

Consumer Behavior Analysis on Social Media for Digital Campaign Optimization

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Abstract

This paper explores digital customer behavior and optimization of the campaign in Ukraine during the conditions of geopolitical uncertainty. A stratified quota sampling was used to gather data on 350 Ukrainian Telegram, Instagram, Tik Tok, and Facebook users. A cross-sectional survey was discussed with the help of a mixed-methods approach through multiple linear regression in order to test the association between ad trust, influencer credibility, perceived relevance, brand social responsibility (BSR), and conversion intention. At the same time, another A/B optimization aspect compared regular promotional messaging with socially responsible framing. The multiple linear regression demonstrated that BSR is the most powerful predictor of conversion intention ($\beta = 0.361$, $p < 0.001$), then general ad trust ($\beta = 0.291$, $p < 0.001$), and impact of influencer credibility was insignificant. Confirming this change, the A/B testing optimization element proved that the socially responsible framing increased the click-through rate of the campaign more than twice, as it rose by 1.98 percent, reaching a 4.66 percent. Digital marketers need to switch off personality-led endorsement in order to maximize campaigns in Ukraine. Rather, value-based message framing, including the emphasis on patriotic solidarity, and a focus on institutional trustworthiness at the localized platforms such as Telegram should be applied to succeed in the low-trust digital environment.

Keywords: Digital Marketing Optimization; Brand Social Responsibility; Influencer Credibility; Consumer Behavior; A/B Testing; Geopolitical Uncertainty

Introduction

The effects of the war and geopolitical uncertainty on consumer behavior and social media use in Ukraine challenge digital marketing in a multifaceted way. The current Russian-Ukrainian war has created an extremely complex media context based on a saturation of propaganda and a subsequent crisis of information trust. In this volatile landscape, trust in information sources is some of the time being renegotiated and

social media platforms operate as a duality: as spreading and fighting disinformation (Kreft et al., 2023). Consequently, Ukrainian users have developed both an elevated level of mistrust towards individual media sources and a sometimes-remained level of trust in established institutions, which results in a diversity and defensive strategy to verify information online (Pasitselska, 2022).

Beyond checking information, crisis has changed the general consumer behavior fundamentally. Economic instability and societal anxiety forces consumers to reallocate expenditures, make necessary purchases and draws heavily on the use of digital platforms not only for commerce, but as psychological coping mechanisms to deal with crisis-induced stress (Yap et al., 2021). The acceleration of online shopping, first caused by the pandemic of Covid-19, has established behavioral attitudes in which the digital control and online consumption is the stabilizing factor during this time of geopolitical turmoil (Akar, 2024; Vasylieva, 2021). Furthermore, consumer information search behaviour under such conditions is highly affected by uncertainty; moderate - to - high levels of systemic unpredictability foster rigorous information - seeking behaviour to minimise perceived risks relating to product quality and brand intent (He & Rucker, 2022). Geographical proximity to the epicenter of the crisis also determines the perception of risk and consequently the rational consumption and interaction with digital marketing campaigns (Li et al., 2021).

Simultaneously, the conflict has been a source of major shifts on the platform and redefining social media engagement. Platforms such as TikTok have seen a shift from being purely entertainment-based applications to becoming powerful tools for personal storytelling, public diplomacy and real-time conflict updates, domesticating the realities of war for younger audiences (Colombo et al., 2024; García-Jiménez et al., 2024; Sidorenko et al., 2023). Concurrently, platforms like Twitter and Telegram have become key spheres of influence operations, where posting content of ingroup solidarity, victim stories, and national unity will receive exponentially higher engagement rates than conventional content (Breve et al., 2024; Kyrychenko et al., 2024; Mejova et al., 2025). This normalization of militarism and nationalistic solidarity in the process of

platformized communication requires a radical change in the way brands communicate with Ukrainian audiences (Massa & Anzera, 2022). Leadership communication, and especially the strategies of audiovisual communication of authenticity and impact of state figures, have set a new standard in the engagement of digital audiences (Sánchez-Castillo et al., 2023).

