

Does Curiosity Make Consumers Less Critical? Effects of Ad-Induced Curiosity on Persuasion Knowledge and Counterarguing

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Abstract

Previous findings suggest that curious people process information more thoroughly and intensely, based on which, one could argue that a curiosity-evoking advertisement will foster more analytical processing and result in a more critical consumer response toward a persuasive message. However, we postulate that the opposite is true and argue that a curiosity trigger will distract consumers' attention away from the persuasion attempt, which leads to a less critical consumer response and a more favorable attitude toward the advertised product. We present two experimental studies. The first demonstrates that curiosity induced by an ad leads to a decreased level of persuasion knowledge, and this effect is independent of the favorability of the offer. The second indicates that curiosity leads to fewer counterarguments generated by consumers, which mediates its positive effect on attitude and purchase intention.

Keywords: *curiosity; persuasion knowledge; counterarguing*

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