesses communicate with their clients and augments simultaneous interactions, permitting a more directed and efficient method (Hanna, 2023). Al-generated data offers companies deep insights into consumer behavior, preferences, and demographics, enabling highly personalized and impactful ads. Based on Collier et al., (2020), such opportunities not only advance the success of advertising activities but further improve consumer gratification by

providing content that aligns with consumers' desires. He et al., (2024) argued that growing reliance on customer data raises ethical concerns. Arbaiza et al., (2024) asserted that the data security gaps weaken customer trust and elevate comprehensive concerns regarding the ethical dimension of employing AI as part of advertising. Although ethical concerns of operating AI in the advertising industry continue to be discussed, AI platforms are still reshaping the advertising landscape anticipating consumer profiles before designing advertising campaigns (Hanna, 2023). According to Abdelmissih (2023), the explanatory abilities of AI guide corporations to primarily obtain recent developments, potentials and proactively find solutions. The rising complexity of AI in making sense of consumer intent leads to questions concerning the personalized accommodation of products or services (Camilleri, 2023). Since advertisements are increasingly designed by personal preferences, the elements of personalization and specific targeting become significant in AI-generated ads (He et al., 2024). Yet, businesses need to carefully manage personalization and targeting in terms of avoiding manipulation and data colonialism (Feng & Chen, 2022).

Given this, the research explores a major paradigm shift in global advertising, focusing on CGI advertising and its impact on consumer engagement and brand perception. CGI digitally creates visuals and effects, initially used in cinema to blend digital elements with real footage (Abdou, 2024). CGI is now being adopted in advertising to enhance visual quality with AI-driven imagery. Aligning with the research aims, North Face ads were selected for their innovative advertising approach. North Face is a pioneer in CGI advertising, receiving global praise. Thus, this study examines and compares its CGI and guerrilla ads to analyze consumer reactions using cognitive and affective models. The cognitive domain allows audiences to perceive and comprehend ads at the cognitive level (Zahid et al., 2022). Audiences' memory, thinking abilities, criticizing skills and reasoning activities encompass the basis of the cognitive domain. In the cognitive domain, informative elements such as logos, slogans and collaboration information are used to capture attention and inform the audience concerning the products or services to be advertised (Kuo et al., 2023). On the other hand, the affective domain attempts to communicate with consumers' emotions to evoke sentiments towards the advertisement. Zahid et al., (2022) claimed that the affective domain tries to activate and navigate the emotional side of audiences by using surprise effects, excitement, comedy, drama, etc. In this context, two guerrilla and two CGI ads from North Face were analyzed to assess their effectiveness in enhancing consumer experience and engagement, fostering emotional responses on social media, shaping positive brand perceptions, and ensuring lasting memorability. Additionally, this study aims to investigate intergenerational (Y and Z-generations) distinctions in terms of the aforementioned categories. Guerrilla advertising is one of the most marginal and unusual advertising types that aims to surprise the audience with unconventional and unique elements to evoke attention toward the campaign (Ouf, 2023).

1. Literature Review

1.1. Evolving Advertising Landscape in the Digital Age

In today's social structure, consumption is the driving force of the system. This system operates through an interconnected chain linking producers, products, intermediary organizations, and consumers. To reach consumers effectively, producers must utilize multiple channels. With technological advancements, consumer expectations and demands have evolved, fundamentally transforming marketing methods, message delivery platforms, and content formats. Advertising plays a crucial role in this transformation, as it bridges the gap between brands and consumers. According to Ayaz (2023), the formal characteristics of advertising require strategic reorganization to align with new media platforms, where consumers increasingly engage with advertisements. This restructuring aims to establish an interactive communication framework, enhancing consumer engagement and product interaction.

Traditional media tools such as newspapers, radio, and television have played a significant role in shaping advertising. However, the technological revolution introduced digital advertising, shifting media platforms into digital formats. Digital advertising offers advantages such as precise targeting, higher engagement, and real-time interaction (Şahinci, 2021). Among the most widely used digital advertisements are banner ads, which first appeared in 1994, marking a turning point in digital advertising (Ha, 2008). Banner ads create awareness by exposing consumers to specific messages and persuading them to take action (Kafadar et al., 2023). Subsequently, email advertising emerged as an early form of online digital marketing (Gedik, 2020).

