

# ADVERTISEMENT CLUTTER, SINS OF MEMORY AND THEIR IMPACT ON CUSTOMER ATTENTION

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**ABSTRACT:** The main purpose of this study is to find out the relationship between Advertisement Clutter, Sins of memory and their impact on customer attention. The dependent variable of this study is “Customer Attention” and the independent variables of this study are “Advertisement Clutter and Sins of Memory”. The research is based on primary data. The study has used a convenience sample of 269 respondents from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan. A five-point Likert scale was used for measurement. The techniques of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin, Cronbach’s alpha, Correlation and Regression was used for analysis. There is a strong positive relationship between advertisement clutter, sins of memory and customer attention towards message. Creativity in advertisement can overcome the problem of advertisement clutter and sins of memory thus can catch better attention.

**Keywords:** Advertisement Clutter, Sins of Memory, Attention, Advertisement

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a common commercial activity. The evaluation of advertising effectiveness is an active area of interest within the advertising research community, and, of course, is most concerned by the advertisers.

As if effective marketing communication were not hard enough to achieve, even if we succeed in getting our message attended to and processed, and a positive intention formed, the very nature of memory may step in and upset everything. Memory distortion and plain old forgetting are unfortunate facts of life. The important question, however, is: can we do anything about it? As with most things, if we are to have any hope of dealing with memory problems and their impact upon advertising and other marketing communications, we must first understand what is going on. [1]

In this paper we will be looking at what [2] has called 'the seven sins of memory': transience, absent-mindedness, blocking, misattribution, suggestibility, bias and persistence. [1]

Also Consumers were always able to avoid mass media advertising. Television breaks would be the time to make snacks or go to the toilet, magazine readers could turn the page and newspapers could have entire sections tossed aside. [3]

And today, advertising avoidance becomes increasingly easy. Televisions all have remote controls, many people watch only shows that were recorded earlier so the commercials can be skipped, or many broadcast services are now by subscription and commercial free. [3]

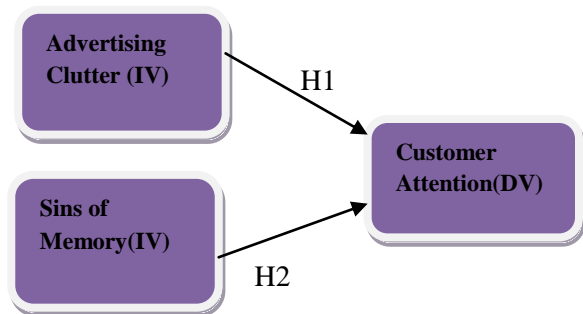
Yet it appears that the advertisers’ “solution” to audience avoidance of their messages is to increase the number of messages, so even effort of commercial avoidance becomes a source of audience frustration. Despite claims to a highly targeted media environment, advertising is increasing placed without much regard for each vehicle’s audience, resulting in the mass media equivalence of advertising spam for audiences. [3]

To some, advertising’s future lies in doing a better job of hiding the sales message in the news or editorial content of the media [4]. Advertising writers say that the solution is more creative advertising that breaks out from the advertising

clutter. They are partially right, since the problems of clutter are compounded when the exact same dull message is seen multiple times within the same vehicle. But for advertisers, they need to realize that a less cluttered environment is worth more money. A sponsored vehicle with a greatly reduced number of advertising messages means that each message would have a greater impact, assuming the provide information that the audiences would like to receive. [3]

Also as society becomes more complex, as we become more aware of the harmful effects of some products and as agencies try to become more creative to “cut through the clutter” to gain awareness, there will be more advertisements which the general public perceive as “offensive”. [5]

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK \ RESEARCH MODEL



Two variables were used to identify the customer attention. i.e. Advertising Clutter and Sins of memory. A simple model is drawn to show the relationship between variables. Two Hypotheses were developed to check the relationship.

## OBJECTIVE(S) OF THE STUDY

The study objectives are to identify and empirically test the factors, which affect the consumer attention towards advertising message in reference to variables such as advertising clutter and sins of memory.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Imperfections in memory have obvious implications for the successful processing of advertising. Even if a positive intention is formed as a result of exposure to an advert, if a

memory malfunction interferes with that intention, the advertising will be ineffective. The problems associated with these 'seven sins of memory', are discussed below.