Despite these radical changes, many international brands still implement standardized global digital marketing strategies. The belief in the existence of a universal "global playbook" to engage consumers across the world is a systematic neglect of the nuanced cultural values and localized market conditions that govern the behavior of digital consumers (Hultman & Oghazi, 2024; Weiger, 2023). While global standardization provided cost-efficiency, its effect has continually declined. Empirical evidence shows that cultural and local adaptation to campaigns (or "glocalization") not undertaken by campaigns leads to a massive disconnect with target audiences, which in turn leads to suboptimal engagement and conversion rates (Hornikx et al., 2023).

One of the critical vulnerabilities of these standardized global playbooks in the current Ukrainian context is the overreliance on influencer marketing in the past. While traditional digital marketing paradigms suggest that credibility of the influencer (based on trustworthiness, expertise, and parasocial interactions) is crucial for boosting purchase intentions (Ananda et al., 2025; Gopakumar & Dananjayan, 2024; Kareem & Venugopal, 2023), economic and social crises cause a drastic drop in the effectiveness of influencers. Modern consumers, especially younger demographics, have a sharp level of skepticism towards influencers during times of crisis, often viewing influencers as inauthentic and economically detached from the hardships being faced by society at large (Pradhan et al., 2022). Instances of perceived violations of ethics or tone deaf promotions often lead to "de-influencing" behaviors which can severely affect the trust of a brand and negate the effectiveness of influencer-led campaigns (Dzreke & Dzreke, 2025). Furthermore, the economic constraints that come with a wartime economy severely limit the influence of discretionary spending that is usually targeted for influencer endorsements (Archer et al., 2021).

As influencer credibility fades, Corporate and Brand Social Responsibility (BSR) has become the leading factor of digital conversion. In the face of times of national crisis, BSR initiatives strengthen the normative legitimacy of a brand, which in turn induces public-serving motives and positive moral emotions that translate directly into consumer support (J. Zhang et al., 2025). Digital campaigns that actively use socially responsible messaging (including green advertising, brand activism, or patriotic solidarity) appeal to consumers by way of central route processing, creating a deeper and value-driven connection that transcends the superficial attractive influence from an influencer (Pittman & Milfeld, 2023; Song et al., 2025). Consequently, optimizing digital campaigns in Ukraine means a strategic shift to BSR.

In order to empirically validate such a strategic pivot, actionable optimization methods such as A/B testing and messaging framing prove to be important. A/B testing helps marketers to quantitatively determine the most persuasive creative elements within a particular localized context (Hewitt et al., 2024; Nichifor et al., 2021). Research has specifically highlighted that hope-framed messages and self-gain combinations are particularly effective in increasing the believability of an advertisement, engagement on social media, and intention to buy, especially if the targeted audience is facing an extended period of adversity (Xie et al., 2024). Furthermore, knowing the nuances of context on the platform, such as the variable effectiveness of call-to-action (CTA) buttons, or showing the social normative influence (e.g. "likes"), are crucial to maximize click-through intentions (Huang & Lin, 2024a; R. Zhang et al., 2024).

Therefore, there is a clear research gap: while theoretical frameworks do exist to account for the shift to brand authenticity from influencer marketing during a crisis, here is a lack of localized, quantitative evidence outlining how this paradigm shift is translated into actionable optimization of marketing campaigns within the specific socio-political context of Ukraine. Addressing this gap, in this study, we aim to answer the following research questions: (1) What are the main psychological drivers of conversion intention among the Ukrainian social media users during uncertainty in wartime? and (2) How can the

digital campaigns be optimized empirically using socially responsible message framing?

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 is a review of the relevant literature and the development of the research hypotheses. Section 3 directs the empirical methodology and the experimental design, which is followed by the presentation of results in Section 4. Finally, Sections 5 and 6 deliver the discussion and conclusions, which include actionable optimization rules for digital marketers who operate in the crisis-inflicted context.