As technology progressed, new advertising spaces were developed, with search engine advertising becoming a dominant approach, allowing marketers to reach consumers in a non-intrusive manner (Al Tamer, 2020).

Mobile phones dominate communication, making mobile advertising a key strategy. Emerging two decades ago, it enhances brand recognition, personalization, purchase intent, and perceived value via branded apps (Talha et al., 2024). Social media platforms have become key communication and advertising channels, offering interactivity, positive word-of-mouth, and targeted ads through sponsored content for greater effectiveness (Al Tamer, 2020). According to Yang et al., (2023), global social media advertising spending is expected to reach approximately 357.92 billion USD by 2026.

The digital transformation of media has driven advertising into digital formats, merging traditional and digital platforms. AI-driven advertising enhances consumer-centric strategies by analyzing big data, providing deeper insights into consumer behavior, interests, and needs (Rodgers, 2021). By providing personalized content and targeted messages, AI enhances consumer experiences (Vashishth et al., 2024). AI-powered advertising not only promotes products but also supports a value-creation process driven by consumer demands. When combined with a consumer-centric approach, AI strengthens brand-consumer relationships and increases advertising effectiveness (Kumar et al., 2024).

1.2. Digitalizing Consumers' Perceptions

Conventional advertising approaches alone are no longer satisfactory due to the changing perceptions. The digital revolution offers fresh ideas in advertising and facilitates reaching a wider audience (Mosa, 2021). The changing perception in advertising necessitates putting the consumer at the center of promotion and branding efforts. The usage of digital marketing, social media management, content marketing and influencer marketing support companies to interact with customers more personally (Ahlluwalia & Singh, 2020). Digital-oriented or AI-oriented advertising enables companies to reinforce their branding processes by generating striking and memorable content on digital platforms (Aiolfi et al., 2021). Meaning creation in

advertising has become crucial in the digital era because digital natives are more aware of the content, message, and function of the brand (Nekmahmud et al., 2022). When individuals activate the decision-making mechanism, stimuli run through information processing stages to make sense of the advertised product (Ahlluwalia & Singh, 2020). Ad interpretation varies by individual, as perception is shaped by biases, expectations, needs, and past experiences.

Digital consumers develop complex advertising perceptions shaped by their interactions with technology. According to Cochoy et al., (2020), digital ads allow for personalized content that meets consumer needs, fostering positive and sincere brand perceptions (Horáková et al., 2022). People often form beliefs and expectations before purchasing. For example, Gen Z values transparency, practicality, and sensitivity in ads. Research (Aiolfi et al., 2021) confirms that digital natives respond more positively to socially conscious advertising. Therefore, advertisers need to build a positive image regarding the brand so consumers develop positive perceptions. Advertisers or producers must also align with younger generations' expectations to generate valuable advertisements that meet their perceptions (Güngör & Çadırcı, 2022). Thus, their constructive perception of a brand leads to emotional attachment and satisfaction.

Positive consumer perceptions can be interpreted that your clients trust your values and believe your company is gratifying their needs. If companies can reserve this positive perception, they can return their customers to purchase more. As asserted by Horáková et al., (2022), indicators such as customer gratification, the probability of recommending the product/service and the possibility to purchase it, might dramatically influence clients' perception. Moreover, positive perception is directly related to consumers' former experiences and also regulates their future interactions with brands (Kini et al., 2023). Positive individual experiences can impact others' opinions about the brand and initiate a wider transformation in perceptions of the masses as well. If customers had a satisfactory experience with products or services, they probably advocate the brand through word of mouth which further contributes to altering public perception regarding the brand at the maximum level (Tzoulia, 2021). Parameters such as online reviews written about brands, promotion activities and digital engagement of a brand, customer rating schemas, customer support services and speed

in addressing customers' issues are vital in terms of shaping and guiding customer perceptions (Cochoy et al., 2020).

1.3. Cognitive and Affective Framework of Advertising

The impact of advertising on consumers has been studied since the 1800s, making it a central focus for professionals and researchers in marketing. Over time, various theories and models have been developed to explain how advertising shapes individual and societal behaviors and how consumers react to advertisements. The primary objective of advertising is to persuade consumers to purchase a promoted product or service through strategically crafted messages. Advertising efforts include building brand awareness, highlighting product benefits, and evoking positive emotions toward the brand (Özsoy, 2015).

