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Study of Appeals across the Product Categories Used in TV Advertisements: A Content Analysis Approach

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Abstract:

Advertising is an important marketing tool that helps the business world to promote their product and services in the target market. It not only provides information about the products and services available, but also makes people aware about their potential benefits, new launches and also about various schemes offered by companies. Advertisers use various strategies to persuade consumers and appeals are one of them. They try to persuade them either emotionally or rationally providing all required information, helping consumers to take decisions logically. The present study examines the appeals used in television advertisements, and also the types of appeals in different product categories. The method used for the study is content analysis and only television advertisements are analyzed. The result indicates that most of the advertisements have used non humorous appeals- either emotional or rational and only few advertisements have used humorous appeals. The result further reveals that in case of high involvement products, rational appeals are being used whereas of low involvement products humorous and emotional appeals are used.

Key words: Television Advertising, Appeals, humorous, emotional, rational

1. Introduction

Advertisement has become an indispensable tool for the advancement of business, for positioning, promotion & increasing sale of the product. It is a powerful communication force, highly visible & one of the most important tools of marketing communication that helps to sell products, services, ideas, images, etc. It is assumed that advertisement is a form of effective persuasive communication to impart information & knowledge about the product & services and arrests the attention of consumers by arousing interest for acceptance of the product. According to Colley¹ (1964), "Advertising pulls a consumer towards purchasing action through changes in his or her knowledge & attitude responses". He defined advertising "a mass paid communication the ultimate purpose of which is to impart information, develop an attitude and induce action, beneficial to the advertiser generally the sale of the product or services." Thorson and Leavitt² (1992) viewed advertising as the best prophet for purchase. The objectives of advertising are generally to create awareness, knowledge and comprehension of brand & positive degree of conviction or buying intention for the product. It is an efficient source of information for the consumers about the product, quality, new merchandise, new technology & prices.

The television has emerged as most powerful and effective mass media. The growth of T.V and the numbers of T.V channels has been overwhelmingly welcomed by the advertisers. Television has a vast reach in urban and rural areas both and its round the clock transmission facilitates repeated exposure of the advertised products.

It is believed that television is the most authoritative, influential and exciting medium and hence it is considered the most ideal medium of advertising. It has abilities to combine visual images, sound, motion and color. In T.V there is a unique blend of sight, color, movement, sound, timing, repetitions and presentation, which produces quick and good results. These characteristics present the advertisers with maximum opportunity to develop the most creative and imaginative advertising messages than any other medium.

2. What Is Appeal?

According to Kotler³ (1997), advertiser has to put some driving power into the message to make the audience to receive messages. This driving power is called appeal. Every advertising appeal represents an attraction, which arouse consumers' desires. Berkman and Gilson⁴ (1987) defined advertising appeal as an attempt at creativity that inspires consumers' motives for purchase and affects consumers' attitude towards a specific product or service whereas Dahl⁵ defines appeal as message designed to motivate consumer behavior. The statement in the advertisement must be related to the viewers' interests, goals and problems. Belch and belch⁶ (1998) state that advertising appeal is used to attract consumers' attention. Authors have developed different categories for

appeals. Chu⁷ (1986), Belch and Belch (1998) and Schiffman and Kanuk⁸ (2007) have classified appeals into rational and emotional appeals while Kotler has given three types

According to Chu (1996), to meet the target consumers' demand, advertisers commonly use rational and emotional appeal in an attempt to influence consumer behavior. Rational appeal has been described by Kotler as rationally oriented purchase which is stimulated by explaining the advantages of products. Thus, rational appeal emphasize on the benefits of the product which consumer may obtain by using that product. It motivates consumers through information and logical arguments. It may be in terms of quality, price, values or the performance of the products. Emotional appeals are woven with the sensation of fun, love, enjoyment, fear, etc (Ramaswamy and Namakumari⁹, 2002). Emotional appeal arouse or 'stir up' emotion of consumers, which may be negative or positive emotions. It usually involves fear or guilt in negative side and joy in positive side. Witte¹⁰ (1992) defines fear appeal as a persuasive message arousing fear by depicting a personally relevant and significant threat, followed by a description of feasible recommendations.

It is usually said that women are more emotional and therefore more responsive to emotional appeals. (Bradly¹¹, 1995). Whereas durable goods need more information and present the facts logically and use rational appeal to persuade the consumers. Advertising appeal usage varies across product types.

The present study examines the categories of products advertised and usage of appeals across the product categories.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To study the category of products being advertised on TV.
- To study the types of appeal (humorous/non humorous) used in TV commercials.
- To study the use of appeals in different product categories.

4. Literature Review

Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) defined advertising appeal as supplier's application of a psychologically motivating power to arouse consumers desire and action for buying while sending broadcasting signals to change receivers concepts of the product. Hence, advertising appeal is applied to attract the consumers' attention, to change their concepts about the product, and to affect them emotionally about a specific product or service (Belch and Belch, 1998; Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007).