Literature Review

Relevance Perceived and The Engagement to Conversion Funnel

Personalization and conversion intention relate to perceived relevance that critically mediates it (Groot, 2022). The personalization paradox makes it obvious that excessive personalization becomes a catalyst in evoking privacy concerns and avoidance of advertising, which acts as an active intermediary between engagement and conversion funnels (Ahmed et al., 2025; Tayeb et al., 2025).

Social Media Campaign Optimization using A/B Testing

Moving engagement to conversion is only possible through optimization of A/B testing. The nature of the cross-lagged longitudinal effects of engagement implies that the elements of creativity can only be tested empirically continuously to isolate the real conversion drivers across the demographics (Nichifor et al., 2021; Ren et al., 2023).

The Evolution and Declining Credibility of Influencers

In the past, social proof and conversions were motivated by the credibility of influencers (expertise and trustworthiness) (Tripopsakul & Hoonsopon, 2025). Nevertheless, this effectiveness has been devastated by market saturation and fake content (Joshi et al., 2023). This, in turn, makes the classical Source Credibility Theory quite questioned, as it is becoming harder to trust commercially-oriented endorsements (Dewi, 2025; Han & Balabanis, 2023).

Ad Trust and Brand Social Responsibility (BSR)

The influencer impact has lost its power, so the general ad trust and BSR are the primary conversion drivers. Favorable brand-based marketing images develop the

required ad trust (Koay & Cheah, 2023). Moreover, the introduction of ethical BSR efforts is a much more sustainable predictor of conversion, which is more effective at boosting a brand image, consumer recognition, and direct purchasing intentions compared to individual influencers (Gupta et al., 2021; Q. Zhang & Ahmad, 2022).

Hypothesis Development

Although the global theories describe the transition to BSR, there is a specific gap in research on platform-specific behaviors during the wartime in Ukraine. The consumer behavior of the Ukrainian population remains extremely divergent in relation to the platforms: Telegram has become a lifeline, requiring crude institutional trust, and highly visual platforms such as Tik Tok and Instagram are experiencing acute influencer burnout and distrust in the conditions of national tragedy. This distinct digital environment increases the worldwide move toward a personality-based endorsements and requires empirically validated message framing based on values and respects these platform-related subtleties. Out of this gap and the selected variables, the study suggests:

- H1: Ad Trust positively and significantly affects Conversion Intention.
- H2: Conversion Intention has a positive and significant effect on Influencer Credibility.
- H3: The relation of Perceived Relevance to Conversion Intention is a positive and significant association.
- H4: Conversion Intention is positively and significantly correlated with Brand Social Responsibility Sensitivity.
- H5: Framing a socially responsible campaign will lead to a significantly large Click-Through Rate (CTR) in comparison to regular promotional framing.

Methodology

This research takes a very meticulous empirical approach, combining a cross section survey of consumer views with controlled experimentation on campaign optimisation. The dual-phase approach allows both identifying of the underlying psychological determinants and empirical validations of marketing performances in the frame of Ukrainian digital milieu.

Sampling and Participants

The target population would be the citizens of Ukraine aged eighteen years and above who are using social media. In order to obtain a satisfying sampling in the different digital ecology, the stratified quota sampling technique was used due to the demographic of age and active use of the platform at the moment (Telegram, Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook, etc.).

The participants were recruited via particular online platforms, with the majority of them being targeted via Facebook and Instagram Ads geo-targeting to adult users in Ukraine and provided by means of direct surveys link distribution within major regional Telegram community groups and public channels. It produced 485 unprocessed responses which were about the campaign click through responses and approximated 68% response rate. To obtain high data quality and analytic validity, strict data cleaning procedure was used prior to analysis. The data set was narrowed down to 135 respondents not completing the questionnaire, failing embedded attention-checks, or displaying uninterested response patterns (e.g. straight-lining). After this data cleaning operation, a strong final data sample of $N = 350$ was obtained and this sample gave a sufficient statistical power to perform the structural analysis and the validation of the experiment.

