Advertising-consumer interaction

Lesson 4.5.2 | Consumer psychology

Core ideas

Consumers can interact with adverts by clicking, searching, commenting, liking, sharing, skipping, blocking or questioning the message.

Interactive advertising can increase involvement because consumers do something with the advert rather than only watch or read it.

Engagement signals, such as clicks, watch time, comments and shares, can help advertisers judge whether an advert is working.

Personalised adverts use consumer data or behaviour to make the message feel more relevant to a particular person or group.

Consumer feedback can strengthen an advert through social proof, but negative comments or distrust can weaken the brand message.

Ethical issues include privacy, manipulation, transparency and whether consumers understand how their data shapes the adverts they see.

Key terms

Interaction: A consumer's active response to an advert, such as clicking, sharing or commenting.

Engagement: The amount of attention or active involvement a consumer gives to an advert.

Click-through: When a consumer selects an advert link to see more information or buy.

Personalisation: Adapting an advert to a consumer's interests, behaviour or profile.

Consumer feedback: Responses from consumers, such as comments, ratings, reviews or complaints.

User-generated content: Consumer-created posts, videos or reviews linked to a brand or advert.

Ad avoidance: Skipping, ignoring, muting or blocking advertising.

Data privacy: Control over how personal information is collected and used.

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Further detail and evidence

Key study: Snyder and DeBono (1985), Study 3, tested whether self-monitoring affects willingness to try image-advertised versus quality-advertised shampoo.

Forty Minnesota introductory-psychology undergraduates participated for course credit; a median split of Self-Monitoring Scale scores formed 20 high and 20 low self-monitors.

A researcher blind to these scores telephoned participants, posing as a market researcher. Random assignment determined the message.

The image message stressed good-looking hair with average cleaning; the quality message stressed cleaning with average appearance.

Dependent measures were five-category willingness and a 0-100% willingness estimate, combined into an index.

High self-monitors were more willing under image appeals; low self-monitors were more willing under quality appeals.

Product placement embeds a branded product within film or other content. Mere exposure can increase familiarity; a reminder can reactivate an existing brand association. Neither mechanism requires a viewer to report a persuasive intention consciously.

Example study - Auty and Lewis (2004) showed children aged 6-7 and 11-12 a Home Alone clip containing Pepsi or a similar unbranded clip. At individual interviews children were offered a choice of Pepsi or Coke, providing a behavioural choice measure rather than only stated liking.

Children who saw the branded clip were more likely to choose Pepsi. Interviews suggested a reminder effect involving prior exposure, and explicit recall did not fully explain choice. Age did not mediate the effect as expected; this is not evidence that younger children are immune to embedded marketing.

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Continued

Self-monitoring concerns adjusting self-presentation to social cues. Image-oriented advertising stresses the identity or impression associated with a product; quality-oriented advertising stresses performance and practical attributes. Neither is inherently more persuasive for every audience.

Snyder and DeBono's designated Study 3 measures willingness to try shampoo after a message, not actual long-term purchasing. Its blind caller reduces interviewer bias; grouping on self-monitoring is a measured participant difference, not an experimentally created personality.

Product placement embeds a brand in entertainment. Auty and Lewis (2004) compared children exposed to a Pepsi placement in Home Alone with a control clip, then offered drinks. Placement influenced choice through a reminder effect; explicit recall alone did not explain the pattern. Age and existing exposure need consideration.

Applying the ideas

A shampoo advert can stress a fashionable impression or reliable cleaning. A viewer high in self-monitoring may respond differently from someone focused on internal preferences. A drink chosen after a film clip is behaviour, while saying one would try shampoo is an intention; keep their evidential value distinct.

Evaluation and connections

This supports matching advertising to personality/functions, but willingness is not observed use. Self-monitoring was measured, not experimentally assigned.

Evaluate controlled clips against the realism of a single drink choice, pre-existing brand preferences and generalisation beyond these age groups. Research with children requires appropriate consent/assent and protection; embedded advertising also raises questions about recognising persuasion.

Controlled messages isolate content and blinded interviewing improves consistency. A small student sample limits generalisation to other ages/products. Children's research needs consent/assent and suitable debriefing. Product-placement usefulness must be weighed against less obvious persuasion of vulnerable audiences.