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## Reconceptualization of Advertising Clutter in the Online Environment [Slides]

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# Reconceptualization of Advertising Clutter in the Online Environment

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# Abstract

This paper proposes an analytical framework that reconceptualizes advertising clutter by separating the physical presence from the perception of advertising clutter with individual differences taken into account. The characteristics of online and traditional media were compared to show how various online ad formats constitute the dual self-pace and the captivity characteristic of online media. The paper further takes into account task orientations and time orientations in determining consumers' perceived advertising clutter level.

# Journal publication citation

- **Ha, Louisa** and Kim McCann (2008). “An Integrated Model of Advertising Clutter in Offline and Online Media Environment.” *International Journal of Advertising*, 27(4), 569-592.

# Objectives

- Reconceptualize advertising clutter by comparing the distinctive characteristics of online and traditional media
- Provide a set of propositions of predictors of perceived ad clutter levels and a research agenda for research on online advertising clutter

# Conceptualization of Ad Clutter

- 3 dimensions of ad clutter (Ha, 1996)
  - **Quantity**: the proportion of advertisements in the media vehicle.
  - **Intrusiveness**: the degree the advertisements interrupt the flow of an editorial media content unit.
  - **Competitiveness**: the degree of similarity of the advertised products or advertising messages.
- Theories explaining the ad clutter effects
  - Selective attention theory
  - Reactance theory
  - Elaboration Likelihood Model

# Proposed Conceptual Framework

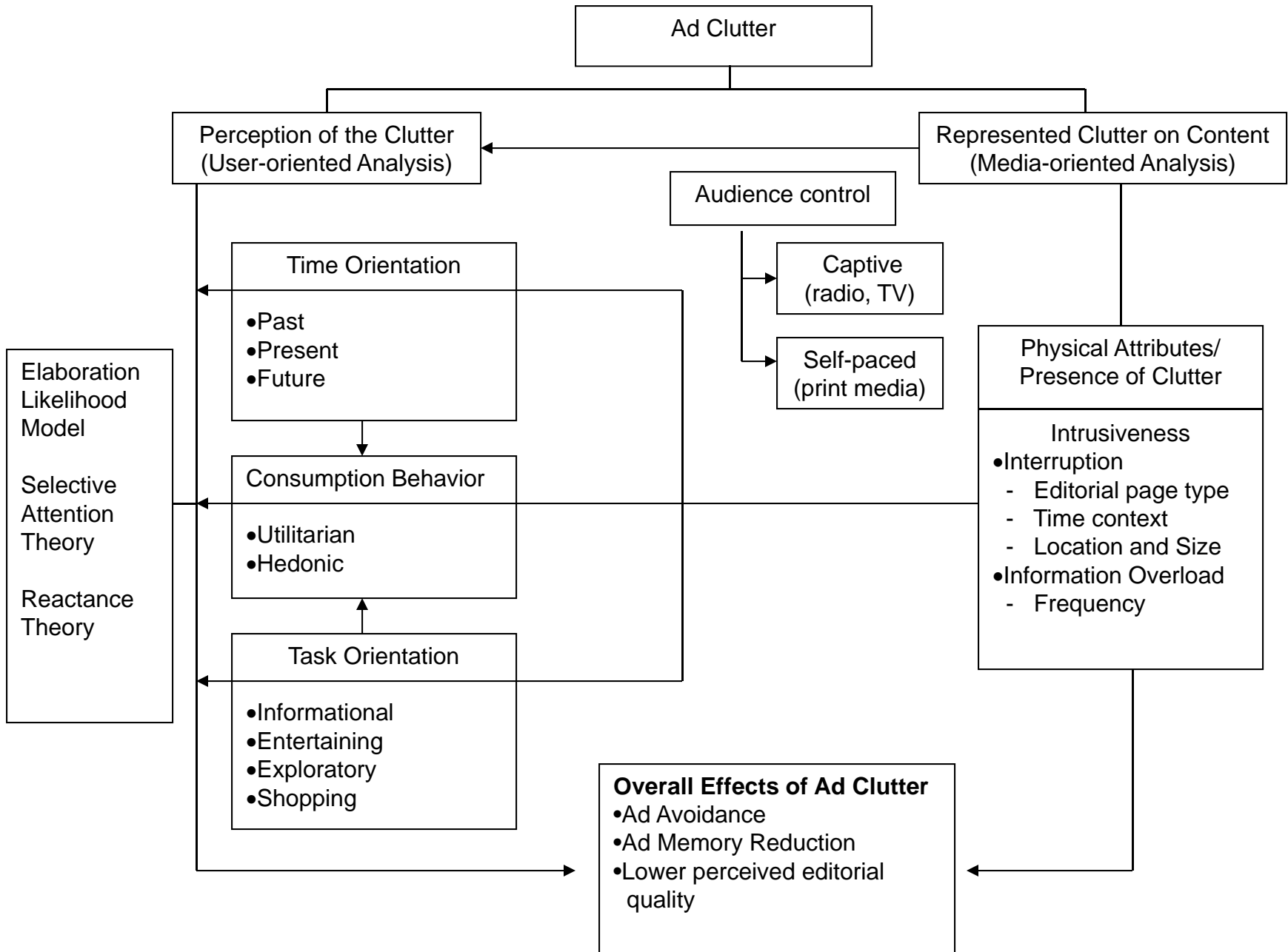
- Overall effect of ad clutter: compounding effects of the perceived clutter and the physical presence of clutter on media content (represented clutter)
  - **Perceived clutter (user-oriented analysis):** based on individual's general attitude toward ads.
    - Time orientation of consumer: past, present, and future orientation
    - Consumption behavior: utilitarian and hedonic
    - Task orientation of consumer: informational, entertainment, exploratory, and shopping
  - **Represented clutter on media content (media-oriented analysis):** an objective measure of the clutter level by the number of ads and intrusiveness of the ads shown in the media vehicle.
    - Intrusiveness: Interruptions and information overload