Measures and Instruments

Survey data was gathered using a structured questionnaire, in which a series of questions on all latent constructs were measured on a five point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The measurement model included five major variables: Ad Trust (TRST), Influencer Credibility (INFL), Perceived Relevance (RELV), Brand Social Responsibility Sensitivity (BSR), and Conversion Intention (CONV). In order to ensure analytical rigour, construct reliability was assessed and needed to have a Cronbach's alpha of > 0.70 .

Experimental (A/B) Testing Design

To go beyond self-reported intentions and obtain convertible digital marketing metrics, an A/B testing protocol was integrated into the investigation. The experiment was conducted over a two-week period to ensure sufficient data collection and to account for daily

fluctuations in user engagement. The experiment manipulated the frame of the campaign message. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions, baseline promotional condition (control) or socially responsible messaging condition (treatment). The main outcome index was simulated Click Through Rate (CTR), for each of the campaign variants. An independent samples t-test was specifically used in order to ascertain whether the differences in CTR between the control and treatment group were statistically significant. Moreover, a General Linear Model (GLM) was used to examine the interaction effects of the campaign type with the sensitivity of brand social responsibility of the respondents.

Statistical Analysis

Data processing and econometric estimation was done using Python version 3.14.0 and SPSS 17. Prior the actual analysis, the dataset was highly screened; the missing data was addressed through listwise deletion, and outlier criteria were defined to delete the responses with standardized Z-score above 3.29. Moreover, Pearson correlation and descriptive statistics were explicitly calculated to be used as the exploratory data to evaluate the initial correlation between the variables. Before hypothesis testing, the data set was checked for the presence of common method bias with the help of Harman's single - factor test. Primary survey data was analyzed using multiple linear regression to determine drivers of conversion intention that were independent of demographic covariates:

$$CONV_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TRST_i + \beta_2 INFL_i + \beta_3 RELV_i + \beta_4 BSR_i + \sum_{j=1}^k \gamma_j Control_{ji} + \epsilon_i$$

where $CONV_i$ is the Conversion Intention of individual i . The coefficients β_1 through β_4 are the coefficient of the main effect of Ad Trust, Influencer Credibility, Perceived Relevance, and Brand Social Responsibility Sensitivity, respectively. The summation term represents a vector of demographic and behavioral control variables including age, gender, and usage of the main platform, in order to isolate the main predictors. Finally, there is ϵ_i which is the stochastic error term.

Subsequently the experimental data were analysed to estimate the average treatment effect of campaign framing on user engagement, while testing for the moderating effect of BSR:

$$CTR_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Campaign_Type_i + \alpha_2 BSR_i + \alpha_3 (Campaign_Type_i \times BSR_i) + v_i$$

In this optimisation model, CTR_i is the observed Click Through Rate. The variable $Campaign_Type_i$ is a binary indicator variable taking value 1 for the socially responsible treatment group and 0 for the standard promotional control. The coefficient, α_1 , estimates the core treatment effect, whereas the coefficient, α_3 , measures the interaction term, which tests whether people with a higher degree of social responsibility sensitivity respond significantly more strongly to the treatment framing. v_i is the error term.

Result

Sample Profile

After data cleaning procedure, 350 valid survey responses were retained for final analysis and therefore fulfill the minimum sample size requirement set for this study. The demographic and behavioral structure of the sample is consistent with the use of the quota sampling approach and provides a sufficient representation of the main active social media cohorts in Ukraine. A detailed breakdown of respondent characteristics is given in Table 1.

