



## Study on the Visual Attention and the Stopping Power of Advertisements – a Content Analysis of The Advertisements on Indian Television Channels

### KEYWORDS

visual attention, stopping power, TV advertisements

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**ABSTRACT** *In judging the effectiveness of advertisements on television, the impact of visual elements assumes significance. The visuals help in the stopping the viewer to see the advertisement further. This paper is an exploratory study taken to know the extent of visual attention and the stopping power of the advertisements shown on Indian television channels. Around 40 ads have been taken from three different language channels: Tamil, Telugu and Hindi during prime time and were content analyzed. . The ads that were taken in four product categories, with FMCG ads in the majority were coded by drawing the constructs for measuring the visual attention- getting based on the literature that was reviewed. They were subjected to statistical analysis by using cluster analysis and ANOVA (one-way) for further interpretation. Results indicated that FMCG ads were high on garnering visual attention and the stopping power was high for these ads. Celebrities play an important role in capturing viewer attention. The visual attention depends on the product category of the ad .*

**Introduction:** Stopping power is the capacity to make the audience attend to the advertisement. This is mainly determined by the size, picture, model, clutter, product characteristics amongst the other factors. The success of the ads is the 'stopping power' that is how much of attention getting is done in the ads. Ads that have a high originality have a good stopping power. People notice novel and amazing things. Contrast can be used for print media, while television commercials have a key visual or a key frame that holds the viewer attention (Wells, 2008). This paper tries to analyze the visual attention getting and the stopping power of the ads that are telecast on Indian television.

**Visual attention:** Ads with pictures are not only noticed, but help in the garnering viewer interest. Further a strong visual with believability increases the memory of the ad. (Wells, 2010). Advertisers resort to some ads being totally visual. This is because of the imagery that is to be caused in the viewers mind. Imagery executions totally depend on the visual elements such as photography, color and tonality. It helps the viewer to associate the brand with any symbol, character or any situation shown in the ad Advertisers use physically attractive models for products such as cosmetics and fashionable clothing as the appearance matters a lot. Added to this, the demonstrations suit the television medium because benefits of the product can be shown on the screen. Advertisers create a visual image personality to enhance the association with the brand. E.g. Amul girl (Belch, 2010). The viewer can switch on to the next channel; hence quick attention getting assumes importance.

The visual attention should be emphatic to sell the message even with the audio portion being ignored by the receiver. Proper coordination of audio with video is required to grab the viewer attention. (O'Guinn, 2007) . Getting a viewers attention in the clutter is difficult task. The viewer can switch across the program channel (zapping) or fast forward the ad if it a pre-recorded program (zipping). Zapping tends to occur during the first five seconds. Since the TV ads are brief, not much time is given to communicate; they have to be kept simple. Those ads with frequent visual representations like brand name, package and product attributes have a high brand recall (Batra, 2005).

**Review of the literature:** Studies that depict the visual attention getting and the measures are the same. The academic

study conducted by Rossiter (1982) stresses the use of concrete visuals and color to get the attention of the viewers. They also stress that the entire visual attention should be obtained within the first two seconds. In another study conducted by Burgess and Blackwell (2001), it was found that attractiveness of a non-celebrity endorser is useful when the consumer is desirous of being associated with the endorser. In a study conducted by Pieters et.al (2010), it was found that there was a positive attention getting for design complexity and negative attention getting for features complexity. Also they suggest that the visual complexity is to be managed to increase the stopping power of the ads. The eye-tracker study conducted by Adam et al (2008), found that while fast forwarding the commercials, the viewer focus is on the central part of the screen.

The study brings the importance of visual attention and brand recall. Pieters et al (1996) studied the impact of visual attention on repeat advertisements and brought out the effectiveness of visual attention over repeated exposures of an advertisement. Study conducted by Jain et al (2010) reveals that in the Indian TV commercial the celebrity endorsers were used in the suggestive mode and more attention was given to the non-verbal communication part of the advertisement.

In a study conducted by Vetrivel et al (2011) on the impact of TV advertisements amongst the viewers in Erode, it was found that the TV advertisements are found to be effective because of the model/celebrities used, attraction, music and lyrics and visualization. Sharma, et al (2012), in their study on the perception and attitude towards visual elements of social campaign advertisements have found that a good visual has the influence on transmission of knowledge, reinforcing or building attitudes and changing the behavior of the viewer.

