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A Content Analysis of Advertising Appeal in Free to Play Mobile Game Ads

Rahma Kahyani Ihsan

[a] rkihsan2@gmail.com

[b] Departement of Communication Universitas of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia

INFO ARTIKEL	ABSTRAK
	The share of Free-to-Play (F2P) mobile games in the United States has increased in-game advertising to 94%. Entering the era of the heyday of mobile games, many game developers are competing for this market share. The emergence of this intense competition has also suppressed the high use of hype and provocative advertising appeals, so advertising broadcasting in the realm of free mobile games is considered to have experienced a setback. This study aims to reveal the reality of F2P mobile game advertisements through empirical glasses. Using quantitative description content analysis methods, researchers collect F2P mobile game advertisements from 2017-2021 of casual, puzzle, simulation, action, and strategy types. The result shows that 79,67% of 100 samples used emotional appeals containing mostly provocative messages (62,40%, 45,73% were positive, and 33,96% were negative). The rest of the samples (20,31%) applied rational appeals.

1. Introduction

Advertising media moves dynamically to accompany the development of the dimensions of global community life. This phenomenon is then referred to as the forming factor of advertising tools and approaches (Campbell, 2019). For example, from the shift in the trend of contemporary society towards the use of conventional mobile phones that are not integrated with the internet, to smartphones that also influence the advertising medium. The use of smartphones in the United States with the use of digital games on mobile devices and tablets in the community immediately contributed to the global advertising market revenue reaching US $ 128.683 billion in 2019. The portion of free mobile games or Free-to-Play (F2P) is said to be the cause of advertising in-game advertising (in-game advertising) grew by 94% in the same year. Seeing this vast opportunity, game developers use unique tactics to attract audience focus and seize market share. The purpose of advertising is to influence the audience's purchase decision (Jovanovic et al., 2016).

Entering the era of the heyday of mobile games, which is said to have gained significant traction, this success seems to have resulted in many games competing for a share of the mobile game market (Flunger et al., 2019), the attractiveness of advertising has become the main feature and strength as a net that can scoop up the target audience. In this large share. Besides being said by Raza et al. (2018), the attractiveness of advertising can achieve positive reception and evaluation of the advertisements that have been made. However, with intense competition, the practice of advertising dominance in the F2P mobile game market share violates consumer rights. This allegedly took place in 2017 (Sinclair, 2020). So, netizens think F2P advertising has experienced a setback from previous years. One of the opinions came from the Savantics YouTube account with an upload entitled "Mobile Ads Have Gotten Even Worse". He says in his description, "Every day, mobile game ads continue to get worse. When will it stop? Will it ever stop? Probably not." (Savantics, 2021). On the same platform, through Optimus's upload with the title, "Mobile Game Ads Are Out of Control",

which highlights the use of sexual attraction, advertisements that look hype but are not as accurate as the content provided, as well as F2P advertisements that trigger anxiety for the audience (Optimus, 2020).

Public unrest will be genuine if it is searched through keywords: mobile game ads on social media, especially YouTube, where many videos are showing F2P advertisements with keywords: cringe, horrible, and awful. The tight competition for the free mobile game market share seems to have broken through the value of truth in the product selling the mobile game itself. Because, then the appeal of the ad, apart from being displayed in the hype, is also claimed not to represent the game's content. From the massiveness of this fraudulent practice, a wave of action came through the 12,000 signing of the petition, "Stop False Mobile Game Advertising" against developers Playrix and its advertisements on the Change.org platform, which Adam Hughes promoted ("Sign the Petition," 2019). In addition to prosecuting claims of inaccurate advertising, the signatories have also highlighted the excessive use of sexuality and provocative messages. Departing from this problem, the researcher then wants to find out the trend of using advertising appeal in F2P mobile games based on five popular types of games: casual, puzzle, simulation, action, and strategy, while at the same time getting inference and actual reality through empirical studies. Hopefully, this research can add to the quantitative research literature on communication science, especially with the content analysis method on the object of F2P mobile game advertisements.

