INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION & MANAGEMENT



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CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Television advertisements plays a major role in the bridging the communication gap between the manufacturers and the consumers. The focus of this research is to study the behaviour of audience towards selected television advertisements. Field survey method was employed to collect primary data from the selected 300 respondents with the help of a structured questionnaire. Aided recall with ten television advertisements of regional language was used. The study explores the behaviour of the audience and their preferences in watching television advertisements. Audience perception towards selected television advertisements was studied and positioned with a perceptual map.

KEYWORDS

advertising, television advertisements.

INTRODUCTION

dvertising is a cultural form that reflects and moulds our lives. Several media scholars have emphasized advertising's role as one of a major reinforcement because of its presumed power for molding opinions, attitudes and behaviour. Advertisement is an effective tool of marketing and the most vital component of promotional activity. Advertising is used by the marketers to publicize the happenings of the company and their offerings to the customers. In the contemporary era, the influence and impact of advertisement over both the classes and the masses has refined the entire ambience of marketing. So great is the power of advertisements to influence the buyer's decision that it has become mandatory for sellers to allocate higher budgets to advertise of their products. Along with the manufacture of products, the sellers and manufacturers are also entrusted with the responsibility of stimulating a desire for their products in the minds of the customers and advertising is doing a great service.

The advertisement industry is one of the most dynamic industries in the world as the process of buying is a continual action and the choice making of customers is in a state of constant flux. In addition to bridging the consumer awareness gap and disseminating information, the focus of the advertisement industry is also to arouse the curiosity and trust of prospective buyers. The culture of buying has undergone a drastic change in the past two decades and advertisements rule the roost in the present market. This is also due to increased brand awareness. Television advertisements have brought a paradigm shift in the arena of advertising.

Television advertisements have in filtered into the very existence of the Indian consumer. Television advertisements especially those which are telecasted at the prime time are strategic tools of mobilizing potential customers. The study explores the behaviour of consumers towards television advertisements.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Advertising is created for and targeted at the audience. Consequently the importance of audience reactions to advertisements has been studied at various intensities by researchers across the globe. Ewen (1992) refers advertising as that not only sells products and services, but also indirectly tells us ways to understand the world. Similarly, Goldman (1992) has opined that advertising is a major social and economic institution which strives to maintain cultural hegemony by providing us socially constructed ways of seeing and making sense of our world. "Advertising is a useful source of reflection on representation in consumer research because it is a succinct metaphor for the wider marketing industry" (Chris, 2003).

Advertisers take the responsibility of communicating the commercial messages and it is an important element in Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategy. It supports the advertisers in various stages of the decision making process. The need is felt in all the stages of consumer decision making and advertisements fills the 'communication gap'. A planned communication process acts as a door opener in the decision making process in buying. Therefore, advertisers, admen and academic researchers give importance to test the communication and message strategies used in ads.

Thomas (1996) studied the aspects of advertising and hype created by ads and highlighted the effects of it. Advertising can create awareness on products as well as brands. Brand awareness in customers a) creates the possibility of purchase b) helps them to see a brand in the store c) biases people in favour of the known brand. Advertisements can communicate unknown facts of the products and services and can suggest a better brand to the prospective customers.

Aaker et al. (1997) suggested that the proficient advertising man must understand the psychology of advertising. One must learn that certain effects lead to certain reactions, and increase the results by avoiding mistakes. Weilbacher (1984) opined that advertising is a form of communication that provides useful and relevant information to the audience to act immediately or to use it at the time of purchase. He also states that advertising is a fraction of the incoming messages seeks to attract attention of the audiences and to convert the loyalty to products, services and institutions. Relevance of information is vital in approaching the audience and converting them to go for the products and services.

In fact, advertising is communication that provides generally useful, relevant and pertinent information upon which the consumer either acts immediately or stores for later reference, application and use. Creative ability in advertising is to solve problem in unique way that is different from any solution ever before devised (Richard, 1982). To succeed in marketing, the advertisers need to understand what makes people behave the way they do.

Haley and Bal Dinger (1991) explains that likeable advertising has an impact on persuasion and it affects the emotional component of audience's attitude towards the brand. Extensive research has accumulated over three decades that indicates both disliked and liked advertisements are memorable and result in recall. Schoham and Aviv (1996) selected a set of three ads and conducted their research on the effectiveness of standardized and adapted TV advertising, and presented the findings from the perspective of target market and assessed the set of outcome measures in the same perspective. The commercials represented varied levels of standardization, recognition, recall, believability and purchase levels in the outcome measures.

