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## **Advertising Channels and Product Categories: an Empirical Study on Compatibility**

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### **Abstract:**

*Advertising is an area where ample studies have been carried out, but only a few academic research based studies have been undertaken on the issues related to Television Advertising. It has been a regular practice by the media watchers, media agencies and advertising agencies to conduct studies based on sample surveys, TRP's, channels shares and on product categories. Studies based on product categories that are advertised on various television channels are very few. Each and every product belongs to different categories. To study and explore the issues related to television advertising is tough for researchers as deciding and defining the consumer mindsets is itself a difficult task. The main objective is to identify and explore the patterns of product categories on various selected television channels. For this a study has been carried out in the proper time frame and this observational mode of data collection defines the patterns of product categories on selected television channels through advertising. Against this backdrop an attempt has been made in this paper to empirically analyse the fit of advertising channels with the appropriate product categories. The findings of the study reveal the sharp contrast regarding the different categories of Television Channels. The result shows that the advertisers carefully select the appropriate Television channel space to reach the targeted audience. It not only makes sound business sense on their part but it is convenient for the customers as well as they can make more informed decisions about whether to buy those products and services or not.*

**Keywords:** Advertising, TV channel, FMCG

### **1. Introduction**

The fiercely competitive pressures have led to the adoption of innovative marketing practices; worldwide promotional strategies have come to play a crucial role in the overall marketing mix. In recent times the growth and penetration of electronic media has tremendously increased. The marketers have attempted to create niche for their products and services. The market segmentation, though very difficult, leads to increased market share using focused strategies. Since the trend is towards giving customers 'more value for less money'. The organizations are trying to economize in every area of operations. Consequently, the marketing professionals have been developing elaborate plans to get the maximum benefit of every rupee spend on advertising. Against this backdrop an attempt has been made in this paper to empirically analyze the fit of advertising channels with the appropriate product categories. The findings of the study reveal the sharp contrast regarding the different categories of Television Channels.

### **2. Review of Related Literature**

Advertising is an area where ample studies have been carried out, but only a few academic research based studies have been undertaken on the issues related to Television Advertising. It has been a regular practice by the media watchers, media agencies and advertising agencies to conduct studies based on sample surveys, TRP's, channels shares and on product categories. Studies based on product categories that are advertised on various television channels are very few. Each and every product belongs to different categories.

Dahlen and Rosengren (2013) explain the role of the brand and advertising in the everyday lives of the consumers, as consuming a certain brand. Knowing things about that brand or about its advertising is a way to fit into different social groups.

India is a country where dialects, cultures and even cuisine change every 50 km. In these conditions the challenge for Indian advertising is to understand what drives the varied group of Indian consumers to different products (Joshi, 2005).

For sports channels, product categories are different as sports-events offer a huge audience but to impress fans, advertising needs to be innovative yet appropriate (campaign @ brand republic brand equity 4 Aug, 2004).

Advertisers need to focus on space more and when they do; they need to think more creatively about execution Hedges (2004).

It is not easy being an FMCG marketer today. Since growth has gone down, competition has gone up, and price wars keep breaking-out, consumers are turning their attention to other product categories.

There is a sense of worry amongst FMCG companies with the increasing competitions of other channel partners, Kumar (2004).

Advertising for certain product category needs great execution.

"Advertisers in telecom, retail, and automotive and financial services sector spend more money on advertising. In the highly competitive advertising industry, creativity in any form will work well in the Indian market place," explained Pandey (2003).

Krishnan (2004) urges that television used to be an expensive medium for small time advertisers a couple of years ago. But with the advent of a number of indigenous channels and increasing competition, it is becoming an affordable option for them today. And increase in competition makes it imperative for advertisers to use mass medium heavily and this explains the rise in the number of commercials on television.

### 3. Research Methodology

Research design chosen for this study is an "exploratory research design". To study and explore the issues related to television advertising is tough for researchers as deciding and defining the consumer mindsets is itself a difficult task. The main objective is to identify and explore the patterns of product categories on various selected television channels. For this a study has been carried out in the proper time frame and this observational mode of data collection defines the patterns of product categories on selected television channels through advertising.