Research that discusses the use of emotional and rational attractiveness has been studied by Nancy D. Albers-Miller and Marla Royne Stafford with research entitled "International Analysis of Emotional and Rational Attraction in Service versus Goods Advertising" (Albers-Miller and Stafford, 1999). Miller and Stafford break down the proposition of using rational and emotional appeal based on the type of product being advertised from the country where the ad is shown. Both content analyses show that the use of rational and emotional appeals differs by product type and country. Another study using content analysis methods related to emotional and rational appeal was also reviewed by Dr. Priyaka Khanna (Khanna, 2016). Khanna analyzed the use of these two appeals in television advertisements that were judged by product category and preferences for these appeals to children and gender. Meanwhile, the author realizes that the subjects and objects in this study have not been of interest to academics. It is hoped that the results of this study will provide awareness of the reality of F2P mobile game advertisements, thereby inspiring other researchers to develop better research.

2. Methods

The author uses a quantitative descriptive analysis method. The use of quantitative description helps understand phenomena that are considered interesting regarding patterns in the population of interest. Besides identifying the latest problems, the quantitative descriptive analysis also serves to understand patterns in the data in response to related questions: who, what, where, when, and to what extent. In simple terms, descriptive analysis simplifies data (Loeb et al., 2017).

Descriptive quantitative research, in addition to describing data from population characteristics, can also be used to draw conclusions based on numerical data from related data. Conclusions should reflect the numerical analysis and context of the study being analyzed (Albers, 2017). Therefore, the data collected must be analyzed to help draw research conclusions. Albers explained that the conclusions from the data analyzed were not simply the results of statistical tests but that researchers must first study these results and apply them to a situational context to draw reasonable conclusions (Albers, 2017).

Researchers took 100 advertising publications on YouTube running from 2017-2021 on the five most popular types of F2P: casual, puzzle, simulation, action/action, and strategy ("Top Grossing Games Apps | INDONESIA | Top App Store Rankings for iOS | SensorTower," 2021; "Top Grossing Apps Ranking - Most Popular Apps in Indonesia | Similarweb," 2021). The number of research objects is obtained by calculating the Lemeshow formula. The Lemeshow formula is used to determine the sample in the number of known and unknown populations. A total of 100 samples is rounded off from n=96.04. Meanwhile, the data collection technique in this study used non-probability sampling. This technique is considered suitable for population characteristics whose total is unknown (Supardi, 1993). Each population element does not get the same opportunity because the researcher selects the sample based on subjective assessments. So, with the non-probability

sampling technique, the authors apply the purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling or judgmental methods select samples based on categories or considerations that the researcher has made. Data collection applies the results of observations that involve object analysis by observing advertisements for a predetermined period, then entering them according to categories into the coding sheet table so that the application of attractiveness used in each game advertisement can be assessed. So, this formula collected 20 ad samples from each category of F2P games, bringing the total to 100.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study uses the assessment of three coders with three separate coding sheets to minimize the influence of subjectivity in coding. As Machamara (2018) explains: The use of multiple coders refers to the post-structuralist notion of inter-subjectivity—the argument that humans cannot be 100 percent objective but arrive at a shared subjectivity, i.e., agreement or consensus (Macnamara, 2018).

After agreeing on the indicators and assessment instruments, the researcher then conducted a training session so that each coder first understood the technicalities of the content analysis assessment method for the assessment scheme on the coding sheet. Coders at separate places and timescales then analyzed the existing samples. Each unit of analysis is marked with agreeing (1) if the unit of analysis contains 13 elements of the characteristics of the advertising attractiveness approach (PDTI) formulated or disagree (0) if there are no elements of PDTI at all. The first coder is the author himself. The second coder, Asep Heri Hermanto, took the Management study program at UNSOED and S2 at ITB. The last two studies entitled, Strategies to Improve Taxpayers Compliance of Indonesian Micro Small and Medium Enterprises: PRISMA Approach and Taxpayers' adoption of online tax return reporting: extended meta-UTAUT model perspective. The third coder is Kania Renanti Wulandari, currently studying Journalism in the seventh semester at the College of Communication Studies, Bandung.