Eva et al. (2007) conducted a study on the effects of television ads in brand placement on brand image. Results of the study confirm the applicability of learning and human associative memories to brand placement. The major findings of the research include brand placement and its effects, brand image and image components that were not associated with the program were not affected and neither was brand attitude. Finally it is suggested that placing a brand in television program can result in very specific image change and advertisers should make a well-defined choice for a program that conveys the desired image before they decide to get involved.

Abhilasha (2000) studied the relationship between the attitude of audiences towards advertisement and its effectiveness. The study aimed to identify that consumers with more favourable attitude toward advertising in general would recall more ads and tend to get persuaded by them. The results of the study indicated favourable attitude towards ads persuades the audiences and also ads which can create a favorable attitude have a positive impact in them.

The present study is of great significance as it directly relates to the most dynamic channel of promotion on which the modern market and even the economy depends. The broad concern of this study directly relates to the behaviour of audience in relation to the TV commercials.

Most of the studies conducted in India had taken the "unaided - recall" method of measuring the effectiveness of the ads. The respondents involved in these research processes give responses based on the memory power they have i.e. the ads watched by them was assessed after a long period. These responses may not reveal the real impact, as the recall is made after a long interval. The period of the ads watched by them and the responses provided by them as input for research is longer to be reliable. In this research the gap is eliminated by using the aided recall method. Ten selective regional ads were chosen and the impact and factors preferred in those advertisements were assessed in this research.

The studies relating to advertising highlights the importance and need for higher level of influencing elements for the success of advertising. The focus of this research is on the audience perception towards television advertisements, the traits liked and disliked by the audience and the consumers positioning of the advertisements.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study understands the behaviour of the audience and their preferences in watching television advertisements. The following are the objectives studied in specific:

- 1. To understand the perception of audiences towards selected television advertisements;
- 2. To examine the features of television advertisements that influence the audiences;
- 3. To position the selected television advertisements based on the respondent's perception of the attributes measured.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE DESIGN

The study was descriptive in nature and conducted in Tamilnadu, India. Sample was selected at convenience in the states of Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri of Tamilnadu. The population above 18 years of age in these two districts was considered as sample for the study. Majority of the population are agricultural labourers and they were not ready to spend time to respond to the questionnaire. This made the researcher to adopt the convenience sampling method that gives flexibility to approach, with only those who are ready to spend time and respond to the questionnaire. Sample size is determined using the "Sample size determination for the means method". The formula for computing "n", the sample size used in the study.

N= $(Z\sigma/Dx)^2$

The 'z' value represents the 'z' score from the standard normal distribution for the confidence level desired by the research. At 95% confidence level, the associated value of z score is 1.96. 'o' represents the standard deviation of the population and 'x' represents the mean of the population. The standard deviation of the population is estimated by conducting pilot study. The interval scale is used in the pilot study. With the mean of 4.3 and the standard deviation of 1.89, the estimated sample size is 296. To round the figures, a sample of 300 was considered for the study. Equal number of samples, 150 from Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri districts was considered.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The focus of this research is to study the behaviour of audience towards television advertisements. Field survey method was employed to collect the primary data from the selected 300 respondents with the help of a structured questionnaire. Ten television advertisements of the regional language (i.e. Tamil) were shown to the respondents and their opinion on those advertisements were drawn. The advertisements selected were of Ashirvad, Fair & Lovely, Fevicol, Hamam, Lakme, Mentos, Parachute, Power soap, Sugar Free, Surf Excel. The advertisements were selected after pilot study. In the pilot study, 20 popular regional ads were shown to the respondents participated and were asked to rank them. Top ten ranking ads were considered for the research. Care was taken in wording the questions in the questionnaire because poorly worded questions can cause respondents to report miscomprehension even though they actually comprehend the message (Lynn et.al. 1992). In case of respondents who were not having formal education, the researcher read and briefed about the questions and recorded their response. Respondents with varying background were selected based on the important demographic aspects like age, gender, educational qualification, marital status, occupation and income level for this study.

PROFILE OF DHARMAPURI DISTRICT

Dharmapuri is one of the 30 administrative districts of Tamilnadu situated in the north-western corner of the state and the district's economy depends on agriculture. Dharmapuri district came into existence since the year 1965. The total geographical area of this district is 4497.77 square kilometers i.e. 3.46% of Tamilnadu, India. According to 2001 census, the total population of the district is 12, 95,182 consisting of 6, 70,520 males and 6, 24,662 females. The literacy rate of this district is 63.5%.

