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## A study on advertisement as an important tool of marketing and promotional activity

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### Abstract

Advertisements enable customers to decide upon products and services and they play a major role in providing relevant information. To increase the attractiveness of advertisement and to overcome the problem of 'advertisement avoidance' (zapping), advertisement creators use various strategies and by using that they engage the audience in watching them. Advertising through television medium combines sight, sound and motion; appealing to the senses; and therefore has high attention and high reach. The aim of any advertisement is to bring in some impact in improving the sales or persuade the audience for some social causes. To bring in changes in audience, communication theories suggest that content, message and the style of delivery play a major role. The current paper highlights the impact of advertisements on purchasing behavior of consumers.

**Keywords:** Advertisement, Consumer, Television, Product, Industry

### 1. Introduction

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.

Thomas (1996) <sup>[1]</sup> 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.

There are people who hold the opinion that advertising is a pack of lies, it manipulates and bluffs the audience. They also have a view that ads are used to sell inferior goods. The existence of this negative perception about ads arouses interest in many researchers to explore further on its effects on audience. The generally accepted fact is that all the ads are not effective and all of them do not work in the same direction. To identify the success of the ads, understanding the psychology of advertising is vital.

Television is considered as a popular and powerful medium of information and entertainment to reach the audiences. Television advertising has been a popular medium for advertisers ever since the TV first began to appear in living rooms. With the arrival of cable television, production costs and the opportunity to reach smaller and more targeted markets, making it a medium for small to medium-size businesses. Programmes like songs, news, interviews, comedy and information attracts the largest audience than any other medium. Numerous channels are available to audience and the audiences are bombarded with ads. This increases the level of ad clutters on television commercials. To overcome this issue, new techniques are adopted by Ad agencies and these techniques sometimes really help them in clutterbeating work. Due to the technical developments, opportunities to advertise on TV have increased over the past years. Audiences are exposed to hundreds and thousands of commercials messages a day.

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The basic idea of advertising is to inform, educate and motivate potential buyers. In this area, the media of advertisement matters a lot. In the present era, TV seems to be the most popular and potent media as people are greatly influenced by what they see and see repeatedly. In urban areas especially, the TV is the most effective medium of advertisement. So potent is this channel of advertisement in persuading the viewer that it has become the most reliable channel of promoting products, both existing and newly launched ones.

Television advertisements have brought a paradigm shift in the arena of advertising. This is mainly due to it being considered as a mode through which buying decisions may be made collectively as opposed to other media of advertisement where the influence upon the buyer is restrictively individual. Television advertisements aim at converting the raw perception of viewers into brand allegiance towards products and services. Television advertisements have 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. Dinner time ads often inspire buying as it is the time of communal decision making.

TV Ads impact viewers due to various factors which have multiple dimensions. The influence of these commercials may be due to the innovativeness in presentation, the theme of the ads, the charisma of the model, the music, the slogan, and the power of the brand and so on. It can be said with conviction that the likeability factor of advertisements greatly influences the buying decision of the viewers and can transform even a casual viewer into a potential buyer. Likewise advertisements that are lack luster or misdirected may chase off buyers from a product.

One of the biggest challenges of the advertisers is to retain the effectiveness of advertisements by tailoring it win the attention of the viewers. It is believed by the advertisers that the major objective of the advertising is to influence a positive brand attitude formation. Competition from other advertisers is unavoidable. To keep their ad visible they adopt a few strategies which can give them fruitful results. To elicit an impact in audience, they combine the images, music, humour, drama and much more in their strategies. Popularization of electronic media with multiple channels created a situation of rising clutter of ads. Bombardment of ads creates an uncomfortable situation to the audience when they switch on the television and they started avoiding ads. It is a big challenge for the ad men to retain the interest of the audience and taking right decisions with regard to the selection of appropriate creative strategies and tactics in ads.

### **Need and Significance of the Study**

Advertising is an “art of telling and selling”. Advertisers and Advertising agencies spend huge amount of time and money in creating attractive advertisements. They attempt to make the advertisements watchable and likeable by adding attractive elements to it.