The researcher uses the Krippendorff Alpha formula to calculate the reliability of the study to avoid subjectivity. Thus, calculating the reliability requires calculations or comparisons that assess: 1) agreement and 2) variation. Krippendorff Alpha was chosen because it has a flexible instrument that assesses reliability between more than two raters/coders. Despite all limitations, the Krippendorff Alpha coefficient is the only indicator among the Inter-rater Reliability (IRR) indices; it calculates agreement among raters (Shabankhani et al., 2020). One of the advantages is that it can be applied by measuring agreement using nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio data; it is also possible to measure reliability with missing codes. The method can be used when more than two coders encode the data and minimize the coincidence effect in agreement with the code (Nili et al., 2017). In this study, the researcher used SPSS macro statistical software, namely, KALPHA, to run the reliability of Krippendorff Alpha calculations. While there is general agreement regarding the value of the instrument, which is said to be reliable if the calculation result of the value is > 0.823, the agreement is considered good, $0.667 \leq \alpha \leq 0.823$ is considered 'suitable' and acceptable, <0.667 is unacceptable (Shabankhani et al., 2020). Meanwhile, another opinion suggested by Krippendorff (2012) shows that a result of >0.8 guarantees fair reliability, and any result between 0.667 and 0.8 can support the content analysis findings..

4. Temuan dan Pembahasan

After calculating the reliability between the three coders using the Krippendorff Alpha formula, the results were found as follows:

Table 1. Value of Inter-Coder Agreement

No.	Coder	Agreement
1	Coder 1 – Coder 2	0,6661
2	Coder 1 – Coder 3	0,9071
3	Coder 2 – Coder 3	0,6699

	Agreement between Coder 1 – Coder 2 – Coder 3	0,7433

The total agreement of the three coders shows =0.7433, which means that this study is reliable and can support the content analysis results. Likewise, the agreement value between coder 1 and coder 2, coder 1 with coder 3, and coder 2 with coder 3 is at the safe point, namely <0.667.

a) Ad Attractiveness

The author of this study took the types of positive and negative emotional attractiveness approaches, as well as the rational attractiveness approach that is commonly used from previous research, as an indicator of assessment in this study. Here are the types and indicators of using ad appeal:

Table 2.   Use of Ad Attractiveness

Type of Attractiveness	Indicator	Sub Indicator
Humor	Ads contain funny/silly things; and invite smiles and laughter shown by the audience in response to particular messages (Tellis, 2004).	Advertising messages with humor appeal, both implied and explicit, contain 1) puns, (2) disparaging statements, (3) jokes, (4) something ridiculous, (5) satire, (6) irony, or (7) funny intentions (Kelly & Solomon, 1975). 8) Ideas that describe a situation or condition of a person that is not suitable, strange, or deviating from the usual, both the perpetrators as well as expected but distorted events, 9) criticism of the situation, stupidity, 10) misunderstanding, 11) clashes between cultures, and other things (Riansyah, 2012). Humor commercials are also usually followed by cheerful jingles as support and entertaining events that are taking place.
Advanture	Advertisements contain sensations of courage, challenge, and adventure (Salary, 2016; Mensa & Vargas-Bianchi, 2020).	The advertising message contains 1) landscape views, 2) cheerful jingles, and 3) providing a sensation of adventure, challenge, storyline, and enthusiasm.
Joy, Compassion, and Love	Exciting moments of fun, smiles and happiness embodies a happy life and connects people (Ambler & Burne, 1999; Kamran & Siddiqui, 2019), provoking entertainment, excitement, and fun (Mensa and Vargas-Bianchi, 2020).	The advertising messages explicitly and implicitly contain 1) efforts to create a happy life, 2) showing groups or people who are happy and have a happy ending, and 3) containing jingles and cheerful advertising tones.
Sexual	Involves action: sexual stimulation such as from a photo/camera angle, seductive language, double-meaning sentences, and sexual behavior (Ramirez and Reichert, 2000), thereby evoking sexual desire, pleasure, and fantasy (Black et al., 2010).	Visual and verbal advertising messages, both written and verbal, include a) nudity: naked body, silhouette, use of invisibility. B) involves action: sexual stimulation such as from the angle of taking pictures/cameras, seductive language, double-meaning