By the above literature it can be said that a viewer's attention gaining by the use of visuals is one of the most important determinants of the stopping power of an ad but the strategies for the same depends on a lot of factors to be taken into consideration. Hence the following are the research questions that pose in front of the research:

1. Is the visual attention the same irrespective of the product category?
2. How does celebrity endorsement influence the visual attention?

Methodology: A content analysis of the ads that appear on television in the Indian channels has been taken up. Content analysis is defined as the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. It is applied to observing and analyzing the content or message of the advertisements, TV and radio programs, newspaper articles and the like. (Aaker, 2007). Based on the literature that has been reviewed, the constructs of coding the factors of visual attention were framed as given below:

1. The shot of the visual taken or any special effect
2. Size of the product vis-à-vis the other elements
3. Celebrity model shown
4. Demonstrations of the product usage
5. Creative Visualization

It is assumed that category of the product is an important determinant because TV being a visual medium offers the advantage of the product "telling about itself". Hence the hypotheses for the study were framed as below:

1. There is a no significant difference in the product category and the demonstration of the product
2. There is a no significant difference in the product category and the use of creative visualization
3. There is a no significant difference in the product category and the size of the product shown
4. There is no significant difference in the product category and the celebrity used
5. There is no significant difference in the product category and the special effect used in the ads

Based on judgment sample, totally 40 ads were taken for the purpose of coding. No repeated ads were taken for the purpose.

All the ads selected are from the national advertisements that have been dubbed in local languages except for four ads that were regional. Totally three languages have been chosen: Tamil, Telugu and Hindi. The GECs chosen were mainly Sony TV, Maa TV and Sun TV. However some ads have been chosen from other channels like Vijay TV, Zee TV and Gemini TV. The ads were taken during May and June of 2013. The prime time chosen for these ads was 6.30 pm to 9.30 pm as the viewers are more for this time slot. The maximum time of the ads was 20 seconds.

Product categories: The product categories have been framed as: FMCG, consumer durables, services, social welfare advertising.

Data analysis: The coding of the data had been done based on the given constructs as 5, 4,3,2,1 for very high, high, medium, low and very low. Cluster analysis was performed for the 40 ads, out of which, 20 ads were chosen in the FMCG category the reason being maximum ads telecast during the mentioned time slot was under the FMCG category. For the other 20 ads ,five ads each were taken in the four product categories mentioned above. Since the sample size was small, the hierarchical cluster analysis method was employed. To test the hypotheses framed, one way ANOVA has been used. IBM SPSS Statistics 21 has been used for the purpose of analysis.

**Limitation of the methodology:**

1. The visual attention is also determined by the fact that the viewer is watching for the first time. The attention is lesser if the same viewer sees it for the second time.
2. The visual attention to a large extent is determined by the ad clutter. How many ads of the same product but different brands has been telecast, has not been taken into account.
3. Since the topic is about television ads, the stopping power has been taken to be the visuals. The audio effect has been highly underestimated because it is the visuals that

catch the attention.

4. The effect of the verbal content and its place on the visual has not been taken into account.
5. The appeal of the ad has not been taken into account.
6. To get the entire message, the whole ad is to be seen which may not be the case in the practical situation. The viewer may zap i.e. switch across the channels.
7. The constructs like product size, demonstration and special effect may conceal the effectiveness of the ads of services and social welfare advertisements as they apply to tangible product advertisement.

**Table 1: Table showing the categories of advertisements taken for the FMCG category:**

S. No	Advertisement with slogan	Celebrity	S. No	Advertisement with slogan	Celebrity
1.	Parachute tender coconut oil	Deepika Padukone	11.	Paragon Chappals	
2.	Coca-cola (Hain main crazy hoon)		12.	Tide (Mr. Talcum powder)	
3.	Godrej Expert hair -dye	Devyani and Arjun	13.	Ranbaxy Volini	Trisha
4.	Eno (Wedding reception)		14.	Boost	Sachin Tendulkar, Virendra Sehwa
5.	Lehar 7 up (lady dancing in Railway Station)		15.	Bingo tanggles	
6.	Cadbury's Silk (traffic scene)		16.	Horlicks Oats	
7.	Good Knight advanced		17.	Hit Mosquito killer	
8.	Cinthol cool		18.	Vim bar	Sakshi Tanwar
9.	Junior Horlicks (Annaprasanam)		19.	Sunrise strong	Surya and Jothika
10.	Fiamsa de wills		20.	Indulekha Hair oil	

