

AFFECTIVE PRIMING TECHNIQUE IN ADVERTISING - AN EMPIRICAL STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOODS SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

In this era where consumers are continuously exposed to media from different sources, an engaging advertisement can be a make or break affair for an organization to thrive in today's world of cutthroat competition. The current generation's preference for video content over static content emphasizes the increasing relevance of digital video advertising. Present young adults are voracious consumers of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) like chocolates and confectioneries, packaged snacks and soft drinks, and hence they are the focus of the present study. This study uses repeated measures design to compare types of appeal (rational vs. emotional with affective priming technique) on buying intention, memorability and impression of advertisement. With use of statistical tools like t test, ANCOVA and correlation, the study found that the type of appeal generally tends to have an impact on buying intention but this ceases to happen when there is a prior strong attitude towards the brand or product. The study also finds positive correlation between impression, memorability and buying intention after being exposed to emotional advertisements.

Keywords: Affective Priming, Indian Advertisements, Emotional Advertising, FMCG.

INTRODUCTION

In today's busy world where the first impression is the last impression and the first impression comes from stimuli around us, right advertising plays a major role in the success of products in the market. Advertising is an important part of the promotional mix. As per content, an advertisement can make either a rational appeal or an emotional appeal. Advertisements using rational appeal try to influence consumers by providing information about and advantages of the product concerned while advertisements using emotional appeal focus on the emotional side of using the product and feel of the product.

Affective priming is a process wherein the perception of an emotion provoking stimulus affects the perception of the consecutive stimulus. For example, when someone is exposed to a strong emotion and immediately after that a neutral object is shown the person may associate that object with that strong emotion and develop negative/positive feelings towards the object. This phenomenon is being used in advertising to garner positive emotions towards brands. The current study focuses on FMCG sector as this sector accounts for continuous long-term small value purchases which add up to be a huge amount. FMCG is the 4th largest sector in Indian economy. Financial Express (January 23, 2019) reports that FMCG sector brands spend 33% of their digital advertising budget on digital video advertising, which is far higher than other sectors. This study explores how Affective priming and

Emotional advertising techniques are being used in the FMCG sector in Indian video Advertisements.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There has been ample evidence available both supporting and negating the impact of advertising in general and the implications of using emotional appeal in the advertisement in particular. Nielsen in their 2016 study reported that use of emotion arousing techniques in advertising led to 23% lift in sales volume. Wood (2012) stated that effectiveness of an advertisement is best measured using emotional measures as humans react to advertisements and purchase using a thinking process which is highly emotional. One of the techniques that could be used in emotional advertising is use of Affective Priming. Affective Priming and emotional advertising techniques have great possibilities for use in advertising. Affective priming and emotional advertising techniques in advertisements are growing in popularity among advertisers as these techniques help in increasing brand popularity and profitability. Batra et al. (1986) found that emotional responses evoked by an advertisement appear to be antecedents of the attitude towards the advertisement and it has a weak but significant impact on attitude towards the brand.

Albers-Miller & Stafford (1999) found that there were much more emotional appeals found in the scientific literature, than the rational appeals. Singh (2017) thoroughly observed 130 TV advertisements of 23 products from Food & Beverages, Household care and Personal care/ Hygiene products category and found emotions such as Humor, Amazement and Love & Affection. Pringle (2008) in his popular book '*Brand Immortality*' mentions that his study of 1400 advertisement campaigns lead to a finding that Ads with purely emotional content generated 31% profit while those with rational content generated only 16% profit. As the power of television is on decline due to media fragmentation, mobile advertising assumes greater significance. To make advertising appeals more distinctive and persuasive, advertisers frequently use dramatic emotional ad-messages (Panda et al., 2013). Copeland way back in 1924 contended that individual customers buy products and services for either a rational or emotional reason. Rational advertising assumes that consumers purchase goods and services based on logical or/and utilitarian decisions. Batra et al. (1990) in an experimental study with print ads found that if readers are in a state of positive mood then it contributes favourably to brand attitude. This supports the use of affective priming as affective priming helps establish a positive mood.

