



Creative Advertising and Advertising Effectiveness in India

PIYUSH N.
MARTHAK

RESEARCH SCHOLAR, SINGHANIA UNIVERSITY, PACHERI BARI- JHUNJHUNU.

ABSTRACT

The importance of creativity in advertising as one of the primary factor for advertising effectiveness has been much advocated by advertising professionals and academicians particularly in a cluttered media. Industry experts argue that advertisements have to be more creative to break through the greater media clutter and develop an impression for the brand. This study examines the potential effectiveness of award-winning television advertisements in India in both single and three advertising exposures. Both creative and control advertisements were embedded in a television program which were shown to two separate groups of research subjects with single and three advertising exposures respectively. After watching the advertisements, Subjects' tapped their responses about brand and advertisement recall, attitude and lastly purchase intent. Contrary to expectations, the finding of this study in single exposure does not verify the superior performance of creative advertising in terms of recall, brand and advertisement attitude and purchase intent. However, in three exposures, creative advertisements developed significantly more favorable brand and advertisement attitude and greater unaided brand recall than control advertisements. Creative advertisements developed greater mean purchase intent for the advertised brands than control group of advertisements; however, it just slipped from attaining significance. Being an optimum and more mature response of research participants in three exposures as compared to single exposure, the results of this study in three exposures conclude that creative advertisements are really more effective than conventional advertisements and bestow value to the advertised brands.

KEYWORDS:

The main purpose of advertising is to persuade potential buyers and to purchase a product or service by differentiating one product or service from another (Hovland & Wilcox, 1989 as cited in Jeong 2004). Each year, companies spend a substantial amount of its income on advertising to promote their products and services (Higie & Sewall, 1991). Only in United States, between 1988 and 1998, \$ 70.8 billion and \$ 200 billion were spent respectively. However, despite this, the effectiveness of advertisements has always remained an important and debatable issue in the advertising world (Dixit, 2005).

Numerous studies have resulted in questionable and conflicting results (Leone, 1995). The issue of advertising effectiveness has become of much greater concern today than ever as competitive clutter is on the rise and industry experts argue that "the power of marketing is eroding due to lack of attention" (Sacharin 2001, p.56). As a result, the discretionary power of television viewers to avoid watching television commercials has increased and viewer surfing over the channels has increased (Hussainy, Riaz, Kazi & Herani, 2008). This has reduced the likelihood of viewers' attention to television commercials. Even if viewers occasionally find an advertisement, it may not grab their attention due to lack of novelty in the advertisement (Mulligan, 1998).

Besides the increased number of television channels, web technology is also continuously growing with a fast rate. Literature reveals that internet subscription is consistently increasing with a high pace (Froggatt, 2010). The internet users are increasing many folds. Global Statistics about the number of internet users in different regions of the world also show enormous growth. The Asia zone has grown by 621.8 % with 825.1 million internet users in 2010 as compared to 114.3 million internet users in 2000, Europe with 352 % having 475.1 million internet users in 2010 as compared to 105 million internet users in 2000 and North America with 146.3 % reaching to 266.2 million internet users in 2010 as compared to 108 million internet users in 2000 ([http:// www. internetworldstats.com/](http://www.internetworldstats.com/) retrieved October 1, 2010).

This enormous expansion of internet is believed to have a profound effect on the media preferences of consumers and hence has led to a significant shift in the corporate world while communicating with its target consumers through mass media (Gorman, 2008; Auchard, 2009). Experts argue that people are now turning towards TV viewing on Web, and as more and more online viewing opportunities become available, the trend of online TV viewing will further increase (Schonfeld, 2010). Due to this trend, online medium has also become the part of the advertisers' pro-

motion mix. Just like the introduction of television in past, advertisers have now realized the benefits of the internet and it has become a bustling hub of commercial activity (Gorman, 2008). From media planning perspective, this has further made the media selection a difficult task. As a result, the introduction of web based television has led to the fragmentation of consumers. Companies have now realized that besides television, consumers should also be approached on the World Wide Web. Consequently, companies will now have to ensure its presence on both television and online medium respectively. This situation is more likely to lead to increase in the advertising budgets of companies. Literature indicates that in situations like this, accountability of marketing managers as well as advertising agencies for optimum utilization of scarce advertising budget of the clients companies also increase (Ang, Lee & Leong, 2007). In other words, the advertisements run on both the television as well as on the World Wide Web, have to be much result-oriented.

Due to such greater media clutter, increased competition, greater consumers' awareness, the importance of advertising creativity has increased. As a result, marketers are now turning towards demanding more novel and creative advertisements for their campaign. The importance of creativity in advertising has been much realized among advertising practitioners and academia (Ang et al., 2007). Advertising practitioners consider creativity in advertising as a remedy for breaking through the greater media clutter (Pieters, Warlop & Wedel, 2002). Similarly, every advertising text book usually contains one or two chapters on advertising creativity (Smith & Yang, 2004). In this sense, creativity in advertising is considered as an effective tool to break through the media clutter, capture consumers' attention, build an impression and lead to more effectiveness of an advertising campaign (Till & Baack, 2005).

To recognize excellence in the creativity of advertisements, advertising agencies are rewarded with advertising creativity awards. Hundreds of creativity excellence awards are given each year to the most creative and outstanding advertisements (Till & Baack, 2005). However, the question is: Are creative advertisements effective enough to persuade its viewers (Ang et al., 2007). Question like "Does creativity in advertising enhance advertising effectiveness" or "Does creative advertisement provide any incremental advertising and brand-related benefits" are the most commonly raised questions found in advertising literature. A Few studies have investigated this issue which is individually interesting and worthwhile. However, taken as a whole, have not portrayed a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between creative advertising and advertising effectiveness (Till & Baack, 2005).