Audience engagement is vital in getting the desired impact so that their interest towards watching the advertisements should be enhanced. Eye catching visuals and apt verbal messages may contribute in enhancing their interest. They watch the advertisements more than once and many research studies have proved that ads frequently watched by the audience will increase the chances of buying. So, advertisers

and ad creators should focus on the features and effective components to make the ad better by keeping the products and audience interest in mind.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Advertising 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 behavior. Advertisement is a potent 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 fat budgets to the advertising 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 process of advertisements to the audience starts with ‘attention getting’ and ends with ‘buying’ a product according to AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire and Action) model. Creativity helps a lot in attracting the attention of the audience. First step is crucial in grabbing the attention of the viewers and it is a big challenge for the ad creators. If they fail to do it effectively, the other steps in the process may also get affected and they may fail. This research work focuses on the audience perception towards television advertisements, the traits liked and disliked by the audience and its influence level towards purchase behaviour.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Television is a medium which carries the messages to mass audience. Individuals differ in their interests and preferences. This study has the objectives to understand the behaviour of the audience and their preferences in watching television advertisements. The following objectives were considered

1. To study the perception of audiences towards selected television advertisements
2. To examine various features of television advertisements that influence the audiences.

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were framed for this study:

1. There is no relationship between gender and number of television watching hours
2. There is no relationship between marital status and number of television watching hours
3. There is no relationship between age and number of television watching hours
4. Television Ads that provide real picture do not provide good source of information about product.

### **Review of literature**

In a study conducted in rural and urban areas of Kerala by Suresh Manimala and Mukunda, majority of the respondents participated in the said that they are interested in the product advertised by the commercial they liked most. Interest in a

product does not necessarily arise from a 'believable' ad but more from a likeable advertisement. Overexposure, irritating presentations and lack of involvement with the product are pointed out as the main reasons for disliking an advertisement. In advertisements thus disliked, study showed that women showed clear responses emerging from these reasons. Firmly it is believed that likeability' of an advertisement influences the purchase behaviour positively. Karunesh *et al.* (2007) [5] discussed the importance of television channels and the time of appearance of advertisements in television channels to the target audience. They felt these factors a vital role in influencing the audience in decision making. The relevance of channel and the time chosen to present the marketing messages to the target audience should be chosen carefully to get the desired impact.

Schoham and Aviv (1996) [8] 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.

Panwar and Milan (2006) [7] have designed a study to extend knowledge of cognitive processing of advertising messages by urban children in India. The study aimed to find out whether advertisement elements like endorsers, music, slogans, etc influence processing and understanding of advertising messages by children. 250 children were surveyed and found out from the response given by them refer to elements like likeability of the model, character or endorser, storyline, slogan and the music. These will create liking or disliking for a particular advertisement and hence decoding of its message. Majority of the children opined that advertisement exaggerates and that there was a gap in promise and delivery, it had to be balanced to be more effective.

Barak *et al.* (2009) [3] discussed the issues related to word of mouth communication. The authors opined that consumer generated communication are not always brand specific. The focus of the study was on two sources of communication, the first one is 'within brand influence', which originates with the firm's own customers, and second one is the 'cross brand influence', which originates with the customers of the firm's competitors. The results of the study indicate that the growth of a new brand which has competition is influenced by the competition of effects from the brand's own customers as well as the competitor's customers. In fact, the follower brand has a 'shorter take off time' than the pioneer brand.

Albert and Rosella (2003) [1] in their study focused on the perceived influence of children resulting from the communication pattern adopted by parents. Parental style of family communication plays a role in providing a means of understanding consumers. Results of the study show that children of concept-oriented parents have an influence on purchase decisions, but children those of socially orientated parents did not have influence on purchase decisions.

Kirti (2009) [6] in her study on consumer beliefs and attitudes towards advertising media concluded that the imperative for marketers is to create advertisements that are believable and contain relevant information about the product. The messages in the advertisements should focus on benefits and

attributes with the required amount of creativity in it to get maximum results.

Eva *et al.* (2007) [4] 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.

Surendra and Jacqueline (1989) [9] examined the effects of viewer excitement as evoked by TV programs on the impact of commercials embedded in such programs. High arousal programs enhance the remembrance level of the viewer on the commercial content than the low arousal programs. Exciting programs induce positive moods and enable them in recalling the commercials whereas in case of irritating commercials audience advocates to avoid the products. In the conclusion, it is opined that suspenseful or emotional programs that induce intense arousal can be expected to influence purchase and consumption behaviours.

Anthony and Clark (1984) [2] opined that the effectiveness of advertising messages is widely believed to be controlled by audience involvement. The study identified four levels of involvement in order from low to high- pre-attention, focal attention, comprehension and elaboration. Antecedents, consequences and process of involvement of audiences were also discussed in the study. Personal relevance of the messages is more important to the audience and it reduces the complexity of decision making.