The past research studies has shown that durable goods advertisements presents more information than nondurable goods advertisements. (Abernethy & Franke¹²,1996). According to Abernethly and Butler¹³ (1992) and Cutler and Javalgi¹⁴ (1993), service advertisements tend to emphasize emotional appeals.

Humor is one of the appeals to sell the product and is "often used in print and television media to sell products". (Catanescu and Tom¹⁵, 2001). According to Gulas & Weinberger¹⁶, (2006), advertisers turn toward humor as a way to break through media clutter and to reach jaded consumers while Sternthal & Craig¹⁷ (1973), Madden & Weinberger¹⁸ (1982) believe that humor enhance the credibility of comparative advertising and to distract the development of counter arguments. Madden and Weinberger¹⁹ (1984) conducted a survey of ad executives and found that 70% ad executives favored the use of humor for consumer non durables. Bauerly²⁰(1990) survey regarding appropriateness of humor for goods and services revealed that product like soft drinks, snack foods, computers, automobiles, beer, bowling alleys, restaurants, diapers services, overnight delivery services, and exterminator services, while products like laxatives, feminine care products, cemetery monuments, higher education, financial and medical services were found to be inappropriate products for humor appeal.

Fear appeal is used in marketing and there is a continuous reliance on fear appeals in the sale of personal products such as deodorants and feminine hygiene (Stuteville²¹, 1970).

5. Research Methodology

- Research Design

5.1. Sampling

The advertisements telecast on Television channels are being analyzed. The programs of one month had been recorded and later analyzed for the advertisement telecast during the programs. Total 177 Television Advertisements were thoroughly studied to carry out research.

5.2. Methodology

The aim of the study was to find out the pre defined variables in the advertisements for which content analysis technique was used. It is a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantities manner for the purpose of measuring variables. (Kerlinger F²², 1986). The unit of analysis was the advertisements telecast on TV channels and were coded under number of variables like name of the products, categories of products and types of appeals.

5.3. Statistical Tools

Only percentage has been calculated to analyze the contents of the advertising.

5.3.1. Product Categorization

The content analysis was performed with initial categorization of the advertisements in to different product categories. Thus products appearing in all the 177 advertisements were placed into following 10 categories.

- Toiletries (soaps, detergents toothpaste)

- Drinks and eatables(tea, coffee, soft drinks, and others)
- Medicine and health products
- Personal appearance products (cosmetics, clothing and footwear)
- Home products and home appliances
- Services
- Paints and furnishings
- Automobiles and vehicles (two wheelers and four wheelers)
- Chocolates and biscuits
- Miscellaneous items

After initial categorization these were clubbed into five broad categories. These are as follows.

5.3.1.1. Medicines and Toiletries

This product category included Drugs painkillers balms headaches tablets, health drinks, toothpastes, detergents and soaps the reason for clubbing together is their chemical nature. Table No 1 shows that the total number of advertisements in this category was (61) which amounted to (34.51%). Fig no 1 also reveals so.

5.3.1.2. Drinks and Confectionary

In this category product includes all kinds of soft drinks, beverages like coffee and tea confectionary items like biscuits chocolates etc. On examining the Table no 1 it is found that the total number of advertisements in this category was 32 (18.08%)

Categories of Products Advertised On Television			
S.N	Product Category	Number	Percentage
1	Medicines and Toiletries	61	34.51
2	Drinks and Confectionary	32	18.08
3	Personal Appearance	13	7.35
4	Home Products Appliances and furnishing	52	29.37
5	Miscellaneous	19	10.73
Total		177	100

Table 1

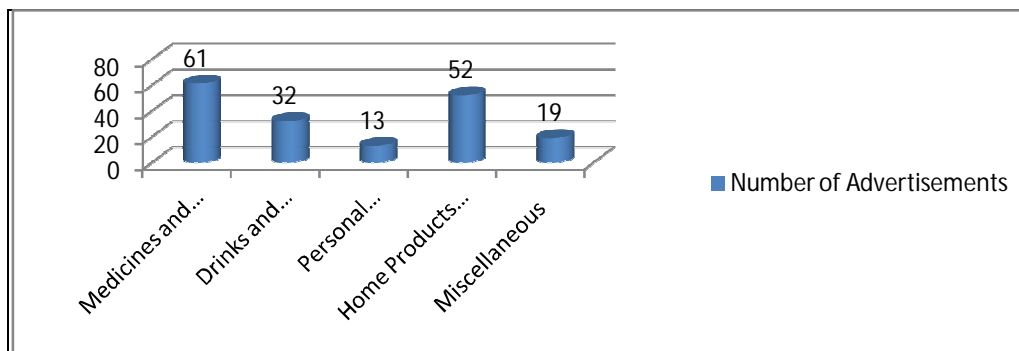


Figure 1: Categories of Products Advertised On Television (In no)

5.3.1.3. Personal Appearance

This category includes all cosmetics items like feminine hygiene products, clothing and footwear taken up. The total number of advertisements in this category was 13 (07.35%) as revealed by Table No 1.