PROFILE OF KRISHNAGIRI DISTRICT

Krishnagiri district has been bifurcated from Dharmapuri district as the thirtieth district of Tamilnadu, India. It has 2 municipalities, 10 panchayat unions, 7 town panchayats, 352 village panchayats and 636 revenue villages. The total geographical area of this district is 5143 square kilometers. According to 2001 census, the total population of the district is 15, 46,700 consisting of 7, 95,718 males and 7, 50,982 females. The literacy rate of this district is 58.11%. Three languages namely Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada are predominantly spoken in this district.

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED FOR ANALYSIS

The data collected was checked for its validity and reliability. Statistical package SPSS 15.0 was used to analyze the data collected. To study the perception of audience towards selected television advertisements, respondents were asked to rate them from best to worst. Weighted average scores were calculated to understand the perception of the audiences on television commercials, and the ads were ranked.

Weighted average score = \sum (No of Respondents preferred the ads x weights assigned) / total no. of respondents.

Perceptual mapping is used to visually display the perceptions of consumers. It is a marketing research technique in which consumer's views about a product are traced or plotted (mapped) on a chart. In SPSS, discriminant analysis is performed considering the brands as the decision variable and the opinion in a scale as the independent variables. A combined group plot is activated to have the perceptual map. The strength of the variables is understood from the coefficient matrix. Perceptual mapping is done to position the advertisements based on the attributes measured as opined by the respondents.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The validity of the instrument, questionnaire was ensured at the time of pilot study. Content Validity was established by enquiring the sample considered for pilot study. Focus was given on whether or not they are able to understand the concept that is targeted in the questionnaire. The respondents who said that television ads influence their decisions in purchasing a product had different levels of influence on the attributes of television ads than those who said that television ads do not influence their decision in purchasing a product. This ensures construct validity of the questionnaire.

The reliability of the questions was empirically examined in order to understand the coherence in the responses made. Reliability of the scales was ensured with Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The coefficient varies between the values 0 to 1. If the score is closer to the value '1', the internal consistency in the questionnaire is perfect and if the score is closer to '0' the there is poor internal consistency among the questions in the scale constructed. Cronbach's alpha measures how well a set of items (or variables) measures a single unidimensional latent construct.

Cronbach's alpha can be written as a function of the number of test items and the average inter-correlation among the items. Cronbach's α is defined as

$$\alpha = \frac{N}{N-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{N} \sigma_{Y_i}^2}{\sigma_X^2} \right)$$

where N is the number of components (items or testlets), $\sigma_{\mathbf{X}}^2$ is the variance of the observed total test scores, and $\sigma_{\mathbf{Y}_i}^2$ is the variance of component i. The Chronbach alpha score for the attributes that influences the television ads was calculated to be 0.748 which is greater than 0.5. Thus, the internal consistency of the questionnaire is good enough to proceed with the research.

PERCEPTION OF AUDIENCE TOWARDS SELECTED TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS

Respondents were asked to reveal their opinion towards the ads selected for the study based on the attributes of the advertisements. Ten television advertisements selected were shown to the respondents and they were asked to rate the ads comprised in it. The rating was done on a five point scale (where 1 – perceive the best, 2 – perceive to be good, 3 – neither good nor bad, 4 – perceive bad and 5 – perceive to be worst) and the results are presented in Table 1 and ranked with weighted average scores.

TABLE 1: PERCEPTION TOWARDS TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements	1 (5)	2 (4)	3 (3)	4 (2)	5 (1)	Mean Score	Rank
Ashirvaad	27	172	145	26	0	3.5	6
Fair & Lovely	107	170	80	13	0	4.0	3
Fevicol	211	93	53	0	13	4.3	1
Hamam	13	106	212	39	0	3.3	9
Lakme	52	130	136	52	0	3.5	6
Mentos	183	80	80	14	13	4.1	2
Parachute	67	171	119	13	0	3.8	5
Power soap	26	79	186	26	53	3.0	10
Sugar free	14	184	133	26	13	3.4	8
Surf Excel	79	211	54	26	0	3.9	4

Note: Figures given in brackets are the weights assigned

Mean Score = ∑ (Number of Responses * Weights assigned) / Total number of Respondents

Out of the ten selected television advertisements, the advertisement for Fevicol was perceived to be the best advertisement among all the ten advertisements. The ad for the brand Fevicol is a humourous advertisement. Fevicol is followed by Mentos again an advertisement with humour appeal in it, Fair and lovely, Surf excel and Parachute. These ads were perceived to be good for their unique qualities like humourous appeal, celebrity endorsement, and attractiveness as revealed by the respondents. Informative ads of the brands Ashirvad and Lakme were ranked equally as sixth and Sugar Free ad was ranked as eighth by the respondents. The advertisements of the brands Hamam and Power soap are ranked as ninth and tenth respectively by the audience.