According to Hartmann et al. (2005) emotional positioning strategies are as important as functional strategies for brand positioning. This study was conducted in context of green branding and it revealed the importance of emotional techniques in advertisements to change the attitude of consumers towards brands. Ferreira et al. (2011) found that negative emotion conveying words, when used in advertisements in websites, lead to more attention towards the advertisement than when positive or neutral words were used. This is in the context where previous studies have reported that people avoid paying attention to advertisement on the web in general. Joshi et al. (2015) found that emotional branding and using of emotional advertising leads to improved brand loyalty. This study was specifically done in context of Indian FMCG sector. According to Wood (2012) an emotional model and emotional measurement of advertising will be more effective than traditional model of advertising. Empirical data is used to drive home this point. Mahapatra (2013) found that emotional advertising is more effective than rational advertising in terms of leading to action.

Yi (1990) conducted an experiment to investigate the cognitive and affective priming of the contact for print advertisements and found that cognitive priming influences the attitude towards the brand, while affective priming influences the attitude towards the

advertisement. Yi (1993) also examined the moderating effect of prior knowledge on contextual priming influences the evaluations of an ambiguous product and concluded that Contextual priming impacts brand evaluations among moderate-knowledge subjects. Earlier advertising theories believed more in functional messaging than in the power of emotional bond for causing favourable brand associations (Panda et al, 2013). Aaker & Norris (1982) found that informational appeals resulted in higher effectiveness ratings than emotional appeals. Roozen (2013) contended that advertisers deliberately use emotion to reach to the consumer's heart expecting a positive attitude and favourable buying decision. The intensity of each individual's emotional response to the advertisement is different, and this level may also significantly influence the attitude formation (Panda et al., 2013).

Kumar et al. (2015) explored the purchase behaviour of poor consumers with reference to fast moving consumer goods and found that they are conscious about price, quality, brand, loyal to the brands. It was further found that they purchase well known national brands in FMCGs and their main information sources of these brands are TV advertising and family members. Vieceli & Shaw, (2010) proposed and tested a model of brand salience for fast-moving consumer goods, which incorporates knowledge, media consumption, and brand image as antecedents leading to purchase likelihood and found positive association. The empirical evidence supports building a brand in a primary category, in order to build the depth and breadth of the brand's associations in consumer memory. Vyas (2005) examined the nature of schemes offered in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) category, the ratio of incentive and outlay (which the consumer is expected to make/pay to avail sales promotion offers) and found that the schemes are more aggressive for non-food items than food items, and non-food category exhibited more variation than the items in food category.

Researchers have paid adequate attention to phenomenon of promotion of products through social media. Mogaji & Wright (2016) investigated how Facebook users express their emotions towards advertisements of brand. Analysing over 250 comments by Facebook users of Lloyds Bank on its 250th anniversary, they found that the advertisement prompted different emotions such as love, pride and in some cases anger. The use of images like the black horse, the cover music and the background music aroused positive emotions. Enginkayaa & Cinar (2014) contended that social media has become a major factor in influencing various aspects of consumer behaviour including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase behaviour and post-purchase communication and evaluation. They further mentioned that digital advertising can mould consumer preferences, helps to build a positive attitude and influence purchase decisions about the advertised products/services, and thus plays an important role. Digital ads are increasingly becoming more appealing tools of marketing communication to reach targeted consumers. Digital advertising includes search or display advertisements and also all types of marketing communication that is executed through web, social media and/or mobile technology (Takemura, 2012).

Mobile advertising is the transmission of a message related to products, services and opinions for promotional purposes via mobile devices (Li & Brian, 2007). The higher penetration rate of mobile phones has resulted in the increased reach of advertisements for products and services. With the declining persuasive Social Media facilitates the companies to engage in timely and direct end-consumer contact at much lower costs and higher levels of efficiency compared to conventional tools of communication, and thus makes it relevant and affordable not only for large multinational firms, but also for small and medium sized enterprises (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Among the online ads, video ads are growing phenomenally owing to fast growth of video traffic and the vast variety of video content providers on the internet. Advertisers now

have a much better access than ever before to a large amount of personal and context data from consumers by the use cookies, location tracking and the like so that they can better target their audiences and customise the advertising messages, which may increase their effectiveness (Hudders et al., 2019).