# The difference between Online and Traditional Media environment

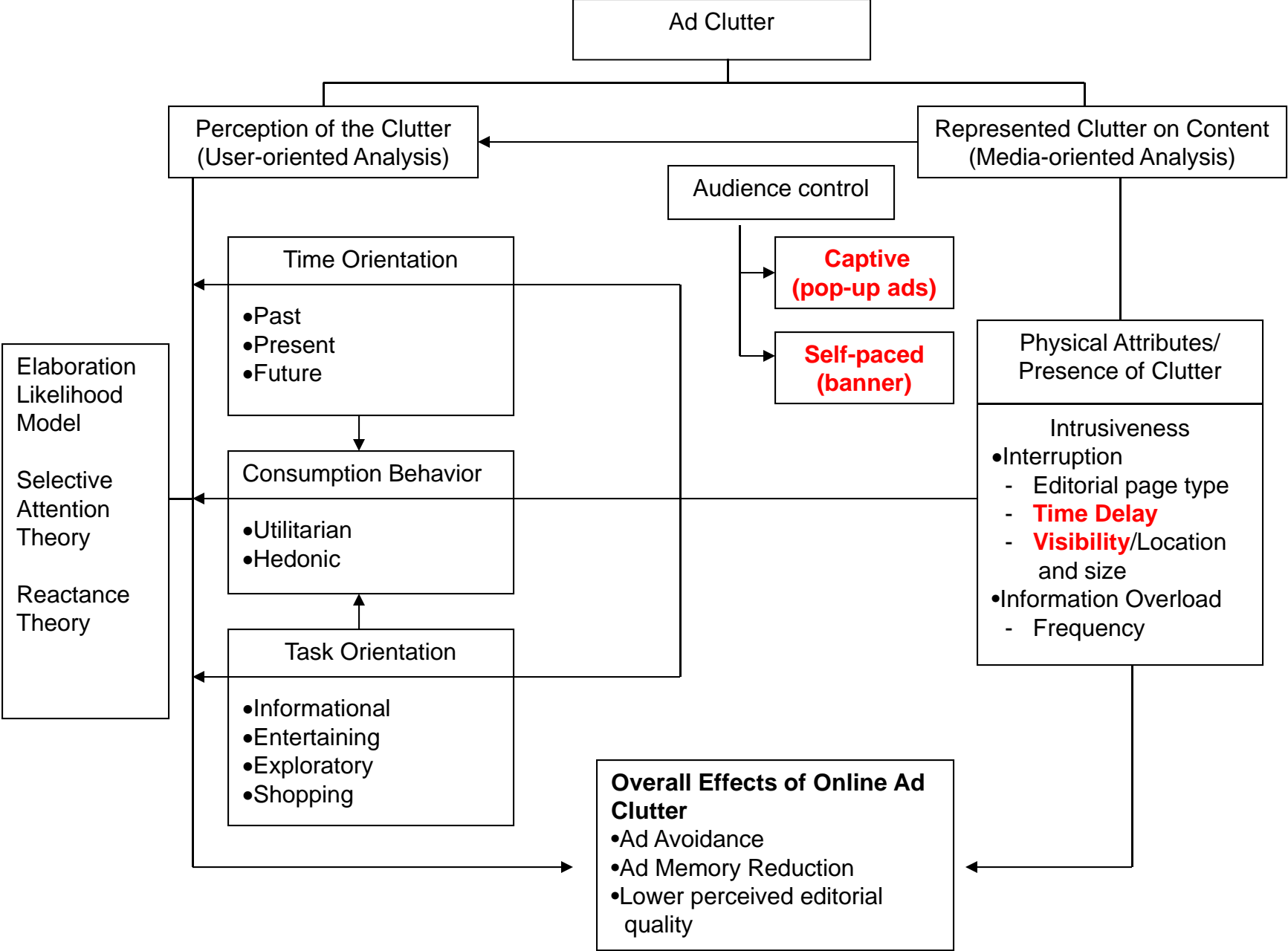
- Traditional media environment
  - **Captivity is defined by medium**
    - Captive medium: television, and radio
    - Self-paced medium: print medium
- Online environment
  - **Captivity is determined by online ad format:**
    - Captive format: pop up (low controllability), and pop-under (high controllability)
    - Self paced format: sponsored hyperlink, and regular banner