**Table 1. Sample profile
(demographics and use of platform)**

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	182	52.0
	Male	168	48.0
Age Group	18-24	88	25.1
	25-34	140	40.0
	35-44	70	20.0
	45+	52	14.9
Primary Platform	Telegram	140	40.0
	Instagram	105	30.0
	TikTok	53	15.1
	Facebook	52	14.9

Model of Measurement, Reliability

Before the assessment of the structural relationships was made, the measurement model was examined for internal consistency and reliability. Psychometric properties of each of the multi-item constructs are summarized in Table 2. All constructs showed Cronbach's α values far above the threshold of .70 which suggests good scale reliability. Harman's single factor test indicated that common method bias was not a widespread problem given that one factor explained less than 50 percent of the total variance.

Table 2. Summary of reliability and validity

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	SD
Ad Trust (TRST)	3	0.84	3.52	0.81
Influencer Credibility (INFL)	3	0.81	2.85	0.92
Perceived Relevance (RELV)	3	0.77	3.81	0.74
Brand Social Responsibility (BSR)	3	0.89	4.18	0.63
Conversion Intention (CONV)	3	0.86	3.65	0.88

Factors Which Drive Conversion Intention (Survey Results)

In order to answer the main research questions related to the psychological antecedents of engagement, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed. The model had considerable explanatory power in the prediction of Conversion Intention. Table 3 shows the major results of the regressions. The results show a serious change in Ukrainian digital sphere: Brand Social Responsibility

became the strongest and significant predictor of the conversion intention ($\beta = 0.361$, $p < 0.001$), followed by Ad Trust ($\beta = 0.291$, $p < 0.001$) and Perceived Relevance ($\beta = 0.090$, $p = 0.011$). Influencer Credibility did not show a statistically significant effect on conversion intention ($\beta = 0.041$, $p = 0.134$) to support for the idea of a diminution of traditional influencer effect during periods of socio-economical uncertainty.

Table 3. Main model results (Regression against Conversion Intention)

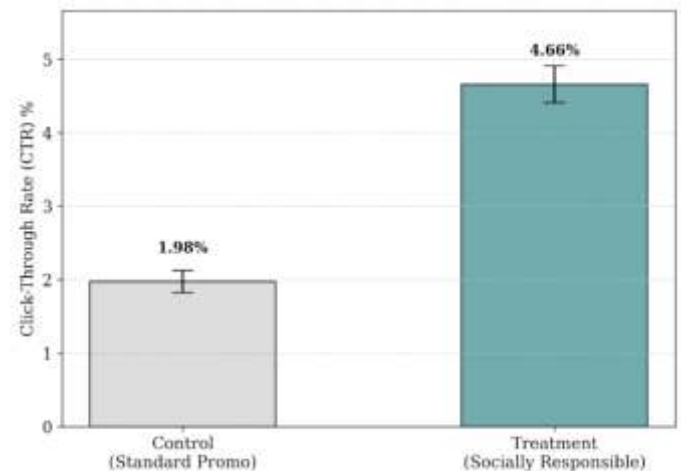
Predictor	Coefficient (Unstandardized)	p-value	Significance
(Constant)	1.437	< 0.001	***
Ad Trust (TRST)	0.291	< 0.001	***
Influencer Credibility (INFL)	0.041	0.134	ns
Perceived Relevance (RELV)	0.090	0.011	**
Brand Social Responsibility (BSR)	0.361	< 0.001	***

Notes: Dependent Variable = Conversion Intention (CONV). *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.05$, ns = not significant.

Optimization Evidence: Results of A/B testing

Following the information generated by the survey, the experimental component of the project assessed the practical effectiveness of integrating social responsibility in the design of the campaign through an A/B test. A generalized linear model was used to evaluate Click-Thru-Rate (CTR) for the two campaign conditions. The baseline "Standard Promo" (Control) resulted in the average CTR of 1.98%. By comparison, the "Socially Responsible Framing" (Treatment) led to a large and statistically significant uplift, with an average CTR of 4.66 percent. This suggests that changing the basic message more than doubled the baseline engagement measures. Visual evidence of the optimization uplift (comparing the control baseline with treatment intervention) is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Optimization evidence: A/B test lift on Click-Through Rate (CTR)



Discussion

This section makes the connection from our empirical findings to paradigm shifts in the literature on global digital consumer behaviour between 2019 and 2025. The results outline a clear shift away from digital marketing strategies that relied on influencer credibility and moves towards digital marketing strategies based on brand authenticity, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and brand activism.