The companies get significant share of their top line from young consumers and provide a sizeable sales potential as future "*adult*" consumers (Magin et al., 2015). Therefore, teenagers have become an interesting target group for companies. Armstrong (2010) and Lantos (2015) argued that emotional appeals are more relevant for hedonic products, while rational appeals are more relevant for utilitarian products. Studies reinforced the importance of emotional appeal in advertising. Affective priming is a technique which can be used for emotional advertising. Use of this technique in digital video advertisements need to be probed further. Also, previous studies have not accounted for baseline attitude towards the product or product category which may be an important factor in such studies.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The study used convenience/judgmental sampling technique. The sample group consisted of 122 undergraduate students of which 60 were females and 62 were males. They ranged in age from 18 years to 25 years with 88.52% in the range of 19-21 years of age. Average age of the sample group was 20.189 years. The sample group was drawn from a particular college in Mumbai, a metropolitan city in India and it was selected such that it could somewhat mimic the diversity of states, languages and cultures of India. This particular age group was chosen as this age group is a voracious consumer of FMCG products like chocolates, packaged snacks, cosmetics and soft drinks.

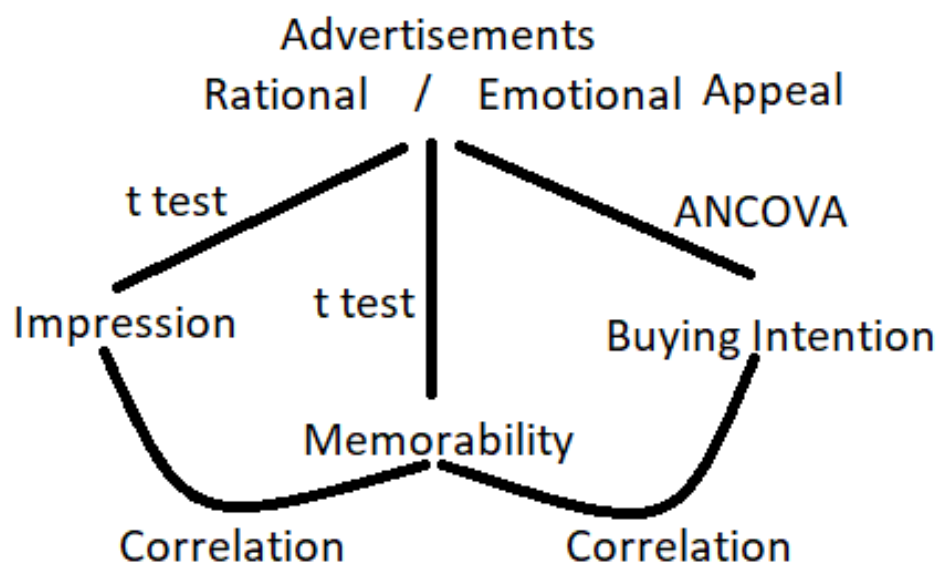
Procedure of study

The advertisements were selected with the help of a video search engine such that both emotional as well as rational appeal advertisements were available for the same products. The products were selected such that the products are ones which are frequently bought by the sample and thus they are consumers of the products. The products belonged to category of chocolates, packaged snacks, cosmetics and soft drinks. Some of the advertisements were edited to make them more geared towards either rational appeal or emotional appeal. The advertisements with emotional appeal were the ones which used affective priming technique by first featuring an emotional story and then introducing the product (Grigaliunaite & Pileliene, 2016).

The sample group was first administered a questionnaire to measure their baseline buying intention and general opinion of 4 selected branded products. Repeated measures design being used; the sample was first exposed to a set of rational appeal advertisements for the same selected branded products and then a questionnaire to measure the impression and memorability of the advertisements from their viewpoint as well as their intention to buy the product after watching the advertisement. Later they were exposed to a set of emotional appeal advertisements (using affective priming technique) for the same selected branded products and a questionnaire to measure the impression and memorability of the advertisements from their viewpoint as well as their intention to buy the product after watching the advertisement. Lastly the sample was administered a questionnaire which included general profiling questions to understand their shopping behaviour and preferred brands in the FMCG category.

Specific to buying intention, a repeated measures experimental design with two levels of independent variable and one dependent variable was used and also baseline of independent variable was measured to adjust for its effect on dependent variable. Here type of appeal was the independent variable with its two levels being use of rational appeal and use of emotional appeal (using affective priming technique). The dependent variable was buying intention reported by each one in the sample group on a scale of 1 to 10. General impression and memorability of the advertisement were also measured on a scale of 1 to 10 (Figure 1).

Plan of Statistical Analysis of Data



Source: Authors

FIGURE 1
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

All the statistical analysis was performed using R statistical programming language (R Core Team, 2019).