5.3.1.4. Home Products Appliances and Furnishing

In these category products includes like washing machines, refrigerator two wheelers, four wheelers, paints, etc. The total 52 (29.37%) advertisements fall in this category as shown by Table No 1.

5.3.1.5. Miscellaneous

Items includes in this category were all services like insurance mobile services, electronic goods etc. The total number of advertisements in this category was 19(10.73%). After this categorization of products the subsequent analysis was carried out with respect to the variables contained in the content analysis.

5.4. Types of Copy Appeals in TV Advertisements

Table No 2 shows the types of copy appeals humorous and non-humorous used in the advertisements. More specifically non humorous can be divided into two parts first emotional and second rational appeals.

S.N	Types of Appeals	Total	Percentage
1	Emotional Appeal	56	31.74
2	Rational Appeal	67	37.75
3	Humorous Appeal	54	30.51
Total		177	100

Table 2: Types of appeals used in TV Advertisements

On examining the Table it has been found that non humorous appeal was used in 69.49% percent of the advertisements in which emotional appeals are used in 56 advertisements accounts for 31.74 % and rational appeals in 67 advertisements (37.75%).The Table also shows that only 30.51 % advertisements used humorous appeals.

5.5. Use of Appeals in Different Product Categories

Table no 3 and Fig No 3 reveals that humorous appeals were being most frequently used in drink and confectionary products (78.13%).

S. No	Product Category	Humorous		EMOTIONAL		RATIONAL		Total
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1	Medicines and Toiletries	10	16.39	29	47.54	22	36.07	61
2	Drinks and Confectionary	25	78.13	5	15.63	2	6.25	32
3	Personal Appearance	3	23.08	9	69.23	1	7.69	13
4	Home Products Appliances and furnishing	9	17.31	18	34.62	25	48.08	52
5	Miscellaneous	7	36.84	6	31.58	6	31.58	19
Total		54	30.51	67	37.85	56	31.64	177

Table 3: Types of Copy Appeals across Product Categories used in TV Advertisements

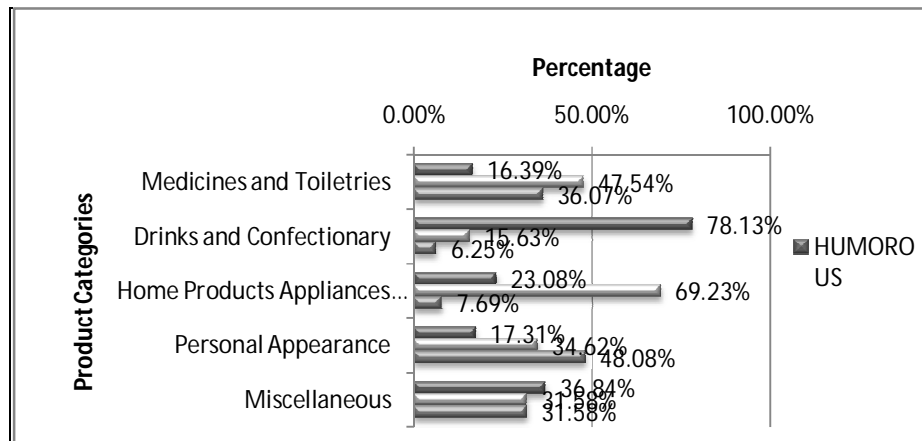


Figure 2: Type of Appeals Used in different Product Categories

The results showed that companies were using mostly emotional appeals (37.85%) for personal appearance (69.23%) followed by medicines and toiletries (47.54%) and home products appliances and furnishings (34.62%) products categories.

Companies were using rational appeals for high involvements products and results showed that rational appeals were most frequently used for home products appliances and furnishings (48.08) followed by medicines and toiletries (36.07%). Above results showed that humorous and emotional appeals were used for low involvement product categories, however rational appeals were used for high involvement product categories.

6. Conclusion

- Result shows the relationship between the types of copy appeals, humorous and non humorous- used in the Television advertisements. More specifically the non humorous advertising can be divided into two with emotional and rational appeals. Use of non humorous appeal was noticed in 69.49% percent of the advertisements. While only 30.51 % advertisements used humorous appeals. It is strange that humorous appeal pattern was not at all being used in case of personal appearance products.
- Humorous appeals were used more frequently in drink and confectionary products (78.13%). The results further showed that companies were using mostly emotional appeals (37.85%) for personal appearance products (69.23%) followed by medicines and toiletries (47.54%) and home appliances and furnishings (34.62%) products categories.
- Companies used rational appeals for high involvements products more frequently for home appliances and furnishings (48.08%) followed by medicines and toiletries (36.07%).
- Above results showed that humorous and emotional appeals were used for low involvement product categories, however rational appeals were used for high involvement product categories.

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