The Loss of Credibility of Influencers in the Context of Geopolitical Uncertainty

Historically, influencer credibility, which is based on perceived trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, has increased persuasiveness and purchase intentions by developing parasocial relationships, especially for low-involvement products (Amin, 2024; Tripopsakul & Hoonsopon, 2025). Nevertheless, the rejection of the influencer hypothesis in our model is consonant with evidence that geopolitical uncertainty has a significant amplifying effect on consumer scepticism. This scepticism is particularly strong among Generation Z who actively avoid entities that are seen as morally irresponsible or driven by corporate interests (Pradhan et al., 2022). Geopolitical instability increases this distrust, which leads to critical examination of promotional intentions (Tripopsakul & Hoonsopon, 2025). The erosion of trust is further compounded by "relationship hijacking" whereby consumers' grievances with an influencer eclipse the endorsed brand (Giertz et al., 2022). Moreover, too much endorsing creates a lack of perceived credibility; in times of crisis, endorsing too frequently is understood as financially motivated instead of genuine (Borchers et al., 2022; Cheah et al., 2024). Consumers thus become hypersensitive to influencers abusing the platforms in the wake of tragedies (Jhavar et al., 2024; Karamushka et al., 2018). As a result, unclear financial disclosures seriously affect consumer judgments about the influencer and the product (Woodroof et al., 2020). The rise of virtual influencers brings even more complexity; disclosure of their nonhumanity can have a negative impact on trust in brands, requiring communication to be carefully managed (Chaihanchai et al., 2024; Muniz et al., 2023).

The Move towards Brand Authenticity and "Partisan CSR"

As influencer efficacy decreases, crises force consumers to be more critical of the authenticity of advertising messages as they seek more realistic stories and message credibility to inform engagement intentions (Jiang et al., 2022). This demand is encapsulated by Consumer Authenticity Seeking (CAS), a psychological moderator which highlights the need for the brand to meet consumer's expectations (Bartsch et al., 2021). Our results, which confirm the primacy of Brand Social Responsibility (BSR), are in line with evidence that crises increase demand for CSR in advertising. "Consumers expect corporate societal involvement," with the Russia-Ukraine conflict spurring "partisan CSR," and thus forcing companies to take explicit geopolitical stances (Bamiatzi et al., 2024). Corporations that pulled out of Russia justified their actions through proactive communication to ease relief efforts in line with societal expectations (Kovalenko, 2024). Highly salient public issues change brand attitudes and purchase intentions, and benefit firms that effectively capitalise on these topics in advertising (Milfeld et al., 2022). Nonetheless, progressive values adoption without meaningful organisational change runs the risk of 'woke-washing,' triggering potentially disastrous reputational crises and consumer backlash (Lizzi et al., 2025).

Brand Activism as a Substitute of Institutional Trust

In areas of conflict where institutional trust is being undermined, there arises a very powerful mechanism for leveraging conversion, that of brand activism. In Ukraine, brands participate in Peace Brand Activism (PBA) through social media to connect with consumer values and create peace (Tsoungkou et al., 2024). War-related Marketing Activism Actions (MAA) express conflict-related positions, helping communities get by and recover (Kipnis et al., 2024). In the absence of trust in conventional institutions, brands step in to become overtly political (Jithesh et al., 2024). By displaying social responsibility, brands develop trust at the institutional level, which leads to increased conversion intentions since consumers support entities believed to be trustworthy with money (Farooq, 2025). Nevertheless, superficial gestures instigate a polarising response; it is important for brands to practice real accountabilities and authenticity in order to maintain this trust (Hem & Hem, 2023; Ram, 2025; Scalvini, 2024).