According to Lavidge and Steiner (1961), advertising does not immediately drive consumers to make purchases; instead, it follows a structured process consisting of multiple stages. Belch and Belch (2001) categorize these sequential processes into four key models: Traditional and Alternative Response Hierarchy Models, the Integrated Information Response Model, and the Cognitive Response Approach (İnam, 2002).

Among the traditional Hierarchy of Response Models, the most widely recognized are AIDA, DAGMAR, and the Hierarchy of Effects Model. These models share commonalities in their sequential approach to consumer behavior. The AIDA model represents the four stages a consumer undergoes: Awareness, Interest, Desire, and Action. According to this model, consumers first become aware of a product, develop an interest, form a desire, and ultimately take action to purchase it.

Colley (1961) emphasized that the most critical measure of an advertisement's success is its impact on sales (Clark et al., 1994). The DAGMAR model builds upon this idea, asserting that advertising effectiveness should be assessed based on communication spectrum targets. This spectrum consists of Awareness, Understanding, Persuasion, and Behavior. Unlike AIDA, DAGMAR highlights the significance of

cognitive engagement and persuasion, emphasizing that awareness and emotional factors play crucial roles in influencing consumer behavior (Belch & Belch, 2001).

Lavidge and Steiner's Hierarchy of Effects Model further elaborates on the consumer decision-making process, illustrating how advertising influences individuals through a series of stages, from awareness to purchase. They argue that advertising does not produce immediate results; rather, consumers must sequentially progress through each stage for the advertisement to effectively drive purchasing behavior (Belch & Belch, 2001, p. 149).

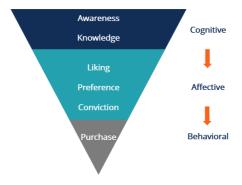


Figure 1: Hierarchy of Effects Model **Source:** Lavidge and Steiner, (1961, p.61).

This model comprises three psychological processes: cognitive, affective, and behavioral (Lavidge & Steiner, 1969, p. 4). The cognitive process is intellectual, logical, and rational, the affective process involves emotions, and the behavioral process stimulates desire, motivation, and action. Cognitive message strategies create a positive impact on consumers' beliefs and knowledge, while affective strategies evoke emotions to enhance product likability (Duffett, 2020). Some studies analyze advertising's influence by focusing on one component- cognitive, affective, or conative (Kuang et al., 2024), while others examine multiple components together (Čvirik, 2020).

The cognitive aspect of advertising is rational, emphasizing message clarity, information processing, attention-grabbing features, and perception. Visual elements

play a key role; for instance, a brand's logo enhances recognition and recall (Henderson & Cote, 1998). Its color, design, and simplicity quickly convey the brand's message and establish a mental connection. Similarly, slogans encapsulate a brand's values and promises in a concise, memorable way, reinforcing brand recall and influencing consumer decisions (Keller, 2013). The affective component pertains to emotions. Both visual and auditory elements shape consumer reactions. These elements create lasting impressions and strengthen consumer-brand connections (Vrtana & Krizanova, 2023).

1.4. Emerging Technologies in Advertising

The advertising sector has experienced a remarkable transformation with the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI), evolving from human-centered approaches to automated procedures generated by AI (Garganas, 2024). Originally, advertising depended on human intelligence (HI) to create concepts and narratives to recognize consumers' needs (Kini et al., 2023). Such advertising processes should be embedded in creativity, sensitivity, and sociocultural dimensions to capture human attention (Araujo et al., 2020). Traditional advertising approaches have been improved by digital innovations by having immediate feedback, personalized ads and interactive layouts. Nonetheless, the advertising landscape has been altered as AI tools allow AI-generated production, hyper-customized designs and predictive analytics when creating ads (Araujo et al., 2020). Novelties in modern technology lead to an innovative era of AI-driven advertising (content, sound and visual creation) and rapid data exploration, underlining highly personalized advertising (Sifaoui & Segijn, 2024).

AI has revolutionized ad targeting by enabling brands to deliver highly personalized messaging (Franke et al., 2023). AI algorithms analyze consumer data to predict behaviors, expectations, and preferences, creating ads that resonate on a personal level (Taşkıran & Doğan, 2024). Prognostic analytics augment AI's aptitudes to predict trends and customer behaviors, which equips advertisers with an influential instrument for proactive advertising/marketing (Mosa, 2021). AI-driven mechanization has started to work in the creative domain as well, where certain AI platforms produce visuals or videos used in advertisement campaigns (Garganas, 2024). This computerization modernizes ad creation processes enabling personalized ads while human-driven methods are lacking in reaching that level in ad construction.