Type of Attractiveness	Indicator	Sub Indicator
		sentences, and sexual behavior (Ramirez and Reichert, 2000), and c) also involves elements of intimacy and eroticism.
Pride	Focus on achieving goals and maintaining a sense of pride (Peter & Honea, 2012). Pride is a moral emotion that focuses on the ego (Danissa van Hattem, 2015).	Promotion of advertising messages contains 1) motivation to achieve positive results and future goals (Higgins, 2000) and 2) encourages individuals to achieve self-esteem (pride).
Celebrity Endorsement	Public figures promote a product or service in advertisements (Priatna, 2018).	Advertising messages featuring 1) public figures, public figures to promote their products and services, or 2) quotations and reviews of these public figures on related brands.
Guilt & Sadness	Creates anxiety, self-blame, guilt, and other negative feelings for suffering, separation, loss, and failure to provoke empathy and guide audiences to comply with advertising suggestions (Danissa van Hattem, 2015).	Loading advertising messages in a star or expressway regarding a) sad events with social principles and norms or ethics being violated or immoral, b) appointing the audience as actors or authorities for events/problems that occur in advertisements, c) expressly or not giving the stimulus that the audience can change the incident/problem by downloading the game in ques so that the audience can reduce their guilt (Godek and LaBarge, 2006).
FOMO (*Fear of Missing Out*)	They were exposing the uncomfortable feeling of missing out on an ongoing trend in a particular population or group. Others may have valuable experiences that the individual does not have (Hodkinson, 2019).	Explaining implicitly or explicitly that the game is trending leads to 1) hedonic temptations and invitations (Kivetz, 2008) or 2) messages to download so as not to miss the trend.
Violence & Fear	Involving shows that have an impact on tension due to acts of cruelty or aggressive actions that cause injury/death or threats by showing weapons or any activities that violate norms that cause discomfort and fear to the audience.	Advertising messages that contain ideas of both actual and expressed opinions: 1) if you don't do this (buy, vote, trust, support, learn, etc.), inevitable consequences will be' (Glascoff, 2000). Highlights vulnerability in discovery by 2) one's physical body, health, and life, and 3) containing social norms or breaking the law. 4) The presence of weapons and all actions that violate norms.
Product Features Appeal	Advertisements contain the following information: the price of the product or service, quality, functionality, materials, time and place of purchase, research	Advertising messages contain information about products, services, quality, functions, materials, time and place of purchase, and details about products: goods, or

Type of Attractiveness	Indicator	Sub Indicator
	data about the product, and packaging (Keshari and Jain, 2014).	services.
Differences in Products or Services	Mentioning competing brand products directly or indirectly (Marketing91, 2021) and providing product comparisons with competing products; the sharper the contrast, the better (Wroblewski, 2020).	Both express and star reveal differences/comparisons between competing brands and product developers that contain the products' advantages.
Product/Service Popularity	Highlight product quality to encourage use by new customers (Marketing91, 2021).	1) Showing the excitement related to the product, 2) statistical data of users who use the related product, 3) and other figures regarding the product's position in the market.
Testimony	A statement of someone who praises the virtues/benefits of a product.	Written and statements 1) well-known figures, 2) the public, and 3) experts regarding the benefits and advantages of the product.

From a total of 100 samples of F2P mobile game advertisements published on YouTube channels in 2017-2021, it is known that the assessment scores between the three coders against the unit of analysis are as follows:

Table 3.   Percentage of Ad Attractive Usage

Attractiveness	Nature	Type	Percentage
Emotional Appeal	Positive 45,73%	Humor	18,67%
		Adventure	15,91%
		Joy, Compassion, and Love	1,38%
		Sexual	9,77%
		Pride	0,00%
		Celebrity Endorsement	0,00%
	Negative 33,96%	Guilt & Sadness	18,17%
		FOMO	0,13%
		Violence & Fear	15,66%
Total			**79,69%**
Rational Appeal		Product Features Appeal	19,55%
		Differences in Products or Services	0,13%
		Product/Service Popularity	0,63%
		Testimony	0,00%
Total			**20,31%**

Through the percentage table above, it is known that emotional attraction is the dominant attraction approach used by F2P mobile game advertisers in attracting the interest of their audience. A total of 79.69% of the total 100 samples used the type of emotional attraction, with details:

