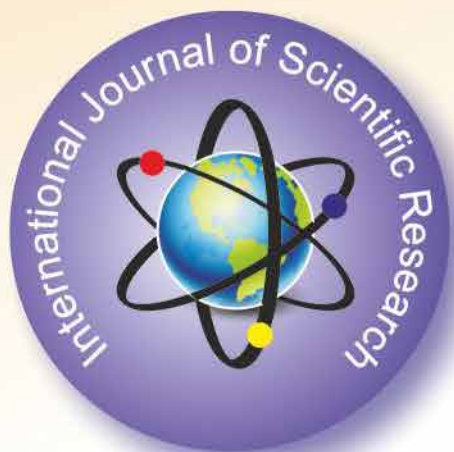


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INDEX

Sr. No.	Title	Author	Subject	Page No.
1	Ionic composition of a freshwater lake and its implications on aquaculture	Dr. Shankar P. Hosmani	Biotechnology	1-2
2	Growth and Performance of Mutual Fund Industry in India	Dr. M. K. Maru	Commerce	3-4
3	Waste Management: A New Paradigm of Contemporary Business	Dr. Vipul Chalotra	Commerce	5-6
4	Rural Financial Services in J&K (A study in the field of financial services sector development)	Tarsem lal	Commerce	7-8
5	Banyan, the National Tree of India	Dr. J.K. Sehgal	Commerce	9-10
6	Impact of Online Marketing on Customers with Special Reference to Coimbatore City	Dr. R. Ganapathi	Commerce	11-15
7	Customers' Attitude towards Housing Loan With Reference to Commercial and Rural Banks	Dr. R. Ganapathi, Mrs. B. VIDYA	Commerce	16-23
8	Consumer Behaviour towards Broiler Chicken Retail Stores With Reference to Madurai City	P. Easwaran, J. Gnanadevan, Dr. R. Ganapathi	Commerce	24-30
9	Data Security and Protection in Cloud Computing	Shameena Begum, V. Ratna Vasuki, K.V.V.Srinivas	Computer Science	31-34
10	Foreign Direct Investment in India – An Explanatory Study	Dr. K.Madhu Babu	Economics	35-38
11	Growth - Saving Causality in India: A Cointegration Analysis	Dr. Shradha H. Budhedeo	Economics	39-42
12	Constitutional perspectives on Labour Wages in India	Dr. Shankar Ambhore, Dr. Dilip Arjune, Manish Parshuram Pawar, Dr. Ashok Shankarrao Pawar	Economics	43-45
13	A Critical Study of Special Economic Zones in India	Dr. Shankar Ambhore, Dr. Dilip Arjune, Manish Parshuram Pawar, Dr. Ashok Shankarrao Pawar	Economics	46-48
14	Industrial Relations - Settlement of Disputes in India	Dr. Shankar Ambhore, Dr. Dilip Arjune, Manish Parshuram Pawar, Dr. Ashok Shankarrao Pawar	Economics	49-50
15	AMLA - ITS MEDICINAL USES	Manisha Gaur	Economics	51-52
16	The Role Of Total Quality Management In Higher Education	Ramesh B. Sakhiya	Education	53-55
17	Perceived Competencies Of Graduate Teacher Trainees In The Intensive Teaching Practice [I T P] Session	Dr M. Parimala Fathima, N.Sasikumar, M. Panimalar Roja	Education	56-58
18	Uchch Siksha Ki Rah Men Dushvariyan	Dr. Anup Chaturvedi	Education	59-60
19	Fault Diagnoses of Rotating Machinery with Advance Signal Processing Methods	Prof. Divyang H. Pandya, Prof. Ankit A. Darji	Engineering	61-63
20	A Hybrid Neural Network Approach for Wind Speed Prediction	S.N Deepa, K.gnana Sheela	Engineering	64-67
21	A Study on Phishing: Preventions and Anti-Phishing Solutions	V.Karamchand Gandhi, Prof R.Senthil Kumar	Engineering	68-69
22	The Killari 1993 Intracratonic Earthquake- a Comparative Study	S.S. Patil, K.L. Karkare, I.B. Ghorade	Environment	70-72
23	Cosmic Plants as Alternative Medicine	Dr. Sneh Harshendra Sharma	Environment	73-77