#### **THE SIN OF TRANSIENCE**

Forgetting that naturally occurs over time may be thought of as transience. While the memory of what one did yesterday may be all but perfect, over time those memories tend to become more a generic description of what one expects to happen under those circumstances rather than what actually did happen. [1]

#### **THE SIN OF ABSENT-MINDEDNESS**

When one fails to pay proper attention to something and as a result does not encode it properly, or when the information is actually in memory, but overlooked when needed to be retrieved, one experiences the sin of absent-mindedness. Absent-mindedness manifests itself both in failing to remember past experiences as well as in failing to remember to do something in the future. Both, of course, can prove troublesome for marketing communication. Also, the fact that absentmindedness is more likely for routine experiences that do not in and of themselves require elaborative encoding (e.g. exposure to advertising) adds to the problem. [1]

#### **THE SIN OF BLOCKING**

We are all familiar with the sin of blocking, that all-too-familiar experience of recognizing someone but not being able to remember their name. According to [2], blocking is not the same thing as absent-mindedness or transience. In the case of blocking, the memory has been encoded and stored, unlike absent-mindedness. In fact, an appropriate retrieval cue could be in place, but the association is just not made. [1]

#### **THE SIN OF MISATTRIBUTION**

If one correctly remembers something learned, but attributes it to the wrong source, this is misattribution. Often referred to as 'unconscious transference', it causes real problems with eyewitness identification. The problem stems from a strong sense of general familiarity, coupled with an absence of specific recollection. While the consequences of misattribution in advertising are obviously not as serious as they are with eyewitness identification, it can nevertheless cause marketers real problems. [1]

#### **THE SIN OF SUGGESTIBILITY**

Suggestibility in memory occurs because one tends to include information that has been learned from an outside source as something personally experienced. This information may come from any external source, including advertising or other marketing communication. While suggestibility is similar to the sin of misattribution, misattribution does not require suggestions from outside sources. But when the two combine, it is quite possible for us to develop memories of something which in fact never occurred. [1]

#### **THE SIN OF BIAS**

The sin of bias reflects how current understandings, beliefs and feelings have the ability to distort how one interprets new experiences and the memory of them. Biases that are associated with memory of past experiences will greatly influence how one perceives and understands new information or situations. [1]

#### **THE SIN OF PERSISTENCE**

Research has shown that emotionally charged experiences are better remembered than less emotional occasions. The sin of persistence involves remembering things you wish you would forget, and it is strongly associated with one's emotional experiences. [1]

#### **Advertising Clutter**

As society becomes more complex, as we become more aware of the harmful effects of some products and as agencies try to become more creative to "cut through the clutter" to gain awareness, there are some hard questions for agencies to ask themselves before undertaking a controversial campaign. [5]

Advertising writers say that the solution is more creative advertising that breaks out from the advertising clutter. [3]

#### **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

To be able to determine consumer attention towards advertising message in reference to variables such as advertising clutter and sins of memory following hypotheses are developed:

**H1:** There is a strong relationship between sins of memory and customer attention.

**H2:** creative advertisement affects the consumers' attention positively

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

##### **Dependent variable**

The dependent variable of this study is "customer attention", because we want to check the affects of sins of memory and advertisement clutter on advertisement message.

##### **Independent variable**

The independent variables of this study are "advertising clutter and sins of memory", because we want to check their impact on customer attention towards advertisement message.

#### **DATA COLLECTION**

The research is based on primary data. The respondents of this study are the students of "The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan". The dependent variable of this study is "Customer Attention" and the independent variables of this study are "Advertisement Clutter and Sins of Memory". The study has used a convenience sample of 269 respondents from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan. A five-point Likert scale was used for measurement. The techniques of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin, Cronbach's alpha, Correlation and Regression was used for analysis.

#### **SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION**

In this study we have used a convenience sample of 269 respondents from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan. We have applied Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy test to check the adequacy of our sample size. The computed value of this test is .854 Which means sample size is very good and is adequate.