18.67% the practice of using humor appeal, 18.17% guilt/sadness, 15.91% adventure, followed by violence/fear 15,66%, sexual 9.77%, joy/affection 1.38%, and FOMO 0.13%. Meanwhile, the types of celebrity/ endorsement emotional attractiveness and pride were not found in the research sample. Meanwhile, the frequency of using the total rational attraction in the unit of analysis is 20.31%. This attraction has elements: information about the product/service, quality, function, material, time, place of purchase/installation, details of the product/service offered, as well as the characteristics of the attractiveness of the product feature itself. Other rational appeals, product popularity, and product/service differences are 0.63% and 0.13%, respectively. However, the use of testimonial appeal was not found in the study sample.

The low use of rational appeals compared to emotional appeals is understandable because the use of rational appeals tends to be attached to high-involvement products/services, where consideration of a product with a high level of risk is required. The risk here will increase according to the high price of the product/service as well as the duration/period of use of the service product, such as the consideration of using insurance or buying a car, which is merely a routine shopping product. Thus, the recipient of the message or potential buyer will be careful in considering and thinking about the message to decide on the purchase, or use of an item or service. For that reason, a rational appeal is more authentic to the product, goods, or services of high value. Because this attraction encourages the target audience's reasoning or logic to buy the advertised product. The rational appeal of explaining the product by informing the target consumer and audience of the reality and vital information of the product, the information provided focuses more on the use as well as the description of the product (Zhang et al., 2020). While the use of emotional appeal is often used in products with low interaction because emotional attraction can lift different items and position them differently in the minds of customers (Panda et al., 2013). On the other hand, the use of negative emotional appeals is considered to increase the audience's memory and attention to the brand but can also invite negative attitudes toward the brand (Panda et al., 2013; Yoon, 2016). This is indicated by the presence of emotional attraction to the type of provocative attraction. Emmanuel Mogaji categorizes positive emotional attraction into adventure, development, beauty, joy, family, popularity, status, sex, security, nostalgia, and a sense of youth. As well as negative emotional appeals include fear, guilt, and thoughts (Emmanuel Mogaji, 2016).

b) Mobile Game Free-to-Play Models

In recent years, many researchers have rated mobile games as the popular entertainment of choice for the global community (Goncharova, 2017; Hill, 2020; Udonis, 2020). F2P has become the best-selling game model in Asia (Niko Partners, 2020). This has led to a reduction in the interest in paid or pay-to-play game models, especially mobile games such as World of Warcraft and Team Fortress 2 (Flunger et al., 2019). The share of free mobile games has also brought in-game advertising to 94% in the same year. Flungeret al (2019) states, "The free-to-play model has gained significant traction which has led to many games competing for share in this market." (Flunger et al., 2019). The main characteristic of F2P mobile games is that it offers players free early access with limited energy, coins, and abilities that can trigger players to remove these restrictions by paying a certain amount of money in exchange for certain items. Meanwhile, Skobeltcyn and Shen describe the F2P model as follows:

"The F2P model refers to a business model that gives players free access to most games and allows them to subsequently purchase virtual items if they wish to enhance their gaming experience or display advertisements (Skobeltcyn and SHEN, 2018)."

F2P mobile games are popular among action/action types, casino, simulation, adventure, arcade, racing, sports, trivia, role-playing, casual, and cards; Mobile Legends is one of the most popular in Asia (NIKO Partners, 2020). Mobile game advertisements are also often shown on social media and become public attention, especially on the YouTube platform, the practice of using these ads is understood by experts as one of the developers' effective strategies for the sake of clicking and downloading profits for F2P mobile games. Greenberg, IronSource's Chief Design Officer calls it an "indirect effect" that drives keyword enhancements to the game in question (Fishman, 2020). So, in other words, highlighting sexuality-related game advertisements—as the background of this research concerns—is intended to be able to inspire viewers and provide opportunities to go viral in cyberspace. This also applies to the function of using positive and negative emotional stimuli because of the use of emotional appeal, especially the provocative approach to emotional attraction. Therefore, according to Jonathan Fishman, Marketing Director of Storemaven,

"Ads will instantly result in app installations. Some of these installs convert into revenue-generating users (whether through in-app purchases or advertising" (Fishman, 2020).

