The Double-Edged Sword of Product Specificity in Conversation-Related Advertising: A Privacy Calculus Perspective

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Abstract

Conversation-related advertising (CRA), advertisements perceived to reflect offline conversations, raises privacy concerns yet is perceived as personalized. Drawing on Privacy Calculus Theory, this survey ($N = 228$) examines how specificity types in CRA relate to Copy of ICORIA Anonymous versionbenefit-based (i.e., perceived relevance, perceived usefulness) and cost-based (i.e., perceived surveillance, perceived intrusiveness) responses, purchase intention, and ad avoidance. Results show both brand and detail specificity are positively associated with perceived relevance, which relates to higher purchase intention and lower ad avoidance. Brand specificity is also associated with higher perceived usefulness, whereas detail specificity is associated with higher perceived surveillance, higher perceived intrusiveness, and greater ad avoidance. Findings show that personalization-related associations in CRA vary by product specificity type, revealing distinct benefit–risk patterns. The study contributes to the Privacy Calculus Theory research by identifying product specificity as a key message-level cue and offers guidance on transparency cues and specificity types in relevance-privacy trade-offs.

Keywords: Conversation-related Advertising, Privacy Calculus Theory, Product Specificity, Personalization, Surveillance, Ad Avoidance