FEATURES OF TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENT THAT INFLUENCES AUDIENCE BEHAVIOUR

From the ten advertisements of the brands Ashirvad, Fair & Lovely, Fevicol, Hamam, Lakme, Mentos, Parachute, Power soap, Sugar free, Surf Excel were considered for the study, top five advertisements that influence respondents to a greater extent were selected. It includes the advertisements of Fevicol, Mentos, Fair & Lovely, Surf Excel and Parachute. Perceptual mapping was executed with these top five ads preferred by the respondents in the study. Positioning of the advertisements was done with discriminant analysis using SPSS. The variables considered for positioning the advertisements include: persuasive, relevance, informative, recall, simple, surprising, precise, likeable, credible and unique. The four discriminate functions represent the dimensions. The dimensions are determined based on the standardized discriminant coefficients given in the table 2.

TABLE 2: STANDARDIZED DISCRIMINANT COEFFICIENT FUNCTIONS

Variables	Functions				
	1	2	3	4	
Persuasive	.050	640	006	094	
Relevant	.410	.013	.261	456	
Informative	526	.400	288	.432	
Recallable	.055	.470	051	041	
Simple	.006	088	247	.256	
Surprising	.606	.438	353	326	
Precise	072	.286	.156	335	
Likeable	153	587	370	326	
Credible	105	.132	1.148	.151	
Unique	.499	254	233	.740	

The highest score in first dimension is for the feature surprising (with standardized coefficient 0.606); second dimension is recall (with standard coefficient 0.470); third dimension is credibility (with standardized coefficient 1.148); and fourth dimension is uniqueness (with standardized coefficient 0.740). These are the four important dimensions considered by the respondents in watching the selected advertisements.

POSITIONING OF TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisements that are positioned based on the strength of the dimensions are decided from the scores of group centroid functions. The results of the data collected are given in the table 3.

TABLE 3: FUNCTIONS AT GROUP CENTROIDS

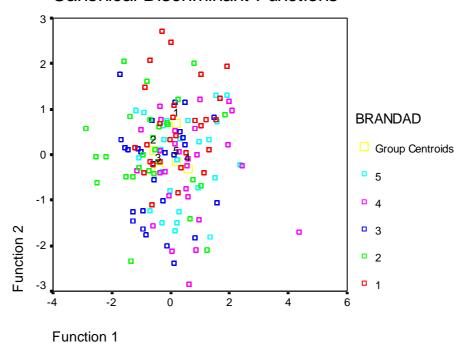
BRAND/ Function	1	2	3	4
Fair & Lovely	.189	.689	.130	-5.908E-02
Fevicol	576	8.028E-02	452	6.852E-02
Mentos	396	314	.356	138
Parachute	.590	305	346	-7.235E-02
Surf Excel	.192	150	.312	.201

Unstandardized canonical discriminant functions evaluated at group means

The advertisement that has the advantages of first dimension (i.e. Surprising) is of Parachute. The advertisement that has the strength over the second dimension (i.e. recall) is for the brand Fair & Lovely. The ad that has the inclination towards third dimension (i.e. credibility) is Mentos and the ad that inclines towards fourth dimension (i.e. uniqueness) is Surf Excel. The advertisement for the brand Fevicol does not have the strength of any of these dimensions. But still it is one among the top 5 preferred advertisements. This may be because it is inclined to the dimension that is not considered. The positioning map of the advertisements of five brands is given in figure 1.

FIGURE 1: PERCEPTUAL MAP

Canonical Discriminant Functions



The advertisements are positioned based on the group centroid function generated from discriminant function. Thus the ad of five top brands as per the perception of the respondents is positioned.

CONCLUSION

The research work focused on the audience perception towards television advertisements, with the traits liked and disliked by them. From the ten advertisements considered for the study, perceptual mapping was executed with the top five ads preferred by the respondents. Positioning of the advertisements done with discriminant analysis revealed Parachute advertisement is preferred for its surprising features, Fair & Lovely for recall features, Mentos for its credibility and Surf Excel for its uniqueness. It is important for the marketers to consider these dimensions that are opined by the customers. This will help them to position the ads in the minds of the customers and break the existing clutter.

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