**Table 2: Table showing the categories of advertisements taken for the four product categories:**

S. No	Advertisement with slogan	Celebrity	Product category	S. No	Advertisement with slogan	Celebrity	Product category
1.	Lays -Rs.5 team	Saif Ali Khan	FMCG	11.	Muthoot Finance	All film stars*	Services
2.	Pepsi (oh yes abhi)	Priyanka Chopra	FMCG	12.	Idea Cellular		Services
3.	Close-up deep action		FMCG	13.	SBI		Services
4.	Boomer		FMCG	14.	Videoccon Zoo-zoo		Services
5.	Kwality Walls Ice cream		FMCG	15.	Redbus.in		Services
6.	Voltas all weather A/c		Durables	16.	Horlicks	Vidya Balan	Social welfare
7.	Tanishq Jewelry	Sridevi	Durables	17.	The Hindu - Behave Yourself		Social welfare
8.	LG Smart TV		Durables	18.	Women development - Build toilets	Vidya Balan	Social welfare

9.	Hero Motors (bike)		Durables	19.	Bharat Nirman		Social welfare
10.	Havel's fan		Durables	20.	Women and Child development - Kuposhan Bharat Chodo	Aamir Khan	Social welfare

Vikram, Venkatesh, Mohanlal to name three of them.

**Table 3: Table showing the cluster membership for both the data: Clusters for ad in table 1 : celebrity cluster & products usage cluster, for ads in table 2: Film celebrity cluster & benefit cluster**

Ads in table 1 : FMCG			Ads in table 2 : All four product categories		
Case	3 Clusters	2 Clusters	Case	3 Clusters	2 Clusters
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	1	1
3	1	1	3	2	2
4	2	2	4	2	2
5	2	2	5	2	2
6	2	2	6	1	1
7	2	2	7	2	2
8	2	2	8	2	2
9	2	2	9	2	2
10	3	2	10	2	2
11	2	2	11	2	2
12	1	1	12	2	2
13	2	2	13	1	1
14	1	1	14	2	2
15	2	2	15	1	1
16	2	2	16	2	2
17	2	2	17	2	2
18	1	1	18	2	2
19	1	1	19	3	1
20	2	2	20	1	1

**Table 4: Table showing the ANOVA for product category and creative visualization**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.250	3	2.417	4.462	.025
Within Groups	6.500	12	.542		
Total	13.750	15			

Post hoc test: Bonferroni:

Product category 1	Product category 2	Mean difference
FMCG	Service	1.75**

Significant at 0.05 level

Since the mean difference is significant at 5% los, we reject the null hypothesis and infer that there are differences between FMCG ads and services ads with respect to creative visualization

**Table 5: Table showing the ANOVA for product category and size of the product:**

ANOVA					
size of the product					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.550	3	1.517	4.667	.016
Within Groups	5.200	16	.325		
Total	9.750	19			

Post hoc test:

Bonferroni:

Product category 1	Product category 2	Mean difference
Services	Consumer durables	1.20**

Significant at 0.05 level

Since the mean difference is significant at 5% los, we reject the null hypothesis and infer that there are differences between services ads and consumer durables ads with respect to size of the product shown

**Table 6: Table showing the ANOVA for product category and demonstration**

ANOVA					
demonstration					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.750	3	3.250	7.647	.002
Within Groups	6.800	16	.425		
Total	16.550	19			

Post hoc test: Bonferroni:

Product category 1	Product category 2	Mean difference
Consumer durables	FMCG	1.60**
Consumer durables	Services	1.80**

Significant at 0.05 level . Since the mean difference is significant at 5% los, we reject the null hypothesis and infer that there are differences between services ads and consumer durables ads, between consumer durables ads and FMCG ads with respect to demonstration.