#### **RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

The mode of data collection used was questionnaires; which were developed after a literature survey. On the basis of this survey the detailed questionnaire was developed. Then,

researcher went for pilot testing of the questionnaire. In this, researcher tested questionnaire on a test sample which comprised of students of department of management sciences IUB Pakistan. The questionnaire was finalized after the pilot test.

**Cronbach’s Alpha**

To check the overall reliability of the instrument used, the technique of Cronbach’s alpha was run. The computed value of Cronbach’s Alpha is 0.870. Which is above the standard value proposed by (Nummally, 1978) of 0.70 which shows that our instrument is reliable and we can confidently apply different statistical tests and interpret the results boldly.

**Data Collection**

Data was collected by using structured questionnaire. A five-point Likert scale was used for measurement. The scale consisted of five levels of agreement, beginning with strongly agree up to strongly disagree (1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=not sure, 4=disagree and, 5=strongly disagree).

**DATA ANALYSIS:**

The data was entered, edited and analyzed by using Software like SPSS version 16 and Microsoft Excel 2007 by applying the techniques of Cronbach’s alpha, Correlation and Regression.

**Correlation Analysis:**

Pearson correlation technique was run to identify the relationship of variables with each other and whether any observed variable has perfect covariance with any other variable which is observed in this study. We applied correlation to advertisement clutter, sins of memory and customer attention. The summarized result of correlation is shown in table 1 below. The relationship between two variables was found significant at p value of 0.01 level. This relationship shows a positive and moderate to strong relationship among variables. The computed value of correlation of sins of memory is .617 which shows a strong and positive relationship among the two variables as the value is greater than 0.50. So our first hypothesis (H1) is accepted as there is a strong relationship between sins of memory and customer attention. The computed value of correlation of advertisement clutter is .689 which shows a strong and positive relationship among the two variables as the value is greater than 0.50. So our second hypothesis (H2) is accepted as creative advertisement increases customer attention.

**REGRESSION ANALYSIS**

To analyze the hypothesis proposed on one to one basis we use linear Regression technique.

The proposed hypothesis postulates that there is a strong relationship between sins of memory and customer attention and creative advertisement increases customer attention towards advertisement message .The value of R square is 0.509, which shows that 50.9% of the variance in the dependent variable (Buying decisions) explained by predictor variables. The value of F test is137.49 at p<0.000 shows the models’ goodness of fit. Hence, our hypotheses are accepted.

**Table1.**

Correlation				
		sins of memory	clutter	customer attention
sins of memory	Pearson Correlation	1	.707**	.617**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	269	269	269
clutter	Pearson Correlation	.707**	1	.689
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	269	269	269
customer attention	Pearson Correlation	.617**	.689**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	269	269	269
**.	Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

**Table 2**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.713 <sup>a</sup>	.509	.505	.59423

a. Predictors: (Constant), clutter, sins of memory

b. Dependent Variable: customer attention

**Table 3**

**ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	97.274	2	48.637	137.741	.000
	Residual	93.926	266	353		
	Total:	191.201	268			

a. Predictors: (Constant), clutter, sins of memory

b. Dependent Variable: customer attention

**Findings of the Study:**

1. There is a strong positive relationship between sins of memory and customer attention.
2. Creative advertisement affects the consumers’ attention positively.

**CONCLUSION:**

Our study concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between advertisement clutter, sins of memory and customer attention towards message. Creativity in advertisement can overcome the problem of advertisement clutter and sins of memory thus can catch better attention. Advertisers should made certain changes in their ads like

- 1) Ensure the message is carefully integrated with how a brand is understood.
- 2) Tie brands to appropriate emotions.
- 3) Create a unique brand benefit claim link.
- 4) Use strong visual images to create or reinforce positive memories associated with the brand, to avoid, or at least minimize, problems inherent in how memory works and create better attention.

**Limitations:**

1. Due to scarcity of time and cost constraints, the study was limited to The University only.
2. The study has been conducted on the responses of the students of The Islamia University (Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan). Therefore, the results of the study need not hold entirely for the Bahawalpur city or for the Pakistan at large.
3. The study was limited only to the 269 respondents (students) from the university. More respondents would have made the results more generalize able.

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