

Advertising Overload: The Impact of Information Overload On Brand Awareness: Case of University Of Swat Students

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Abstract

Information overload due to the excessive advertisement is a serious concern. Marketers think that they can achieve favorable marketing outcome such as brand awareness and higher sales using the excessive advertisement. However, research suggests that excessive advertisement may not be very beneficial. In this study, this issue is investigated using the information overload as independent variable and brand awareness as dependent variable. The methodology used in this study is quantitative and survey is used for data collection. For sampling, we used the University of Swat students. A total of 148 surveys were used for analysis and method of sampling was convenience non-random sampling. Results show that mostly respondents reported a higher problem of information overload due to the excessive advertisement. Furthermore, regression results showed that information overload is negatively influencing customer brand awareness ($\beta = -.317, P < .05$). Results have implications for marketers.

Keywords: Information Overload, Advertising, Excessive, Brand Awareness, Pakistan.

Introduction

Now a day, there is excessive advertisement to which individuals are exposed every day and everywhere (Khan, Dongping and Wahab, 2016). The result of excessive advertisement is that it leads to decreased advertisement effectiveness among customers (Chang, Chen, and Tan, 2012). In this study, the focus is on understanding how excessive advertisement which leads to the information overload brings change in customer brand awareness. The literature suggests that increased advertisement using different channels such as mobile and television based advertisement leads to the decreased perceived web quality of the message and resulting decreased brand awareness among customers; a phenomenon known as banner blindness (Akar and Topcu, 2011); and advertising avoidance. Mostly, such studies conducted in

Western context but not in local context which is a literature gap identified in this study is based on previous studies work including Salyer (2013), Cheoux-Damas and le Floch, (2014), and Lazauskas and Vilhelmsson, and Tran (2017). Therefore, this study intends to fulfill this literature gap.

Research Question

- What is the effect of information overload on brand awareness of customer?

Research Objective

- To test the effects of information overload on customer brand awareness

Significance of the Study

The benefit of the study is that it highlight the problem of information overload something which is mostly missed by the marketers. Using the findings of the study, an organization can better devise its marketing and advertising plan.

Literature Review

Information Overload

In ordinary language, information overload can be described as a phenomenon of receiving excessive information (Vollmann, 1991). An alternative term to information overload is infobesity which is also frequently used for situation where there is excessive information bombardment on ordinary individual who find it difficult to handle this information overload (Wurman, 2001). The result of information overload caused by excessive advertising is that it creates difficulty for individuals to complete or perform a task or give attention to the details of the contents of the advertisement (Kovach, 2010). Outcome of excessive advertisement is that individuals become bombarded with too much advertisement information and they cannot use it for their benefit because of limited capacity to remember information (Lincoln, 2011).

Bawden (2001) states that because of burgeoning growth in electronic and print media and contents, there is several time increase in information overload phenomenon. Edmunds and Morris (2000) made interesting comments that because of information overload, it is also becoming difficult for individuals to search and retrieve specific information as there is always chance of unnecessary information to come to surface. The negative effect of information overload is that individual customers find it difficult in understanding information and this reduce the ability to make use of useful information or filter unnecessary information. In this scenario, because of online advertisement which is conducted through social media and other online platforms has also increased the information overload for ordinary customers (Lincoln, 2011).

Brand Awareness

Keller (2009) describe brand awareness is the extent to which potential customers can recognize and associate with particular brand or product. Every organization wants to develop brand awareness because of large benefits associated with brand awareness as it leads to the higher brand equity, purchases, profitability, and growth of the organization (Keller, 2009; MacDonald and Sharp, 2000; Aaker, 1991).

Brand recall and brand recognition are two related concepts of brand awareness. By brand recall, it means that customer is able to recall the brand in the absence of any advertisement; while, brand recognition is about customer ability to recognize the brand among different brands posed. Aided and unaided are two measures of brand awareness. Aided strategy is suitable when customer is observing several brands simultaneously; while, unaided is suitable when customer is talking about specific brand (Liu, Wong, Tseng, Chang, and Phau, 2017).

Brand name is also part of the brand awareness as it help customer to recall the product and assist in making purchase decision (Davis, Golicic and Maquardt, 2008). The function of the brand awareness is that it enable customer to recognize a product from range of products (Janiszewski and Van Osselaer, 2000).

Effects of Information Overload on Brand Awareness

Every organization uses advertisement to convey information to the customers so that customer retain those information and enhance brand awareness (Keller, 2009). According to Rafi, Ali, &Waris, (2011), an organization should engage in cyclical advertisement so that it create an impression and brand recall among the customers. Previous work suggests that information overload is influencing customer brand awareness. Chatterjee, Tooley, &Fatseasa, (2008) suggest that information overload which is provided through any medium create noise and customer prefer certain information over others. Information overload create situation when customer miss giving attention to the information voluntarily or involuntarily.

Theoretical Model of the Study

The theoretical basis of the study is the Distraction Conflict Theory (DCT) proposed by Baron (1986). The theory suggest that when distraction occurs, it make individual to focus more on simple tasks and ignore the complex tasks leading to situation where good performance is presented for simple tasks and performance is effected for the difficult tasks.