For collection of primary data one structured tabulated format was used. The time duration was six months [March 2013 - August 2013]. This format had been filled on the daily basis and in the proper timing period. (Enclosed Appendix 1 shows timetable of viewing) Researchers selected 12 channels from different channel profile categories and viewed television ads for the six months. All these channel categories were different and they had different kind of viewer profiles too. Similarly, like channels there were different patterns of advertising companies and all the advertising companies varied with the product categories.

All the entertainment channels had been viewed at prime time slot (8 to 11 PM) and for News channel morning time slot (8 to 9.30 AM). Every programme on different channels is been viewed for half an hour duration and researcher does this on daily basis as a duty.

### 4. Analysis of the Data

The key words are "Pattern of Product Category" and selected T.V. channels where patterns of Product categories mean what kind of patterns in product categories are being used on television channels. Each product and service belongs to different product categories for example advertisement from FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods). It may be from banking or financial sector, automobile and so on. Based on data collection, researchers broadly classified the ten most common patterns of product categories telecasted on television.

The observations have been taken in 30 second "Television Commercial Break" (TVC) during the half an hour programme.

(i) Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) (ii) Telecommunication (iii) Banking and Finance (iv) Automobile (v) Electronics (v) Grocery Products (vii) Cold drinks and Beverages (viii) Garments and Textiles (ix) Jewellery (x) IT Companies (Information Technology) To analyze these product categories with the selected television channel, researcher used structured tabulated format and counted down the number of advertisements from each of the product categories. Selected television channels are also from different channel profile.

- a. Entertainment Channels
  - i. Zee T.V.
  - ii. Sony Entertainment Channel
  - iii. Star Plus
- b. News Channels
  - i. Aaj Tak
  - ii. CNBC TV
  - iii. NDTV 24X7
- c. Sports Channels
  - i. Ten Sports
  - ii. Star Sports
  - iii. ESPN
- d. Educational Channel
  - i. National Geographic
  - ii. Discovery
- e. Cartoon
  - i. Cartoon Network

After analyzing the research data, researcher found that every channel is positioned at a certain segment and, naturally, the clientele who watch these channels are also from intended segment. For e.g. the finding w.r.t. for Entertainment and Sports Channel have been presented (Table 1 & 2, Fig. 1 & 2). As is clear from the above table that FMCG advertisement are shown with the highest frequency on sony channel. On ten sports cold drinks and beverages ads have the highest frequency

Product Categories		Percentage	No. of Ads
(i)	FMCG	55.19%	117
(ii)	Electronics	12.73%	27
(iii)	Automobile	7.08%	15
(iv)	Telecommunication	6.13%	13
(v)	Garments/Textile	6.13%	13
(vi)	Cold Drinks and Beverage	4.71%	10
(vii)	Banking and Finance	3.78%	8
(viii)	Grocery	3.30%	5
(ix)	Jewellery	0.47%	1
(x)	IT	0.47%	1
Total Number of Advertisement			212

Table 1: Product Categories of Advertisement on Sony

	Product Categories	Percentage	No. of Ads
(i)	Cold Drinks & Beverages	26.61%	33
(ii)	Telecommunication	20.16%	25
(iii)	Automobiles	18.54%	23
(iv)	Electronics	12.09%	15
(v)	Banking & Finance	4.67%	12
(vi)	FMCG	8.87%	11
(vii)	Garments	1.61%	2
(viii)	I.T.	0.00%	0
(ix)	Grocery	0.00%	0
(x)	Jewellery	0.00%	0
Total No. Of Advertisement			124

Table 2: Ten Sports

The advertisers who use these channels as their media vehicles to advertise their offerings are also targeting the same target market although it seems a very natural position, but the same has been substantiated by the analysis. There are different patterns of advertising companies and all the advertising companies vary with the product categories. Analysis shows that all the product categories have different television channel space for advertisements.

The Researcher having compiled the entire data with regards to product categories (Table 3) shows that FMCG companies appear heavily on entertainment channels, as no. of advertisement figure is very high on all three major entertainment channels. Cartoon channels have maximum number of advertisement from confectionery products.

The second product category is Banking and Finance and it shows that major part of advertisement from banking and financial sector is on News channels. Comparatively less number of advertisements is shown on the Entertainment Channels.