Regardless of the notable proficiencies of AI, human intelligence (HI) in advertising is still needed, predominantly in creativity, emotional intelligence (EI), and moral principles (Segijn & Strycharz, 2022). Even though AI creates perfect ads, human creativity allows ad concepts to reach a profound emotional level, which is hard for AI to imitate because AI relies on pre-defined and relevant data. Therefore, people can pass on cultural understanding to ads with social values, guaranteeing that ad content communicates properly across diverse audiences. HI takes a vital role in upholding ethical standards, particularly as AI's practice of personal data increases concerns regarding customer privacy and ethical values (Segijn & Strycharz, 2022). Hence, human judgments are invaluable in guiding AI operations to generate responsible and sensitive advertising campaigns.

The evolving advertising landscape calls for hybrid techniques integrating AI and human intelligence (HI). Future innovations may enhance AI's ability to incorporate creativity, empathy, and collaboration in campaigns (Chu & Seock, 2020). With digitalization, traditional media like print, TV, radio, and billboards have declined in use. So, traditional advertising platforms and techniques seem to have lost their influence over digitalized societies. Nevertheless, the escalation of digital technologies has been accompanied by novel tactics highlighting personalization, feedback, and data-based analyses (Franke et al., 2023). Social media platforms, AI-oriented advertising, influencer collaborations and advanced technologies such as augmented reality (AR) assist brands in communicating with consumers at a personalized level (Nekmahmud et al., 2022). Traditional approaches try to build trust and enduring visibility while digital-driven methods aim to reach customers rapidly and enhance their engagements with the product establishing consumer-brand interactions (Chu & Seock, 2020). Hence, effective advertising in the digital era must blend traditional methods with AI innovation to keep up with the changing advertising industry. Ongoing advancements in advertising enable professionals to adapt innovative and tech-oriented solutions such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR). The combination of such platforms with already existing advertising strategies enhances consumers' experiences and develops brand-customer relationships (Tzoulia, 2021).

2. Research Methodology

Qualitative research allows researchers to collect people's opinions and attitudes toward the issue to be studied (Mayring, 2015). Qualitative research frequently answers how and why questions. Thematic Analysis facilitates seeking and detecting common themes and meanings within a material selected to study (Archibald et al., 2015). Given all, a thematic analysis under qualitative research was carried out on four advertisements shared by The North Face: two CGI and two guerrilla. The study was drawn from the cognitive and affective frameworks of advertising to evaluate consumer reactions toward the ads. Consequently, the data-gathering process was twofold: a focus group (thematic analysis on transcribed data) and qualitative content analysis. In this regard, focus group interviews can be explained as discussions conducted with small participant groups under the guidance of a researcher (moderator), to identify participants' views on a topic that concerns all members of the group (Doğanay et al., 2012). A focus group study was conducted with twelve Turkish and Turkish Cypriot participants (6 Gen Y and 6 Gen Z) who work or study in the faculty of communication and media studies, at Eastern Mediterranean University, to obtain deep and comparative data regarding CGI advertising and the guerrilla advertising of North Face Company. The sample of the study was composed of the major state universities in North Cyprus, Eastern Mediterranean University. As soon as the ethics form was obtained from the ethics committee, a focus group study was carried out with students and faculty members working/studying in the faculty of communication and media studies from Y and Z generations. Guerrilla and CGI advertisements were first shown to the participants, and then a discussion environment was created, starting with warm-up questions. The second step was conducting a thematic analysis of the transcribed document to make sense of the participants' data. The third step was implementing a qualitative content analysis of ads (both CGI and guerrilla) to categorize findings based on the cognitive and affective frameworks model of advertising. Qualitative content analysis focuses on the examination of the content of any recorded form of communication. This may include various types of written texts, such as books and journals, as well as verbal expressions conveyed through writing. Additionally, visual elements such as television programs and advertisements can also be subjected to content analysis (Gül & Nizam, 2020). Content analysis can be conducted using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Qualitative content

analysis takes an inductive, interpretative approach, aiming to uncover underlying concepts and their relationships through coding (Sahin et al., 2023). Hence, the primary objective of content analysis is to uncover implicit elements that are not immediately apparent or easily perceived at first glance, rather than focusing solely on readily noticeable and easily comprehensible components (Metin & Ünal, 2022). In this context, the codes prepared for qualitative content analysis are illustrated in the table below.