# A Conceptual Framework of Ad Clutter in Non-Online Media



# A Conceptual Framework of Ad Clutter in Online Media



# Propositions

- **Determinants of Ad Clutter Perception**
  - P1: **Time orientation** affects the perception of advertising clutter: Past oriented consumers perceive the highest level of online ad clutter. Present-oriented consumers perceive a higher level than future-oriented consumers.
  - P2: **Time management** style affects advertising clutter perception: The utilitarian time user perceives a higher level of ad clutter than the hedonic time user.
  - P3: **Task orientation** affects ad clutter perception: Informational search task-oriented consumers have a higher perceived ad clutter level than entertainment-, exploration- and electronic shopping-oriented consumers.

# Propositions

- P4: **Time delay** of the online ad lowers the perceived online ad clutter: A user perceives lower ad clutter when the display of pop up ad is delayed than an immediately displayed pop up ad.
- P5: **Page type** affects the perceived online ad clutter: A user perceives higher ad clutter level on navigational web page than on informational content pages.
- P6: **Location and size** of ads affects perceived ad clutter: Ads that are centrally-located or large size in an editorial unit are more likely to be perceived as higher ad clutter level than ads shown in other locations and smaller sizes.

# Propositions

- **Information overload posed by online ad clutter on consumers**
  - P7: Frequency of ads affects perceived ad clutter: The higher numbers of ads in online media lead to a higher perceived ad clutter level.
- **Overall effects of online ad clutter:**
  - P8: When consumers perceive a high level of advertising clutter, negative advertising effects will occur such as advertising avoidance, advertising memory reduction, and perception of lower quality of the editorial content.

# Implications

- Controllable variables (e.g., amount, size, content, context, and location of ads) and uncontrollable variables (e.g., individual difference in time and task orientation) in advertising clutter perception.
- **Media** - improve the physical characteristics of the advertising clutter
  - reducing the number of ads to a level that will be perceived as low clutter by most of its users
  - giving priorities to advertisers who have well-executed advertisements and the most visible location in the editorial unit
  - studying the time orientation and task orientation of their users so that media can determine receptiveness of audience to advertising messages.
- **Advertisers** - evaluate the advertising environment of the media by examining the physical characteristics of the ads in the media and audience characteristics

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