## Results

General opinion of the audience on TV ads, the most influencing media, timings and duration spent by the audience on TV ads, influence level of television ads are also discussed.

**Table 1:** Audience response on Television as a Useful Medium.

S No	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	358	96.8 %
2	No	12	3.2 %
	Total	370	100%

Table 1 depicts the opinion of the respondents on the usefulness of the television as a medium. Almost all the respondents felt television is a useful medium for them to know the information. Only 3.2 percent of the respondents have a different opinion on the factor. Television is considered as king of all media, it combines both sight and sound, and demonstration is possible only through television. Therefore, television is judged as the most useful medium by the respondents, it can be used by the advertisers as a medium to convey the messages to the audiences to influence their purchase activity. The study included respondents from semi-urban and rural areas and almost all the households in these geographical areas have TV sets. This again confirms that television still has its importance in sending the marketing communication to the consumers. The timings audience viewed the advertisement are presented in table2.

**Table 2:** Timings

S No	Time	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Morning ( before 12 noon)	27	7.3
2	Afternoon (12- 4)	28	7.6
3	Evening (4-8)	118	31.9
4	Night after 8	197	53.2
	Total	370	100

Table 2 represents the timings audience watch the television. More than half of the respondents watch television after 8 pm. 31.9 percent of the respondents watch television in the evening. 7.6 percent of the respondents in the afternoon 7.3 percent of the respondents in the morning watch television. The inference from the above table is that majority of the respondents watch television programs in the prime time and they perceived it as a useful medium. The advertisements that are broadcasted in the prime time will have more reach and impact than the ads broadcasted in non-prime time. Further it can be inferred that all types of respondents, i.e. respondents involved in the study of various age group, gender, employees; find time to watch television in the prime time, so to communicate the marketing messages of any kind of product, evening is the right period for the advertisers. Most of the housewives watch television in the morning and afternoon period, ads for the products used by them can be broadcasted in that time. The extent of influence of television advertisements in deciding the products is understood and illustrated in table 3.

**Table 3:** Influence Level of Television Ads

S No	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly influence	206	55.7
2	Moderate influence	164	44.3
3	No influence at all	-	-
	Total	370	100

General opinion of the respondents on the influence of television on them is illustrated in table 3. Out of all, 55.7 percent of the respondents opined that they are strongly influenced by television commercials and 44.3 percent of the respondents are moderately influenced by television advertisements. All the respondents agreed that television ads have some level of influence and none of them agreed that it has no influence on them. Specific benefits of television advertisements felt by the audience are discussed in table 4.

**Table 4:** Benefits felt by the respondents through TV Advertisements

S No	Benefits	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Educates	248	67.0
2	Gives more knowledge on product features	253	68.4
3	Information on offers and discounts	211	57.0
4	To know the new arrivals	279	75.4

Note: Percentage in the table refers to the percentage of the total number of respondents (370)

Various roles of advertising are discussed in this section. In this multiple- response question, i.e. respondents have given multiple options to respond and their opinions on the benefits were drawn from the given set. Table 4 depicts the perceived benefits of the respondents on television

commercials. 67 percent of the total number of respondents felt that television commercials educates them, 68.4 percent of them felt that ads give them more knowledge on product features, 57 percent of them opined to know the information on offers and discounts. Majority (75.4 percent) of the respondents' opinion reveal that they watch advertisements to know the new arrival of products and services in the market. Thus, television advertisements give a multiple usage to the advertisers. They can be used by the advertisers to inform the new products and be successful. FMCG sector in the industry introduces new products frequently, so television can be a right medium to convey the messages to the customers.

### Conclusion

Consumers take purchase decisions based on their personal factors and the external communications they receive. They are bombarded with marketing messages communicated by several media. To cut through the clutter and to stand out from competition advertisers need to have effective strategies in writing their marketing messages to their customer. The responses to the marketing communications from the customers vary. Therefore a need for the study on audience behaviour is felt. This study focused on the behaviour of audience towards television advertisements. The study indicates the importance of television medium by the amount spent on TV advertisements, usefulness of television advertisements in making purchase decisions and the benefits of television advertisements felt by the audiences. Attractive advertisements are welcomed by respondents. If the advertisements have likeable elements in it, they will create the desired results. Animated advertisements, humorous advertisements and advertisements endorsed by celebrities create impact in audience. A few advertisements bother the audience while watching and those kinds of advertisements need to be eliminated. Audiences do not watch the advertisements if they are repetitive and uninteresting. If advertisements are created with likeable factors it will be watched by the audience and it influences them towards purchasing.

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