Campaign Optimization Using Value Based Message Framing

The effectiveness of our optimisation component supports the psychological effect of value based message framing on click through rates (CTR). Intrinsic values of target audiences are stimulated in order to encourage action and increase the perceived relevance of advertising (Kosteljik, 2020). While gain framed messages tend to make people more engaged, societal crises often make loss - social framing very efficacious for promoting compliance and engagement (Gala et al., 2024; J. Zhang et al., 2025). On the contrary, the mismatched messages that clash with audience values are active agents in reducing persuasiveness (Joyal-Desmarais et al., 2025). A/B testing is important for testing thematic framing where moral sentiments that stress community responsibility exponentially increase CTR (Epstein et al., 2022). Patriotic framing efficacy varies depending on the salience of national identity at the time of ad exposure (Yoo & Lee, 2020), Promotion framing brand activism in combination with specific visuals improves favourable attitudes and purchase intentions (Zhou et al., 2023). A/B testing is also used to determine the most effective personalised creative elements, such as certain faces, technical details, etc. to customise strategies for different segments (Nichifor et al., 2021). Finally, ad timing and presentation of social endorsements use normative influence to maximise ad consumption and conversions (Huang & Lin, 2024b; Saha et al., 2021).

The Imperative of localization (Digital Strategies)

At the end of the day, playbooks that are standard at a global level fail to work properly without rigorous localisation in crisis markets. Successful adaptation requires cultural awareness, finding the right balance between content and local norms and socio-cultural dynamics so as not to commit the critical missteps (Saliba & Salem, 2024). Language localization is a key driver of engagement; genuine engagement between brands and consumers is created through the authentic use of local dialects (Pradani, 2024). At times of crisis, communication in more than one language reduces vulnerabilities for minority-language speakers ensuring comprehension on a wider scale (Lukic, 2025). Fostering user generated content (UGC) and localised hashtags brings about real endorsements,

boosting discoverability in regional conversations (Okonkwo et al., 2023). However, brands need to try to balance global consistency with local adaptation - too much localisation that dilutes brand identity and too little localisation that alienates consumers in sensitive environments.

Limitations and Future Research

Although the given research sheds solid empirical data on digital campaign optimization in a crisis, it is important to obtain a number of limitations that should be mentioned explicitly. To begin with, the study is prone to sampling bias; although the authors apply stratified quota sampling, the use of the digital recruitment tools (e.g. social media advertisements and Telegram groups) would inevitably eliminate Ukrainian citizens who lack consistent internet connectivity or totally avoid online resources during the conflict. Second, the survey part is based on self-reported scales on such constructs as perceived relevance and conversion intention, which are vulnerable to social desirability and cognitive recall bias and can overstated the reported significance of ethical brand behavior. Third, the digital ecosystem is extremely fluid; the results can be readily affected by updates in the algorithm of the platform, especially in the context of such platforms as TikTok and Facebook where the content moderation rules or feed algorithm may and will change overnight dramatically, affecting the effectiveness and visibility of the socially responsible message framing. Lastly, the research is limited by data because the study is cross-sectional in nature as well as due to the nature of the A/B testing experiment, which only represents consumer sentiment at a single, very stressful and geopolitical time. The limitations can be faced by future research through the use of longitudinal designs that will help to monitor the long-term effects of value-driven framing and introduce the objective data of behavioral tracking to reduce the drawbacks of self-reported surveys.

Conclusions

This work has used empirical techniques to investigate the changing nature of digital consumer behaviour and campaign optimisation in the socio-political context of Ukraine. The results suggest a significant paradigm shift in the engagement to conversion funnel. As geopolitical uncertainty and market disruptions continue, traditional

global marketing assumptions (especially the credibility of influencers) have lost their effectiveness. The empirical model shows that the credibility of influencer has lost its statistical significance as a determinant of conversion intention. Instead, Ukrainian consumers are increasingly prioritizing authenticity and putting their trust in brands' social responsibility and general ad trust at the forefront of their digital decision-making processes.

