

## **The effect of creating curiosity theory (information gap) in teaser advertising campaigns on recipient behavior**

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### **Abstract:**

Advertisers use teaser ads to introduce a new product or to attract attention to an upcoming ad campaign for an existing product. The teaser campaign operates on the simple premise of the need to capture attention before the brand's story can be told. It persuades the recipient audience to create and develop their curiosity for the unbranded product, and make them talk about the advertisement in order to satisfy their curiosity. This "curiosity for news" trend pushes the teaser campaign ad forward as the mystery is exposed in a series of segments. These advertisements arouse curiosity and appeal to the behavior of the recipient and adopt their orientation towards the purchase decision.

One of the modern theoretical treatments of curiosity is the "knowledge gap" perspective, also referred to as the "information gap." Curiosity is created when the recipient became aware of the shortcomings in their knowledge. Awareness of the knowledge gap results in an excessive feeling of discomfort that can only be alleviated by obtaining the necessary information to bridge the gap, resulting in an intense desire to modify the knowledge structure of the recipient. Curiosity manifests itself in the desire to seek knowledge. It is only created when the gap in knowledge is perceived as manageable or moderate, the recipient has some 'cue' that helps him relate the lost information to knowledge that is already in the field. The extent of curiosity will be stronger when the knowledge gap is more moderate than when the knowledge gap is very low or very high. Therefore, the research recommends the need to study the theory of creating curiosity (information gap) in teaser advertising campaigns, because they help influence the behavior of the recipient to respond to the advertising message in a positive way. This paper focuses on studying the information gap theory to create curiosity. Moreover, the impact of creating curiosity on target audiences of teasing advertising campaigns.

### **Keywords:**

Information Gap Theory, Creating Curiosity, Teaser Advertising Campaigns, Recipient Behavior

### **Introduction:**

Curiosity is a guided, motivational state associated with exploration. It is a function of learning and exploration. In literature, curiosity is often defined as "the desire to seek and acquire new information." Hence, curiosity can be a powerful tool because it leads to interest, which

stimulates behavioral intention. Advertisers are often interested in arousing and creating a recipient's curiosity about the product to capture their attention and interest in the product. Curiosity is a powerful driver of the recipient's behavior. When curiosity is aroused, the recipient is willing to purchase the product without knowing the content of the advertising message, academic scientific research has proven the effectiveness of intriguing advertisements. About four decades ago, it was demonstrated that arousing curiosity through outdoor advertisements encourages recipients to seek information. Arousing curiosity can change the behavior of the recipient from an anonymous processor to an active searcher of brand information, and curiosity is effective for low-cost / risk products. Curiosity-generating radio ads are considered to attract attention and improve information acquisition. Subsequent studies have linked curiosity to the development of advertising strategy, and have shown that the curiosity that internet advertising arouses, for example, enhances the time spent and attention devoted to specific information.

### **Research problem:**

The research problem lies in the importance of studying the theories of curiosity in advertising campaigns and their role in shaping the behavior of the recipient. The research problem can be summarized in answering the following questions:

- 1- What is the theory of creating curiosity (the knowledge gap) in advertising campaigns?
- 2- What is the effect of the curiosity creation theory (the knowledge gap) in the teaser advertising campaigns on the behavior of the recipient?
- 3-

### **Research aims:**

- 1- The research aims to study the theory of creating curiosity (the knowledge gap) in teaser advertisements and its effect on the behavior of the recipient.

### **Research hypotheses:** The research assumes that:

- 1- The curiosity creation theory (the knowledge gap) in teaser ads affects shaping the behavior of the advertising message recipient.
- 2- Describing and analyzing the theory of the knowledge gap has the effect of designing the advertising campaigns.
- 3-

### **Research objective:**

Raise the level of awareness of advertising designers to pay attention to the theories of creating curiosity in advertising campaigns and to know the extent of their impact on shaping the behavior of the recipient.

### **Search limits:**

Objective boundaries: Studying models for advertising campaigns (local and international) and clarifying the importance of the role of curiosity in shaping the behavior of the recipient.

Temporal boundaries: from 2015 to 2020. Spatial boundaries: local and global advertising models.

**Research Methodology:**

The research follows the descriptive approach to describe and analyze some local and international advertising models and to clarify the effect of the theory of creating curiosity (the knowledge gap) in shaping the behavior of the recipient.

**Teaser advertising campaigns:**

Advertisers use teaser campaigns to either introduce new products or services or to attract attention to an upcoming advertising campaign for an existing product or service. A suspense advertisement is a powerful tool used to convey messages to the target audience, but with its own style of creating curiosity about the subject of the advertisement and thus directing the attention of the receiving audience. J. Kover (President and Professor of Marketing, Graduated from Business School, Fordham University) has developed a strong definition of teaser that connects viewers by creative professionals in his studies. He pointed out that the teaser gives incomplete information that motivates the recipient to seek to solve clues and riddles or to limit clarifications to subsequent disclosure work. Suspense advertising is creative communication at its finest. "This type of advertising does not attract the attention of consumers," said David A. Aaker (US organizational researcher, consultant, and professor emeritus at the University of California, Haas School of Business in Berkeley, who specializes in marketing with a focus on branding strategy). "It also generates interest and informs the consumer of the benefits of the product and positioning, thus acting as an effective tool for communication."