Category	Code	Definition/Criteria	
Ad Type	CGI or Guerrilla	Type of advertisement based on medium and style (digital/virtual vs. physical/real).	
Comitive	Clarity of Message	Clear and concise presentation of information, including logos, slogans, collaborations and text.	
Cognitive Domain	Attention-Grabbing Features	Unique elements that capture initial attention (e.g., surprising visuals).	
	Memory and Recall	Ease of remembering the ad or brand after exposure.	
	Emotional Impact	The emotions evoked by the ad (e.g., excitement, curiosity, surprise, "wow effect").	
Affective Domain	Engagement and Interaction	Ability to provoke social media shares, discussions, or actions. Strong immediate reaction or lasting impression upon viewing the ad.	
Generational Perceptions	Preferences	Differences in engagement and reception between Gen Y and Gen Z.	
Behavioral Impact	Social Sharing	Encouragement to share or promote the ad on social media (e-WOM).	

Table 1: Qualitative Content Analysis Coding Schema

Using cognitive and affective frameworks, the study aimed to reveal consumers' cognitive engagement with traditional and CGI ads, highlighting improved comprehension and recall. Affectively, it was aimed to reveal whether or not these ads evoke stronger emotions than traditional ads. Focus group was conducted to see and compare intergenerational reactions and opinions regarding the CGI advertisements of North Face. At the beginning of the focus group study, participants were shown two guerrilla and two CGI ads of North Face to start a discussion on the pre-prepared focus group research questions. Thematic Analysis was conducted to understand companies' approach to CGI advertising. The study aimed to gather insights from both consumers and brands to enhance and optimize data.

To summarize the research methodology, participants viewed two CGI and two guerrilla ads, followed by discussions to capture intergenerational opinions and reactions. Thematic analysis was applied to transcribed data to identify recurring themes, while content analysis categorized findings within cognitive (engagement, recall, comprehension) and affective (emotional response) dimensions. This approach aimed to compare generational responses, assess the effectiveness of CGI ads and gather insights from both consumer and brand perspectives.

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Participants	Gender	Age	Generation	Student/ Faculty Member	Faculty	Department
P1	Female	34	Y	Faculty Member	Faculty of Communication and Media Studies	Department of Public Relations and Advertising
P2	Male	23	Z	Student	Faculty of Communication and Media Studies	Department of Public Relations and Advertising
Р3	Male	22	Z	Student	Faculty of Communication and Media Studies	Department of Public Relations and Advertising
P4	Male	33	Y	Faculty Member	Faculty of Communication and Media Studies	Department of Radio, TV and Cinema
P5	Female	24	Z	Student	Faculty of Communication and Media Studies	Department of Public Relations and Advertising
P6	Female	24	Z	Student	Faculty of Communication and Media Studies	Department of Public Relations and Advertising
P7	Male	29	Y	Faculty Member	Faculty of Communication and Media Studies	Department of Public Relations and Advertising
P8	Female	22	Z	Student	Faculty of Communication and Media Studies	Department of Public Relations and Advertising
P9	Male	23	Z	Student	Faculty of Communication and Media Studies	Department of Public Relations and Advertising
P10	Female	31	Y	Faculty Member	Faculty of Communication and Media Studies	Department of Public Relations and Advertising
P11	Female	33	Y	Faculty Member	Faculty of Communication and Media Studies	Department of Public Relations and Advertising

P12	Male 30	Y	Faculty Member	Faculty of Communication and Media Studies	Department of Public Relations and Advertising
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Table 2: Focus Group Study: Demographic Details of Participants

3. Research Questions

- 1. How do consumers perceive the effectiveness of North Face Company's CGI ads as a means of brand engagement?
- 2. What are the customers' experiences and perceptions regarding the comprehensibility of North Face Company's CGI ads compared to its guerrilla ads?
- 3. How do customers describe the emotional impact of North Face Company's CGI ads compared to its guerrilla ads?
- 4. What are the intergenerational (Y and Z-generations) opinions toward the effectiveness of North Face Company's CGI ads compared to its guerrilla ads?
- 5. What are the perceived effects of North Face Company's CGI ads (both CGI and guerrilla) on customers' intentions and behaviors such as purchasing the product and sharing its ads?