AN OVERVIEW OF CREATIVE ADVERTISING AND ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS

The global media domination has produced greater challenges for the advertising industry. To meet the challenge of greater media clutter, the importance of creativity in advertising has much increased today than ever before. Keeping in view the recognition for inherent potential of creativity in advertising to break through the greater media clutter and grab viewers' attention in a meaningful way, advertising industry nominates advertisements that excel in creativity. Having greater recognition of creativity by the advertising peers, such award-winning advertisements have greater face and content validity (West, 1993) and therefore, such award-winning advertisements are often used as better measures of advertising creativity research (Kover et al., 1995; Stone, Besser & Lewis, 2000). Advertising agencies feel proud in winning advertising creativity awards and consider it as the recognition of their creative work. Moreover, advertising agencies believe that winning an advertising creativity award increases their prestige in the advertising industry. As such, award-winning creative advertising is considered as one of the effective ways of attracting new clients (Schweitzer & Hester, 1992).

Despite so much importance and recognition in the academia and advertising industry, it is somewhat surprising that effectiveness of creative advertising has got very little attention. If creativity in advertising industry, being recognized by the industry peers in the form of creativity awards is considered as the barometer of advertising industry performance (Ahmed & Haroon, 2003), this area then certainly needs a thorough investigation to determine whether award-winning creative advertising are really effective or mere "beauty contests" (Moriarty, 1996).

So far, there have been a few studies that have contributed to this inquiry (Till & Baack, 2005). For instance, Kover et al. (1995) found that award-winning creative advertisements measured in terms of novelty and exciting, were more liked and produced greater purchase intent for the advertised brand. Ang and Low (2000) found that creative advertisements being relatively more novel, meaningful and emotional, elicited more favorable attitudinal response towards the respective advertisements; however, the degree of influence to evoke favorable response towards the brands advertised in the respective advertisements and purchase intent for the respective brands were lesser. While associating creative advertisements with greater recall and likeability of the advertisement, Stone et al. (2000) found that people recall commercials that they like more than those commercials they dislike. As such, Stone et al. (2000) linked creative advertising with greater likeability of advertisement. Till and Baack (2005) found quite contradicting results. Their study found that creative advertising as compared to control advertisements, significantly elicits high unaided recall. However, these creative advertisements did not have any significant effects on attitude towards the advertisements and the respective brands.

CONCLUSION

Similarly, there is a rich literature on the different effects of different advertising exposure levels on viewers' recall, attitude and purchase intention. It may be due to this reason that consensus has not been developed among the concerned researchers and, as such, no well established theory on the relationship between creative advertising and its effectiveness has yet been developed in the advertising literature.

REFERENCES

- Dixit, Y. (2005). Indian Award Winning Advertisements: A Content Analysis. Unpublished Master Thesis, University of Florida, Florida.
- Higie, R. A. & Sewall, M. A. (1991). Using Recall and Brand Preference to Evaluate Advertising Effectiveness. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 31 (2), 56-63.
- Hovland, R. & Wilcox, G. B. (1989). *Advertising and Society: Classic and Contemporary Readings on Advertising Role in Society*. Lincolnwood, IL: NTC Business Books.
- Hussainy, S. K., Riaz, K., Kazi, A. K. & Herani, G.M. (2008). Advertising Styles' Impact on Attention in India. *KASBIT Business Journal*, 1(1), 28-35.
- Leone, R. P. (1995). Generalizing What is Known about Temporal Aggregation and Advertising Carryover. *Marketing Science*, 14 (3), G141-49.
- Mulligan, J.H. (1998). Consumer Usage Pattern of the Internet and Traditional Media. Internet Usage, Media Consumption, Demographics and Lifestyles in a Local Market Context. Paper presented at the ESOMAR, Media Research.
- Gorman, S (2008). TV-Internet usage overlap. Retrieved October, 13, 2010, from <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE49U75C20081031>
- Sacharin, K. (2001). Attention! How to Interrupt, Yell, Whisper and Touch Consumers. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Froggatt, M. (2010). Online Ad spending in Asia-Pacific is Heating Up Fast. Retrieved October, 13, 2010, from <http://www.emarketer.com/blog/index.php/asia-pacific-ad-spendingupdate/>
- Ang, S. H. & Low, S. Y. M. (2000). Exploring the Dimensions of Ad Creativity. *Psychology and Marketing*, 17 (10), 835-854.
- Schonfeld, E. (2010). Estimate: 800,000 U.S. Households Abandoned Their TVs For The Web. Retrieved October, 13, 2010, from <http://techcrunch.com/2010/04/13/800000-households-abandoned-tvs-web/>
- Lee, Y.W. & Mason, C. (1999). Responses to Information Incongruity in Advertising: The Role of Expectancy, Relevancy, and Humor. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 26 (2), 156-169.
- Pieters, Warlop, R. L. & Wedel, M. (2002). Breaking Through the Clutter: Benefits of Advertisement Originality and Familiarity for Brand Attention and Memory. *Management Science*, 48 (6), 765-781.
- Townsend, J. D., Calantone, R. J., & Cavusgil, S. T. (2007). A Longitudinal Analysis of the Effects of Brand Equity on Anticipated Value Retention in the U.S Automotive Market, International Motor Vehicles Program Automotive Mini-Conference, 1-49.
- Till, D. B. & Baack, W. D. (2005). Recall and Persuasion: Does Creative Advertising Matter? *Journal of Advertising*, 34 (3), 47-57.