Hypotheses

H1: Mean Ratings on impression are significantly higher for emotional appeal (using affective priming technique) advertisements than for rational appeal advertisements for each of the four products.

H2: Mean Ratings on memorability are significantly higher for emotional appeal (using affective priming technique) advertisements than for rational appeal advertisements for each of the four products.

H3: Mean buying intention is significantly higher for emotional appeal (using affective priming technique) advertisements than for rational appeal advertisements for each of the four products adjusting for the mean baseline buying intention.

H4: Impression of advertisement is positively correlated with memorability of advertisement for each of the four products in emotional appeal condition.

H5: Memorability of advertisement is positively correlated with buying intention for each of the four products in emotional appeal condition.

Scope of the study

1. The study analyses the effect of type of appeal on buying intention adjusting for baseline intention to buy the product with respect to 4 branded FMCG brands such as Pepsi Cola Drink (Product 1), Ponds Cold Cream (Product 2), LaysChips (Product 3) and Cadbury's Celebrations Chocolate (Product 4).
2. The study reveals patterns of correlation between impression of an advertisement, its memorability and buying intention.
3. The study compares the memorability and impression of advertisements between the types of appeal.

Limitations

1. The study is limited to young adults (aged 18-25) and thus to be generalized with caution.
2. Limited sample size and sampling error could probably limit the validity of findings.
3. As the study is limited to Indian FMCG sector and further limited to only four branded products, its applicability in other sectors and geographical areas may be limited.

Despite limitations, the authors exercised due diligence in picking the respondents and soliciting responses from the target respondents.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The following Table 1 provides results of paired samples t test for comparing means of impression of advertisements between rational and emotional appeal conditions:

Product	Mean Impression of Rational Ad Message	Mean Impression of Emotional Ad Message	T value	df	P value
Product 1	6.352459	8.483607	-7.0685	121	0.01
Product 2	5.213115	5.229508	t = -0.074026	121	0.94
Product 3	6.901639	8.581967	t = -7.8146	121	0.00
Product 4	7.114754	7.360656	t = -0.96496	121	0.33

Source: Primary data

Interpretation and discussion: Paired samples t test results indicate that data for product 1 and product 3 are in line with hypothesis I, showing significant difference at 95% and 99% confidence levels respectively. While data for product 2 and product 4 are not in line with hypothesis I. Further analysis would bring out the reasons for this discrepancy among products (Table 2).

Product	Mean memorability of Rational Ad Message	Mean memorability of Emotional Ad Message	T value	df	P value
Product 1	7.713115	8.500000	-2.6231	121	0.0098
Product 2	4.745902	4.737705	0.037508	121	0.47
Product 3	6.672131	8.254098	-6.3038	121	0.000
Product 4	6.786885	7.131148	-1.2169	121	0.226

Source: Primary Data

Results of paired samples t test for comparing means of memorability of advertisements between rational and emotional appeal show a similar trend of mean scores for impression. The data for product 1 and product 3 are in line with hypothesis II while, data for product 2 and product 4 are not in line with hypothesis II. Further analysis would bring out the reasons for this discrepancy among products.

Results of ANCOVA to determine effect of type of appeal on buying intention with baseline buying intention as the covariate:

Table 3A					
PRODUCT 1-RESPONSE BUYING INTENTION					
	Df	Sum sq	Mean sq	F value	P value
Type of appeal	1	177.31	177.31	26.847	0.000***
Baseline buying intention	1	705.06	705.06	106.752	0.000 ***
residuals	241	1591.71	6.6		

Source: Primary Data

In Table 3A, level of association between a): Type of Appeal and response buying intention and b): baseline buying intention and response buying intention was studied, and both turned out to be highly significant at 99% confidence level. As the type of appeal has significant effect on the buying intention, a further analysis can be done using paired samples t test.