**Table 7: Table showing the ANOVA for product category and special effects**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.350	3	1.783	1.659	.216
Within Groups	17.200	16	1.075		
Total	22.550	19			

Since the mean difference is not significant at 5% los, null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference amongst the groups with respect to special effects

**Table 8: Table showing the ANOVA for product category and celebrity model**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.750	3	1.917	.744	.541
Within Groups	41.200	16	2.575		
Total	46.950	19			

Since the mean difference is not significant at 5% los, null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference amongst the groups with respect to celebrity model .

#### Results and discussion:

1. The table 1 advertisements are clustered as ads 1,3,12, 14, 18, 19. These advertisements have the celebrity endorsements and hence they are clubbed as celebrity cluster. This indicates that with celebrity endorsement the visual attention is more and hence results in more stopping power.
2. Table 1 ads of FMCG category have celebrities with six film stars, two cricket stars and one TV star.
3. The second cluster for ads in table 1 is high on factors of product usage, special effects and demonstrations that demand reasonable visual attention. This cluster can be termed as product usage cluster.
4. The one product in separate cluster is Fiana deWills that does not have model showing the face and is low on all the constructs except for size of the product and demonstration. The visual attention may be low in this ad
5. For the ads given in table 2, the ads 1,2,6,13,15, 20 that have the celebrity endorsements and are clubbed as film celebrities cluster and hence results in more visual attention that is irrespective of the product categories. This too results in more stopping power.
6. The second cluster is high on the other factors of product usage, special effects and demonstrations and is termed as benefit cluster
7. The third cluster is the ad of Videocon Zoo Zoo that was distinctly high on the constructs creative visualization and the special effects. The visual attention is high because of the high creativity that is seen in the ad.
8. The ANOVA table shows that there is a significant difference between the FMCG and services ads in the creative visualization of the ads chosen. Visual attention is obtained more by the FMCG ads by creative visualization.
9. The ANOVA table shows that there is a significant difference between the consumer durables ads and services ads in the size of product, indicating that the visual attention is obtained more by the consumer durables ads than services ads. The possible reason is that by the inherent nature of intangibility of services, the product size assumes less significance
10. The ANOVA table shows that there is a significant dif-

ference between FMCG, consumer durables and social welfare ads in the demonstrations shown. The demonstrations capture the attention in the case of FMCG and consumer durables advertisements garnering a high stopping power.

11. Out of totally 25 FMCG ads chosen, 8 products (32%) have ads with creative visualization. This mainly for shampoos, hair oil, hair dye, ice cream and detergents. Boomer is high on creative visualization and demands a high stopping power from its target group i.e. children.
12. Only five ads were telecast during prime time for social welfare. Three ads of social welfare except Bharat Nirman and The Hindu (Behave yourself) had celebrities in their ads namely Vidya Balan and Aamir Khan. These ads were low on the other constructs. This indicates that the attention getting part to a large extent is done by the celebrities especially film stars to market an idea. The possible reason is that the reach and popularity of these actors in a fragmented audience both rural and urban is high. Cinema dominates as a medium of reaching people whether rural or urban.
13. The Behave yourself ad of The Hindu is low on the constructs taken. This is because, the ideas execution and appeal of the ad, however rational it is does not reflect in the constructs taken for visual attention. The slogan, name of the newspaper is not likely to be recalled by viewers though the message of the ad is thought-provoking.
14. In the services category only one ad had film stars celebrity. All the other ads were low on other constructs. This indicates that for service ads, the attention is warranted by other factors like verbal content and appeals. E.g. the Idea cellular ad is attractive not because of visuals alone, but the theme of "telephone exchange".
15. In the consumer durables category, the ads were high on the constructs of product usage and demonstrations, size of the product. The visualization was high for LG Smart TV and the jewelry ad of Tanishq was high on celebrity endorsement which had actor Sridevi featured in it.

Conclusion and scope for further research: The analysis of the TV ads indicates that FMCG ads are high on creativity, special effects and celebrity endorsements. Added to this, the ideas are best communicated if the celebrities are involved in the ads. The size of the product and the demonstrations and creative visualization make way for a better visual attractiveness. All these can enhance the stopping power of the ad. Further studies can be taken by taking into account the visual and the verbal content as well. The creative elements of the television advertisements like music, voice-over, jingles, sound effects and their impact on the viewer's attention can be studied. The present study confines itself to the attention gaining part of the ad. Studies can be taken on the interest, desire and action part of the advertisement or the pulling power and the locking power.

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