The use of an experimental A/B testing framework provided actionable evidence of this behavioural change. Transitioning from a standard promotional baseline to a socially responsible message framing led to a more than doubling of the click through rate ranging from 1.98% to 4.66%. This result confirms that matching marketing stories to increased moral and social expectations of the target audience is not only an ethical imperative but an extremely effective digital optimisation strategy.

On the basis of such empirical findings, the subsequent actionable optimisation measures emerge to digital marketers who will be in an environment crisis-stricken such as Ukraine:

1. **Switch Personality-Driven Communication to Principle-Driven Communication:** Marketers need to evade investments on the classic high-tier influencers, especially on visually oriented websites such as Instagram and Tik Tok, where influencer fatigue and distrust are at peak levels. Rather, the budget must be redistributed to institutional campaigns that market the brand as physical social causes and dependability.
2. **Install Value-Based Framing On Formats:** Framing efforts over community resilience, patriotic solidarity or ethical actions ought to become the fundamental creative parameter of A/B testing. By modifying these value-based stories into massively entertaining formats, e.g., in the form of short-form videos on Tik Tok and Instagram Reels, or community-based updates in Facebook, one staple will always yield much more engagement than a blanketing promotional discount.
3. **Improve Ad Trust Structures:** In a low trust digital world, it is urgent to make sure that every promotional content includes clear and verifiable assertions. Marketing should ensuredly be careful not to disclose ambiguous sponsor information or the so-called over-

endorsement tactics on social feeds, which rapidly provoke consumer reactance and brand erosion.

4. **Carry out Platform Localisation Contextual:** Marketers must shed off fixed global standardised playbooks. The only way to optimise effectively is to keep changing campaign tone, language, and cultural references to keep in touch with the reality of the target group at the moment. More importantly, it means putting emphasis on platforms that are now vital life-blood sources of real-time news and community support in Ukraine including Telegram and exploiting local dialects to establish authentically localized relationships.
5. **Engage Micro-Influencers in Segmental engagement:** Although the credibility of high-tier influencers has waned, the companies must focus on maximizing their targeting efforts through high-vetted and local micro-influencers. Their real, on-the-ground community links can cut through overall ad skepticism and can actually reach certain, niche demographic groups otherwise very difficult to serve.

Although it offers some good insights, there are limitations to this study. Cross-section survey data reflects the consumer sentiment at a given time, and can change as geopolitical climate changes. Moreover, the A/B test had been set-up to assess immediate click-through rates, future studies are needed that will involve longitudinal monitoring of more profound key performance indicators, e.g., actual cost per acquisition (CPA), or ultimate sales conversion rates. More importantly, the emphasis on multi-country replication in future research should be very high. To ensure the global generalizability and applicability of these value-based optimisation strategies is not limited to the context of Ukraine, but is also applicable to other emerging or crisis-impacted markets, it is of paramount importance that rigorous multi-country replication studies should be conducted.

Declarations

Ethical Approval and Informed Consent

All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and national research committee. Explicit informed consent was obtained from all individual participants prior to their inclusion in the study. Participants

were fully assured of their anonymity, and no personally identifiable information was collected, stored, or processed during the survey and experimental phases.

Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are not publicly available due to privacy and ethical restrictions regarding the ongoing geopolitical situation in the targeted region, but are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

AI Use Disclosure

During the preparation of this work, the author utilized an AI tool (Google Gemini) to assist with language translation, text editing, and formatting to improve the overall readability of the manuscript. After using this tool, the author thoroughly reviewed, edited, and validated the content as needed, and takes full responsibility for the final content, accuracy, and integrity of the publication.

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