The teaser advertising is designed to build curiosity, interest and / or excitement about a product or brand by talking about it but without revealing the brand's identity.

**Curiosity concept:**

Curiosity is a basic human motivation that influences learning, gaining knowledge, and achieving life. The recipient immerses himself in a world full of information and can obtain new experiences with just a few taps of the keyboard, the curiosity is the search for information and experiences for his sake through self-directed behavior. Theorists have argued that curiosity is crucial to human learning and achievement. Empiricists discovered that curiosity's contribution to the realization of knowledge is largely independent of cognitive abilities. Current knowledge indicates that curiosity is a multifaceted phenomenon that is more complex than previous definitions. Previous research has portrayed curiosity as one or two faces that are highly interconnected, limiting both experimental research and practical applications.

**Curiosity theories and teaser campaigns:**

Among the popular forms of advertising, teaser has shown steady growth in usage and application by ad source (advertisers and authors) over the past three decades. Teasers may have started as an experiment in movies but is now part of our cross-product advertising strategies, extending it to an exploration of a fixed space in the creative mix of advertising. In addition, the increase in the number of products and the shift in power from producer to consumer has also led to an increase in the use of teasers that act on the basis of interest, create curiosity, and attract attention as the most important functions of communication in an age of active audiences that use the media to satisfy their needs, desires and motivations.

Industries involving entertainment, automotive, and 3C products (Computer, Communication, and Consumer Electronics) are using teaser advertising campaigns to increase consumer curiosity about soon-to-be-launched products. Despite the widespread use of teasers, researchers have focused little on this unique advertising style, and there are three related theories.

**The first theory** is that, unlike regular advertisements that reveal brand names immediately, “ambiguous ads” that only reveal brand names near the end of teaser campaigns may be more effective in building memory connections between product category and brand; However, it only works when the receiving audience is unfamiliar with the brand.

**The second theory** suggests that music helps the receiving audience to interpret the messages hidden in the teaser, especially when the music is associated with certain visual images.

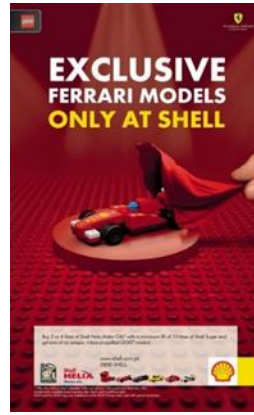
**The third theory** found that suspenseful advertising that introduces some product clues and leaves the knowledge gap of the receiving audience at a medium level can lead to stronger curiosity than if the knowledge gap was at a low or high level; Besides, curiosity leads to more goal-oriented detail and improved learning.

### Creating curiosity (knowledge gap theory):

The primary purpose of teaser campaigns is to arouse the recipient's curiosity. Curiosity refers to the need and desire for information. The gap between "what the recipient wants to know" and "what the recipient already knows" is called the "information gap" or "knowledge gap". When a knowledge gap exists, the recipient not only feels curious, but also experiences excessive feeling of deprivation, discomfort or uneasiness; As such, he has a strong desire to gather additional information to modify the structure of incomplete knowledge and reduce his negative feelings. It is assumed that the intensity of curiosity and the size of the knowledge gap have an inverse relationship. When the knowledge gap is large or very wide, it becomes more difficult to fill the gap, and the recipient tends to give in and despair, which reduces their curiosity. However, if the gap is very small, there is no challenge, and the recipient does not feel obligated to search for additional information. When the recipient acquires information about something, the objective value of the information decreases, although the subject of the advertisement may remain unknown. Thus, when the recipient's knowledge gap is very small, their curiosity towards the topic of the ad is also likely to decrease because he can make reasonable assumptions about the content with a certain degree of confidence. Hence, a moderate gap leads to a curiosity stronger than any other alternative.



Teaser for a new car illustrates the small information gap. Teaser for a new car illustrates the big information gap



The final teaser revealing the new Ferrari (watched by both groups).

Figure No. (1) a teaser campaign for the new Ferrari car.

**Example:** Figure No. (1) There are three teaser ads for a new car that illustrate the difference between the information gap that is very large and very small. The first teaser advertisement was presented that shows the large information gap for a group of recipients, any car model. In this type of teaser, when the knowledge gap is large, the recipient tends to give up in despair, which reduces their curiosity. The second teaser advertisement that explains the very small information gap was presented to another group of recipients, in this advertisement the car model was revealed very clearly, which reduced his curiosity towards the subject of the advertisement because he could make reasonable assumptions about the car model with a certain degree of confidence. Therefore, it is important for the information to be moderate, and this can be achieved, for example, by disclosing the brand of the car in the first advertisement, without disclosing the car model clearly as in the second advertisement.

As for the third announcement, it is the final revealing announcement that was submitted to the two previous groups, after the previous teaser advertisements were submitted for a not too long period. The designer revealed the brand of the car, Ferrari, and the new model of the car was revealed. Although both groups lost the element of curiosity in the previous cases, the final disclosure was more familiar to the second group, which predicted the model of the car more than the first group.