4. Findings

This research compares customer reactions to North Face's traditional guerrilla ads and CGI ads, using a cognitive and affective framework to assess consumer attitudes. In this scope, two street guerrilla ads and two CGI ads of North Face have been chosen for this research to study.



Figure 2: The North Face's Guerrilla Ad Called "Red Jacket on a Building" **Kaynak:** https://www.designboom.com/design/gucci-the-north-face-01-07-2021/

This advertisement is North Face's one of the most powerful street advertisements that surprised customers by evoking their attention and feelings toward the red coat designed by the company. This was one of the oldest street guerrilla ads that were executed by wearing a building with a three-dimensional red-colored coat. A thematic analysis has been conducted to interpret this branded experience by cognitive and affective frameworks. Analyses revealed that both affective and cognitive domains were designed and implemented together to attract audiences at once. The major element was the usage of red color. As the literature evidence available to assist this argument, the usage of red color in ads has its roots in neuro-marketing and psychology. Such disciplines argue that using red color in advertisements evokes people's emotions such as excitement, courage, passion and self-esteem. In this ad, the coat that was placed on the building is fully made of red color. The selection of red color was intentional to evoke attention and keep the product in consumers' minds as long as possible. All these signify the affective domain of advertisement. Apart from the affective domain, this advert consists of cognitive elements as well. Amongst the cognitive elements, it is revealed that the hashtags, information of collaboration with another brand Gucci and the company information placed on the advertisement. Such informative elements are directly related to cognition. Informing people about the brand or their collaboration signifies the attraction of the mind. At first, people get to know what it is, then evaluate and measure if it is valuable for them and then develop feelings towards the product.



Figure 3: The North Face's Guerrilla Ad 2 Called "The Yellow Giant Man" Kaynak: https://tryon.kivisense.com/blog/guerilla-marketing/

North Face Company has a specific taste and designs its advertising campaigns to facilitate recognition for its customers. As seen in the visual above, the company preferred to use extreme dimensions combined with multiple strategic elements in the promotion/ marketing process. The "Yellow Giant Man" advert is one of the most original and multi-functional street guerrilla ads of North Face. In this campaign, one of the streets in China was used as a spot for North Face's advertising campaign to display its yellow coat remarkably and fascinatingly. The huge inflatable human-shaped object was installed on the street for people to engage in product displays and purchase the products displayed in the temporary street area. The major element was the giant man's color because yellow represents youthfulness, optimism and happiness. Since the aforementioned feelings were associated with people's emotions, they were evaluated under the affective domain. North Face Company mostly targets young individuals and individuals who desire their appearance to look young. As visually illustrated above, the shade of the object was a driving force to grab the audience's attention and arouse positive feelings. All these elements were categorized under the affective domain. Apart from the affective domain, advertisement consists of such cognitive domains as informing people by logo and slogan. All these informative representations reference to cognitive domain considering this framework as the process of knowing and perceiving.

As a result of the focus group discussion, it was found that the Y-generation preferred guerrilla advertising more. They found guerrilla ads to be more creative and impactful compared to CGI ads because they could physically experience the advertisement. Y-generation stated that guerrilla advertising was more memorable and, therefore, a suitable advertising strategy, especially for brand awareness. On the other hand, the Z generation noted that because guerrilla ads take place on the streets, people who do not live in major cities might not be exposed to such advertisements. Gen Zers also argued that this situation reduces the likelihood of reaching the desired target audience for the brand compared to CGI advertisements.



Figure 4: The North Face's CGI Ad 1 Called "Jacket on the Big Ben, London". **Kaynak:** https://images.app.goo.gl/oZ1tNCTU7LBqpa9BA

In this advertisement, North Face Company engaged in AI to produce computer-generated imagery (CGI) as a means of product promotion. The advertisement went viral on the Internet and featured one of their well-known jackets virtually on the Big Ben building in London. It led to a massive social media sensation because most people thought the ad was real and there was a coat on Big Ben. The major success that North Face obtained was the shock effect that people experienced seeing the ad in the first place.