Table 3B	
RESULT OF T TEST SHOWING MEAN BUYING INTENTION WITH RATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL MESSAGE	
Mean response buying intention (rational message)	Mean response buying intention (emotional message)
5.303279	7.008197

Source: Primary Data

$t = -6.1914$, $df = 121$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$

Table 3B shows buying intention with emotional message is significantly higher than the same with rational message

Table 4					
PRODUCT 2-RESPONSE BUYING INTENTION					
	Df	Sum sq	Mean sq	F value	P value
Type of appeal	1	0.1	0.1	0.0179	0.8937
Baseline buying intention	1	534.35	534.35	93.2476	0.000 ***
residuals	241	1381.04	5.73		

Source: Primary Data

Table 5					
PRODUCT 3-RESPONSE BUYING INTENTION					
	Df	Sum sq	Mean sq	F value	P value
Type of appeal	1	10.25	10.25	2.4349	0.12
Baseline buying intention	1	647.41	647.41	153.8552	0.000 ***
residuals	241	1014.11	4.21		

Source: Primary Data

Table 6					
PRODUCT 4-RESPONSE BUYING INTENTION					
	Df	Sum sq	Mean sq	F value	P value
Type of appeal	1	4.74	4.74	1.0047	0.3172
Baseline buying intention	1	649.3	649.3	137.6973	0.000***

residuals	241	1136.41	4.72		
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Source: Primary Data

Tables 4-6 show that there exists significant difference between response buying intention and baseline buying intention with respect to Products 2, 3 and 4.

Correlations

Product	1	2	3	4
r value	0.8134	0.7392	0.5461	0.6539

The r values in Table 7A show that there is strong positive correlation between impression and memorability in emotional appeal condition. Here the data is in line with hypothesis IV. The correlations were calculated only for emotional appeal condition so as to maintain consistency.

Product	1	2	3	4
r value	0.4401	0.7595	0.5145	0.5867

The r values in Table 7B show that there is moderate to strong positive correlation between memorability and buying intention in emotional appeal condition. Here the data is in line with hypothesis V. The correlations were calculated only for emotional appeal condition so as to maintain consistency.

DISCUSSION

The study provides significant insights for marketers while designing and executing promotional strategies. Though the consumers' response varied slightly for each type of product, the implications of using affective priming technique in advertising are quite evident. For product 1 both, type of appeal as well as baseline intention have significant effect on the buying intention after exposure to advertisements. Further t test shows that the data for product 1 is in line with the hypothesis III. But, in case of products 2, 3 and 4 only the base line buying intention has significant effect on buying intention after exposure to both types of advertisements (rational as well as emotional appeal). On 10-point scale the average baseline buying intention for products 2, 3 and 4 are 3.590, 7.557 and 6.819 respectively. Here the general opinion about the product on a 10-point scale is 4.303, 7.770 and 7.106 respectively. Here the trend shows that sample group has a very unfavourable attitude towards product 2 while highly favourable attitudes towards products 3 and 4. The attitudes are so strong that the type of appeal fails to show effects on it. This also explains the discrepancies in the analysis that Table 1 and Table 2 of the results section (Bytyci, 2014).

The low favourability toward product 2 could be understood better from the profiling questions. Product 2 was a cosmetic cream and most of the subjects generally did not buy the particular product. Some of the subjects also mentioned not using any cosmetics. Also products 3 and 4 were packaged chips and packaged chocolate respectively and the entire sample group was regular consumers of the product. This could explain highly favourable attitude towards product 3 and 4.

Existence of strong positive correlation between impression and memorability, and a moderate to strong positive correlation between memorability and buying intention for emotional appeal underpins the need for use of emotional appeal in advertising.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH ORIENTATIONS

The study, in the context of FMCG sector in India, provides at least partial evidence that use of affective priming and emotional advertising techniques increase buying intention which may lead to increased sales. The study shows that the type of appeal generally tends to have an impact on buying intention but only when there is no prior strong attitude towards the brand or product. In case of presence of strong prior attitude, this attitude will prevail irrespective of which type of appeal is used in the advertisement. Further the study also gathers some evidence that use of emotional advertising techniques increase impression and memorability of advertisements. The study finds positive correlation between impression, memorability and buying intention after being exposed to emotional advertisements. This indicates the importance capturing attention of audience to create a strong impression which will lead to memorability and buying intention.

Advertisements with rational appeal play a vital role in the promotion of utilitarian products, whereas emotional advertising is more relevant for products or brands based on experiential services. Acquiring new customers through emotional appeal also helps in reducing post-purchase dissonance, but the same cannot be used across the board (Panda et al, 2013). Further studies in area are required which would throw light on the phenomena of use of affective priming technique in emotional advertising in the context of varied sectors (other than FMCG) and varied brands and products with a vaster geographical area.

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