

The Degree of Exposure and its Association with the Influence on Attitude and Behavior

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Abstract

Literature relevant to the degree of exposure to media and its association with the effects reveals different propositions. Such as higher exposure: leads to greater effects; ii. increases the effects on those audience members who are already influenced from the subject presented; iii. would generate greater effects only if socio-psychological barriers are explored and removed; iv. does not matter in the effects process because audience members selectively seek out information supportive to their existing beliefs and avoid information contradictory to them; and v. sometimes, adversely affects the effects process and produce even negative consequences. These different propositions have been established about commercial advertising and political campaigns, but what will happen in the area of social communication¹. So, this study is planned to explore and examine an association (if any) between the degree of exposure and the effects process in social welfare domain. Four communication campaigns have been selected for this purpose.

Introduction

Several studies have revealed that higher degree of exposure to mass media generates greater impact. Zajonc (1968) proposed that repeated exposure "leads to a more and more positive evaluation of the stimulus." Clark and Kline (1974) introduced the concept of "message discrimination" in communication effects process. This paradigm suggests that increase in the flow of information would enhance the possibility of the repeated exposure of the individual to the media. As a result, a higher level of success is likely to be achieved. Similarly, Chaffee and Wilson (1977) claimed, "individuals discriminate more messages from an 'information rich' environment than from an 'information poor' environment." They formulated that higher level of information from the media will generate greater effects on individual's cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels. McGuire (1989) related the concept of message discrimination to exposure and found a strong relationship between the number of exposure and the levels of impact on the audience members. Finnegan, Viswanath, Hannan, Weisbrod, and Jacobs (1989) also support this view but they suggest a cut point on after some exposures because of marginal impact. Zuberi (1992) concluded that heavy viewers recalled more commercials than light viewers. Moreland and Beach (1992) asserted from a series of experiments that repeated exposure affects liking. Baron, Byrne and Johnson (1998) also concluded that "higher degree of exposure influences individual's liking.

On the other hand, Hyman and Sheastley (1947) suggested, "those responsible for information campaigns cannot rely simply on 'increasing the flow' to spread their information effectively." They hold that psychological barriers must be explored and

Commercial advertising and political campaigns seek to promote benefits of the sponsoring agencies or individuals while social communication campaigns are noncommercial and seek to promote individual and collective benefits of the adopters.