That way, advertising with provocation to appeal to consumers is considered a quick strategy to generate profits (attract audiences and profits) and create new game products (Anderson, 2019). Then the researchers found similar results in this study, where the frequency of use of the appeal of guilt was found to be highest in casual mobile games, with a total of 145 frequencies from the entire sample. As it is known, the attraction of feelings and thoughts is an emotional attraction that creates and provokes empathy, then guides the audience to comply with advertising suggestions to overcome these feelings, is to download the related game. Meanwhile, the frequency of humor is more often used in action-type mobile game advertisements as much as 54 times, with a total of 149 frequencies from the total sample. On the other hand, the frequency of use of attraction is 78 times, most often found in simulation-type mobile game advertisements, followed by negative emotional attraction occupying the second position, namely 33.96% with the types of guilt/sadness, FOMO, and violence/ fear. Referring to Andersson and Pettersson (2004), provocative advertising is one of the techniques used by many advertisers who are activated to frequently create advertisements, it is made that the advertisement is deliberately to surprise and attract attention (Vezina and Paul, 1994; Dahl et al., 2003; Andersson and Pettersson, 2004). Dahl et al (2003) mention seven types of characteristics of provocative messages, namely, related images, sexual references, obscene/obscene words, vulgarity, inappropriateness, moral violations, and religious taboos. a strong message to make it look unethical, and unfair, and must include a tragic fate. In this study, the researchers grouped attractive advertising messages that included provocative into five types, namely: humor, sexual, guilt and list categories, FOMO, violence, and fear. Thus, from this grouping, it was found that the attractiveness of advertisements containing provocative messages in F2P mobile game advertisements was 62.40%.

Table 4.   Message Provokatif

Provocative Message	Percentage
Humor	18,67%
Sexual	9,77%
Guilt & Sadness	18,17%
FOMO	0,13%
Violence & Fear	15,66%

Meanwhile, although the use of rational appeal reached 156 frequencies or a percentage of 20.31%, the use of rational appeal was not the main use of advertising appeal in 100 F2P mobile game advertisements. In this study, rational attraction becomes a filler attraction in collaboration with emotional attraction. The use of product feature appeals is marked: a description of the availability of the F2P mobile game application on the App Store and Google Play, a description of the number of mobile game users, and the number of reviews of the mobile game placed in the closing scene.

5. Conclusion

This study describes the practice of using advertising appeals based on 100 samples of F2P mobile game advertisements with five popular types of games, namely: casual, puzzle, simulation, strategy, and action. The author found that 79.69% used emotional appeals containing provocative messages 62.40%, and F2P mobile game advertisements containing rational appeals by 20.31%. The magnitude of the findings of the use of provocative messages in F2P mobile game advertisements represents the polemic of the implementation of advertising attractiveness in F2P mobile game advertisements. Provocative messages that have generated reactions and criticism from various parties in the social media line as well as on the internet are allegedly the purpose of using provocative messages, so that advertisers deliberately embed—as described previously—that advertisements containing provocative messages are deliberately made to surprise and offend the audience (Vezina and Paul, 1994; Dahl et al., 2003; Andersson and Pettersson, 2004), or by Andersson and Pettersson (2004) called, "to break through the advertising clutter". Because they believe it will attract attention, memory, and recognition for their products (Dahl et al, 2003). This argument is reaffirmed by Fishman's statement, which states that this practice is an "indirect effect"

to encourage keyword enhancements to the game in question. From the use of provocative messages, advertising directly results in application installations (Fishman, 2020). However, game developers should think about the future of their products in the future, honestly represent the products offered, and start building a creative positive image, so that gradually they can provide sustainable benefits. This is because the use of positive emotional appeal is assumed to inspire positive attitudes in the audience, such as increasing liking and strengthening positive attitudes related to brands, and even loyalty (Mensa and Vargas-Bianchi, 2020). On the other hand, the use of negative emotional appeal can increase the audience's memory and attention to the brand but can also invite negative attitudes toward the brand (Panda et al., 2013; Yoon, 2016). It is hoped that this research can raise awareness of the practice of using F2P mobile game advertising appeals in the future.

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