Wood (1986) further suggests that information overload leads to decreased cognitive capacity among the decision maker. Norman and Bobrow (1975) further suggested that information overload result in confusion in memory since information overload and primary tasks utilize same sensory organs. This is in line with the information overload theory which states that too much information received by an individual cause’s decreased capacity of understanding that information (Schneider, Dumas, and Shifrinn, 1984).

Based on the information overload theory and distraction conflict theory, we propose that in advertisement context, too much information overload result in decreased brand awareness among individuals. Hypothetical model for the study is provided below.

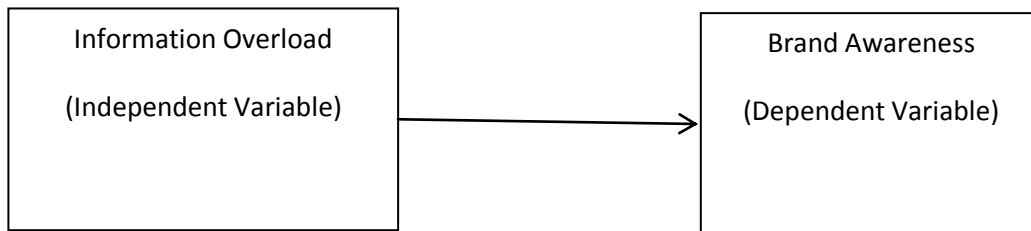


Figure: Theoretical Model

Our hypotheses are as follows.

H0: Information overload has insignificant influence on customer brand awareness

H1: Information overload has significant influence on customer brand awareness

Research Methodology

Research Design

The design of the study is quantitative research design along with the cross-sectional. It means that our data collection and analysis is based on statistical approach and data collection is based on single time collection. The research design of the study is also explanatory means it is about testing the hypotheses and analyzing the influence of one independent variable over the other.

Research Population

The focus of the study is understanding the information overload influence on customer brand awareness and it is focused towards the university of Swat students so all students in this university makes the population. The population is about 4000 students.

Research Sampling

Sampling is used when it is difficult to study the full population as it provide a useful method of collecting data from small sub-set and making inference about larger population (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2018). A sample of 148 students was conveniently selected using the Bartlett, Kotrlik, and Higgins (2001) sampling formula.

Data Collection

Data collection in this study was primary method based and we used the survey method for collecting primary data. Our survey consisted of questions which were required to be answered based on 5 points Likert scale.

Survey Measure

The information overload in this study was measured by 4 questions adapted from Alarabi and Gronbland (2012). The brand awareness is measured by 4 items adapted from Marius Le Floch (2014).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was based on quantitative approach and we used frequency analysis, correlation, and regression analysis. These analyses were performed by SPSS version 21.

Results

Demographic Information

Table 1.Demographic Information

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	137	92.6
	Female	11	7.4
Age	20.00	23	15.5
	21.00	48	32.4
	22.00	22	14.9
	23.00	26	17.6
	24.00	11	7.4
	25.00	5	3.4
	26.00	8	5.4
	28.00	5	3.4

Mostly participants were male (137) and few were female (11). Age wise, mostly participants were 21 years of age (48); followed by 23 years of age (26); 20 years of age (23); and 22 years of age (22).

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2.Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	SD	Cronbach Alpha
Information Overload	2.17	.835	0.841
Brand Awareness	3.98	.665	0.775

Note: 1=Strongly Agree-----5= Strongly Disagree

The reliability statistics indicate satisfactory reliability of the questionnaires adapted. The descriptive statistics indicate low brand awareness based on mean value of 3.98 and high information overload based on mean value of 2.17.

Correlation

Table 3: Correlation

		1	2
Information Overload	Pearson Correlation	1	-.399**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N		148
Brand Awareness	Pearson Correlation	-.399**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	148	

Correlation analysis indicates significant negative relationships between information overload and brand awareness with coefficient value of -.399 and significance value of 0.000.

Regression Analysis

Table 4:Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.678	.141		33.175	.000
Information Overload	-.317	.060	-.399	-5.251	.000

R= .399

Rsquare= .159

Adjusted Rsquare= .153

Fstat= 27.576 (0.000)

Results from regression analysis confirm that information overload has negative significant influence on customer brand awareness with beta coefficient value of -.317 and significance value of 0.000. The Rsquare indicate that information overload explains 15.9% variation in brand awareness (dependent variable). Fstatistics shows good model fitness (Fstat=273576>4.00).

Discussion

The objective was to test the influence of information overload on customer brand awareness. Results obtained using the primary method of data collection through students of University of Swat shows that information overload bring negative influence on customer brand awareness. Other studies results are also similar to these results including Chatterjee et. al., (2008) and Rafiet. al., (2011). The results are also supported by the distraction conflict theory (Baron, 1986); and information overload theory (Schneider, Dumas&Shiffrin, 1984).

Conclusion

On the basis of the study findings, it is concluded that information overload is a negative phenomenon which negatively influence customers in terms of brand awareness. It can be concluded that organization should not only focus on excessive advertisement since it may create distraction and dissatisfaction among customers. Banner blindness and advertising avoidance may be caused because of advertisement overload. It can be concluded that excessive information overload may bring brand awareness rather than increasing it.

Recommendations

- Marketers may focus on simple and cyclical advertisement.
- Too much information overload and advertisement may be avoided.
- Give preference to the customer perspective.

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