When Familiar Brands Match Your Conversations: The Role of Brand Familiarity in Conversation-related Advertising

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Despite denials from companies, research shows that consumers believe their phones listen to their conversation for personalized advertising (i.e., conversation-related advertising). Brand familiarity plays an important role in advertising literature, but has not been explored in the context of conversation-related advertising. Grounded in the dual processing theories, the DEAL framework, and expectancy violation theories, we study how consumers respond to conversation-related ads depending on the familiar or unfamiliar brands that are seemingly related to the conversation. Study 1 (a survey, $N = 250$) showed that brand familiarity was beneficial rather than harmful. Study 2 (a field experiment, $N = 138$) further confirmed these results. This brings insights to advertising practitioners that familiar brands could mitigate negative consequences.

Keywords: personalized advertising, brand familiarity, trust, smartphone, ad attitude