#### **The effect of curiosity creation theory (knowledge gap) on recipient behavior:**

The emotional states affect many aspects of a recipient's life, including situations, attitudes, and consumption behavior. Certain emotional states lead to specific cognitive and motivational processes. These processes represent the influence of emotional states on judgments, behavior, and decision-making. For example, grief is accompanied by assessments of loss suffering, while anxiety is accompanied by assessments of impairment. These evaluations then lead to action designed to change the recipient's circumstances. This framework can be applied to effectively influence the behavior of the recipient. The recipient suffers from a specific emotional state, which in turn activates cognitive and motivational processes that ultimately lead to different behaviors. Thus, advertisers often add emotional stimuli in their ad campaigns to produce an effect that triggers certain behaviors. Although it is clear that emotional states can influence consumer behavior, the way to distort specific emotional states that lead to certain behaviors is less clear.



Revealing Final Announcement



Teaser Preliminary Announcement

Figure No. (2) a teaser advertising campaign for the new Brix ceramic cleaner.

**Example:** Figure No. (2) shows a social media teaser campaign for a new ceramic cleaner, the designer showed the type of product, which is a floor cleaner, explained in the advertisement, and his function is a ceramic cleaner, confirming the extent of its effectiveness and strength using technology before and after using the product in ceramic cleaning, with the use of the Slogan "add and shine without a trace of violin" and "power cleans the sparkle of honor", without disclosing the advertised brand, which attracts the attention of the recipient and creates a kind of strong curiosity and the word conveyed about the new detergent and thinking about more than one brand. In the final revealing announcement, the brand is Brix for detergents which appeared in the same way as the introductory teaser advertisement in the clean area of ceramics to emphasize secondly the effectiveness of the new product, without using Slogan or Hashtag, which confirms the enhancement of the mental image by using teaser advertising campaigns.

Information gap theory states that curiosity reflects the recipient's desire for information which is hitherto remains unknown. Previous research has argued that curiosity increases in having information that could close the information gap more easily. Although the curiosity was not directly expressed, and it was found that recipients who were offered a free gift were uncertain (for example, they were told that they would receive one of two potential gifts) preferred to receive some information about the product, such as a photo or description of the potential gifts, Instead of no product information. Likewise, recipients will search more for information when they are getting a moderate amount of information rather than limited or complete information. This indicates that curiosity is highest when the recipient realizes that only a moderate amount of information is required to obtain all of the information, and that bridging the information gap is realistic. Here, a moderate information gap is defined as a situation where many cues about an ambiguous product or promotion are provided without revealing the product or promotion itself. A large information gap, in which a minimum amount of information is provided, is defined as a situation in which only a few signals are displayed. This creates a high degree of uncertainty about the nature of the product or vague promotion. By following this logic, if the recipient is missing only a small amount of information needed to fill the information gap, he or she should be more curious than if there is little or no information. Thus it is considered that exposure to ambiguous attraction with moderate information will lead to higher levels of consumer curiosity as compared to exposure to little information.

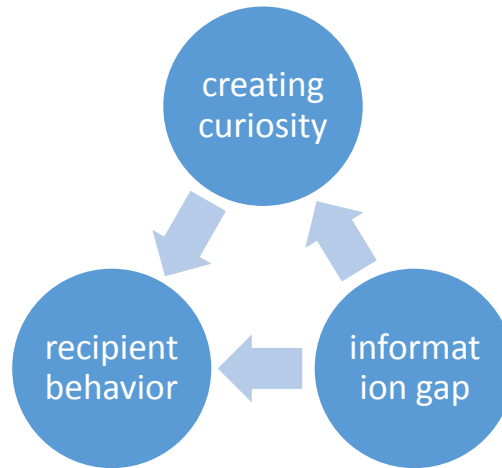


Figure No. (3) illustrates the relationship of the knowledge gap in the role of curiosity in the behavior of the recipient.

Figure (3) illustrates the relationship of the knowledge gap in the role of curiosity in the behavior of the recipient. The creation of curiosity fully mediates the effect of a knowledge gap on the recipient's behavioral intention.

### Conclusion:

- The design of exciting advertising campaigns in a creative framework depends on creating the recipient's curiosity and thus directing his attention and shaping his behavior. An advertisement that creates curiosity leads to higher behavioral intent compared to one that creates less curiosity.
- The study of the theory of creating curiosity (the knowledge gap) in the advertising campaigns affects the behavior of the recipient of the advertising message in a positive way.
- Applying the theories of creating curiosity (the knowledge gap) when designing advertising campaigns makes it more effective on the recipient.

### Suggestions:

- Curiosity is the stimulating state among the recipients of the advertising message when the advertiser raises ambiguity. Therefore, the study of ways that enables advertisers to extract the state of curiosity must be strengthened to optimally influence the behavior of the recipient.
- Researchers from multiple fields discussed creating curiosity according to the information gap theory. However, it is necessary to conduct more research to determine the factors that determine the size of the information gap by changing the amount and duration of information that the recipient already knows and wants to know and thus influences his curiosity.

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