The North Face aimed the highest audience attention possible, which succeeded. Conscious and unconscious reactions of the audience towards the advertisement demonstrated the attention and mental processing of people while consuming the ad. Questioning whether or not it was real and paying attention could be interpreted by the cognitive domain of the advertisement. Apart from these, a further cognitive domain was discovered through the informative elements embedded in the ad. The ad was generated digitally which also comprises logo and brand information, thus, such elements address people's cognition. Audiences acquire knowledge through informative texts in ads that further influence their emotions and mental processes. On the other side, the CGI ad campaign includes key elements in the affective domain such as the "wow effect". For instance, the audience was shocked and thought it was real at first glance. This is the "wow effect". Such surprises evoke humans' feelings such as excitement to focus, criticize and recognize the advertised material better. It can be

asserted that the company virtually touched the audience's feelings by producing an extraordinary advertisement.



Figure 5: The North Face's CGI Ad 2 Called "Jacket on the Empire State Building, New York".

Kaynak: https://images.app.goo.gl/iloiHFZ5LpJyisAfA

North Face's one of the most popular products virtually displayed on a building once again. The company has successfully practiced AI-generated advertising to keep up with the trends and reach out to the younger generations. In this ad, the "wow effect" still continues as the impact left by the first CGI ad. In the ad, even though it is virtually designed, surprise noises from the crowd have been noticed. In other words, the audience reflects on their excitement and shock while seeing the dressed Empire State Building. These emotional reactions signify the affective domain. When it comes to the cognitive domain in the ad, informative elements such as presenting logos and slogans can be categorised under the cognitive domain. Having such information on the brand aims at informing the audience regarding the origin of the brand and making them think about the advertised product.

In focus group interviews, the Z generation showed more interest in CGI advertisements compared to the Y generation. They found CGI ads to be more creative and impactful. Additionally, the Z generation stated that computer-assisted CGI advertisements are more likely to be shared on social media, which increases the likelihood of reaching a larger audience. This, in turn, contributes to building a connection between the brand and the consumer. Both generations agreed that CGI ads

are easier to understand, more innovative, more exciting and better at capturing consumer attention compared to guerrilla ads.

Domain Codes		Findings	Supportive Ads
Cognitive	Intriguing Visuals	Virtual placement on famous buildings such as Big Ben and Empire State	Big Ben and the Empire State Building
		Informative elements such as logos, slogans, and collaboration details effectively convey brand identity and recognition	All ads
	Brand Identity	CGI ads resulted in facilitate comprehension, memorability, and recall compared to guerrilla ads	Big Ben and the Empire State Building
	Collaboration	The North Face attempted to ensure its' credibility by collaborating with Gucci	Red Jacket and Yellow Giant-Man)
Affective	Wow-effect	CGI ads are revealed to evoke stronger emotions such as excitement and curiosity enhancing sentiment engagement with the product	Big Ben and the Empire State Building
	Color	Guerrilla ads appealed emotionally to navigating and color psychology on consumers (use red for power; yellow for youthfulness and happiness)	Red Jacket and Yellow Giant Man
	Value to Share	CGI ads encourage younger generations to share their brands on social media which supports e-wom.	Big Ben and the Empire State Building

Table 3: Findings and Supporting Ads by Cognitive and Affective Domains

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research aimed to inspect two different types of advertisements comparatively to reveal the effectiveness of CGI and guerrilla advertisements in engaging consumers, mostly from Generations Y and Z, by applying cognitive and affective frameworks. Through an in-depth analysis of North Face's innovative advertising campaigns, the present research explored how digital advancements, including AI-driven CGI, influence consumer behavior, emotional engagement and brand recall. The findings revealed distinct generational preferences emphasizing digital native audiences' satisfaction with CGI ads. On the other hand, guerrilla ads

were more appealing to the experiential inclinations of Gen Y. These outcomes highlighted the transformative role of technology in determining modern advertising strategies, as well as the varying demands of diverse consumer cohorts. By addressing these distinctions, the study contributes to a nuanced understanding of advertising dynamics in the digital era, paving the way for more targeted and impactful marketing practices.

