

Mental availability as a measure of advertising effects: empirical evidence and implications

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Abstract

Mental Availability (MA) captures the propensity of a brand to be thought of in buying situations, yielding significant theoretical and practical relevance. This research aims to test MA metrics suitability for measuring brands change in mental availability, following advertising exposure. We replicate and extend Vaughan et al.'s (2021) research, and overcome its limitations by using primary data, forced ad exposure and a longitudinal test with the same respondents. We find MA metrics are responsive to advertising exposure, but with ceiling effects. There are consistent positive changes across all MA metrics, the biggest change is in Mental Penetration (which measures the number of category buyers who can provide at least one any association with a given brand) among non-buyers of a brand. We discuss MA's role in shifting underlying brand purchase probabilities among non-buyers of a brand as part of brand growth tactics and the resulting implications for researchers and practitioners.

Keywords

Advertising response, Mental Availability, Measurement, Validation, Purchase probability