Star Plus	Zee TV	Aaj Tak	CNBC TV18	NDTV	ESPN	Star Sports	TEN Sports	Cartoon
126	119	47	18	26	25	13	11	182
30	11	6	4	5	10	19	33	9
20	39	31	15	31	12	20	15	5
9	12	15	16	48	18	15	23	3
7	11	4	10	15	33	37	25	0
4	1	49	0	2	2	0	2	0
2	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	2
1	1	6	44	25	13	13	12	0
1	4	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
0	1	5	43	3	0	0	0	0
0	1	13	11	19	8	8	3	0
200	205	179	161	181	121	125	124	201

Table 3: Findings with TV channels and product categories: Master table 1

Similarly in case of IT sector product category, it can be easily analyzed that the IT companies are heavily investing their money on advertising on news business channels instead of entertainment channels or sports channel.

## 5. Suggestions

Any advertisement, when it comes for certain or specific product category always carries special effects and some distinguishing character to attract the consumer towards the particular brand. But with reference to this research article, researcher would like to make the following suggestions to the advertisers of different brands that may belong to different product segment.

- Humour: Whenever any advertiser puts humor in an advertisement, it always gains consumers' attention but if humour is used just for the sake of humor it does not get sufficient attention and only the joke is remembered and not the brand. So if humor is a part of the advertisement, it should pull and grab the consumer's attention along with that great laughter.
  - Target: There will be many segments of products as there are different kinds of people.. Somehow each and every product has set up its target. They target consumer and they advertise for them upto the mark. When a product category or particular brand decides to advertise for a certain segment of the people it tries to influence the consumer's mind at all levels.
  - Social Issues: Beside all commercialized product categorized that are being mainly advertised on television, there are some social issues for advertisement and they all can be categorized in new segment. Like AIDS, HIV +ve., polio campaign, literacy programme, advertisement from WHO (World Health Organization) and many more. All these need to be advertised at a large scale so that everyone can be aware about this instead of small ads. During national programs or some charity shows, they need large t advertisements can play a major role in this.
  - Right Product at right Channel: Advertisers should always take care of proper programming. Product should be advertised on the right channel, so that it can be useful for advertisers as well as viewers. For example if an advertisement of cement product is advertised on religious channel or any cosmetic product on Cartoon channel, it will be of no use in both the cases as the viewers will not want to see the product. As in first case target viewer profile is from old age people whereas in second case target viewer profile is children.
  - Right Product should be advertised at right timeslots: Advertiser should advertise the product or services at the right timeslots, for example, advertisement of any home appliance product should be advertised at prime time because a large number of families watch television at the prime time and so do housewives. An analysis of the research work also shows the same result.
  - Avoid False Value: Advertisement should not contain any false value. It creates confusion among the viewers and directly affects the brand image.
    - i. Message Recall: If an advertisement carries a message recall value in it, it is good for the advertisers. It is said that advertisement is seen publicly but any viewer cannot react instantly towards the advertisement. First he sees the advertisement and at the time of shopping if the viewer can recall the product advertisement then only he can go for it
    - ii. Appealing: An Advertising agency must review its ads in subjective matter before advertising. Its advertisements should carry an appealing style so that viewers are easily attracted towards the advertised product. Advertisement should be catchy.
    - iii. Should not Appall: Advertising agencies should take care before advertising that advertisement should not be shocking or confusing. If so, then viewers cannot understand the advertisement and they will not get significant returns.
    - iv. Innovative Strategy: A lot depends upon whom you address, and advertising agencies should always try to be original and contain innovative strategy in advertisements.
    - v. Big ideas: As it is always in advertiser's mind to reach target viewers, but along with that they should try to grab the other viewer's minds too, because one can never decide consumer's mindset. May be, it can create a new want in others viewer's minds too.
    - vi. New Standard in Creativity: Creativity plays an important role in advertisement. When any advertiser hires advertising agencies for its product promotion, it looks for creativity as viewers too want same.
- In conclusion it can be said that the advertisement that we casually see on our television screen are the result of detailed and elaborate strategies planning on the part of marketers.

With the onslaught of alternative advertising media it becomes imperative for both marketing professionals and media managers to rationalize the channel selection decision in such a way that the entire marketing overheads are kept to the minimum.

## 6. Conclusions

It implies clearly from the foregoing analysis that the advertisers carefully select the appropriate Television channel space to reach the targeted audience. It not only makes sound business sense on their part but it is convenient for the customers as well as they can make more informed decisions about whether to buy those product and services or not.

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