The findings affirmed that the CGI ads were more exciting, captivating and compelling than the traditional guerrilla ads. Guerrilla ads are amongst the most powerful and visually captivating promotion activities, yet, the majority of focus group participants (Y and Z-generations) declared that they expect more digitally enhanced advertising campaigns like CGI ads due to their effectiveness. So this outcome addresses the first research question. Z generation is digital natives who were born within the advanced digitalization, thus, they seek for digitally striking and virtual ads. This aligns with recent studies suggesting that younger audiences, who are deeply embedded in the digital age, are more likely to engage with innovative and technologically advanced advertising formats (Ahn et al., 2022). Furthermore, the study revealed that such visually striking ads increase word-of-mouth in the digital environment. WOM has transformed as digitalization advances and become e-WOM (electronic word-of-mouth). CGI advertising seems to work perfectly in activating e-WOM in the digital society promising long-term vitality to the existing advertising strategies. Since CGI ads are more powerful and out-of-scope, people cannot forget them for a long time, share them with friends and family, and also, they appreciate the company for taking an unusual approach in the advertising industry. The focus group research revealed that while Y-generation participants desired to experience guerrilla ads physically, Z-generation participants wanted to see them on social media. This finding underlines the distinctions among generations. Additionally, the majority of Zgeneration participants declared amid the focus group research that CGI ads were capable of enabling them to purchase products rather than Y-generation participants. This finding replies to the fifth research question.

Excitement and recall in computer-generated imagery (CGI) advertisements led to the generational impact that guided this generation to go for more dynamic and

interactive content as part of their digital engagement. The majority of participants underlined that CGI was more understandable and creative compared to guerrilla ads. This outcome was a response to the second research question. Focus group research revealed that the younger generation caused the alteration of advertising strategies due to their digital expectations the advertising industry has undergone sophisticated improvements by modern AI technology to generate virtual content. Furthermore, the existing literature concerned with the financial effects of CGI claims that lack of people who are experts in designing CGI ads. Recent literature points to the absence of trained professionals who are capable of planning and creating high-quality CGI ads, which in turn, results in higher costs for creating CGI campaigns compared to guerrilla advertising (Wuisan & Handra, 2023). The aforementioned disadvantage could hinder the wider adoption of CGI methods in advertising, as highlighted by scholars arguing organizational imbalances in the digital economy (Thatcher et al., 2016). A few literature on the aforementioned argument claim that such visually striking ads are more costly compared to guerrilla advertising. So, digital colonialism become an important concept at this point to discuss whether or not smaller or newly established businesses can compete with other businesses that could easily assign experts to generate CGI ads for them. Such opportunities lead to a major inequality between companies in the advertising industry. However, Y and Z-generation participants recorded that North Face's CGI ads were more exciting, captivating and compelling than guerrilla ads. Also, participants highlighted that CGI ads were easier to remember and such ads help them to recall the brand much easier than guerrilla ads. As such findings were associated with the study of Akcan et al., (2024), they also underlined that digital ads have a better potential to stay longer in customers' minds, thus, contribute positively to the brand. Such findings were a response to the fourth research question.

More screen time more energy used by servers to support digital content and other effects of increased digital consumption should also be taken into account. Oversaturation is a possibility even with the novelty and excitement of computer-generated imagery advertisements. The distinctiveness that now stimulates e-WOM may decrease as more businesses use this strategy which would eventually result in lower returns. Recent studies also argued that advertising strategies need to be continuously innovative to sustain consumer engagement and interest in this digital era

(Campos & Campos, 2024). The findings also approved that CGI ads enhanced consumer engagement and seemed innovative, thus, evoking their positive emotions easier than guerrilla ads. The outcome addressed the third research question. This section explores these themes comprehensively while providing a fair assessment that considers both the advantages and possible drawbacks of the growing trend toward digital advertising techniques like computer-generated imagery.

Recommendations for Further Research

The research outcomes underlined the effectiveness of CGI advertising over digitalnative audiences. The study may recommend the need for further research into the evolving preferences of generational cohorts, predominantly as younger generations become more adapted to immersive and interactive digital settings. Future studies may discover how emerging technologies, such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), can participate in CGI ads to enhance consumer engagement and retention. Moreover, exploring the effectiveness of hybrid campaigns that combine CGI's digital appeal with guerrilla advertising's physical and experiential aspects could offer significant insights into creating more versatile advertising strategies that attract diverse audience segments. Another suggestion for future research lies in addressing the ethical and sustainability concerns associated with digital advertising, mostly CGI ads. The ethical dimensions of AI-driven personalization, such as potential data privacy violations and digital colonialism, may require a deeper investigation in this digital era. Further research could also address businesses accessing CGI technology. The aforementioned recommendations would contribute to developing more inclusive, ethical and sustainable advertising frameworks in the rapidly digitalizing global advertising industry.

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