24	Green Initiatives for Reducing Carbon Footprint	Dr Mahalaxmi Krishnan	Environment Science	78-79
25	Prediction of Urban Sprawl in Hyderabad City using Spatial Model, Remote Sensing and GIS Techniques	S. Indhira Gandhi, Dr. V. Madha Suresh	Geography	80-81
26	Tectono-Provenance and Reservoir Rock Characteristics of the Tipam Sandstones in Parts of Upper Assam Basin	Dr. Pradip Borgohain	Geology	82-84
27	(Jansanchar Aur Bharatiya Samaj)	Dr Subodh Kumar	Journalism	85-86
28	An Overview of Industrial Disputes Settlement Authorities in India	Manish Parshuram Pawar, Dr. Ashok Shankarrao Pawar	Law	87-88
29	Innovative Method of Role Play for Developing English Language Teaching and Learning	K Rajkumar	Literature	89-91
30	Impact of Workers Participation in Management on Industrial Relations	Anuradha Averineni	Management	92-93
31	Consumers Preferences , Behaviour and Satisfaction with respect to banking services quality in Ghaziabad(NCR Region)	Prof(Dr.)H. P. Pandey, Mr. Ashish kumar Singh	Management	94-96
32	Factors Influencing Employee Branding in Higher Educational Institutions: A Special Reference to Management Institutions in Virudhunagar District in Tamilnadu	Jegadeeswari. Mani, Dr. S. Franklin John S.	Management	97-98
33	Evaluation of Service Quality in Internet Banking: An Empirical Study in Coimbatore	Ms. R. Gokilavani, Dr. R. Ganapathi	Management	99-101
34	To Study the Relationship Between Gender & Banking Preferences of Management Graduates at Ibmr, Ahmednagar	Rajendrasingh Pardeshi, Gadekar Vithal Laxman	Management	102-103
35	FCB model of Advertising Strategy	Prof. Arvind Rathod	Management	104-107
36	Assessing Beneficiary Satisfaction with Service Delivery of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	Dr Paporu Baruah, Bhaskar Jyoti Barthakur	Management	108-111
37	Current Trends in Human Resource Management	Dr. Kalyani Kenneth, Mrs.R.Aruna jayamani	Management	112-113
38	“Indian Banking – A Future Ahead”	Haresh B. Barot	Management	114-116
39	Financial Inclusion-Banking Services to the Common Man	Dr. M. Venkata Subba Reddy, Mr. M.s.udaya Banu	Management	117-118
40	A study of Service Marketing Mix w.r.to b-schools in Mumbai	Dr. Balaji S. Mudholkar	Management	119-120
41	A Study on the Customers Opinion on the Benefits of the Credit Cards Around Combatore District	Mrs. G. Murali Manokari	Management	121-123
42	A Study on the Job Satisfaction of the Employees at Sri Kannan Departmental Stores, Coimbatore	Mrs. G. Murali Manokari, Mrs.r.kanaka Rathinam, Mr. G. Lenin Kumar	Management	124-126
43	Foreign Direct Investment In Indian Retail Sector: A Critical Evaluation	Dr. Raghavendra Dwivedi, Ram Kumar	Management	127-128
44	Emerging Challenges to Cyber Security-Internet Monitoring with Specific reference to National Security	Triveni Singh	Management	129-131
45	An Empirical Study of Consumer Impulse Buying Behavior in domestic Markets (special reference to Ahmednagar, (M.S) India.)	Gadekar Vithal Laxman	Marketing	132-135
46	Insomnia and the performance of general population: Results from the Insomnia Survey	Miss Ketaki Sathe, Dr G S Shekhawat	Medical Science	136-137
47	Transition in Human Resource for Health: Challenges Ahead	Dr. Pawan Kumar, Dr. Abdul Majeed Khan	Medical Science	138-139

48	Kartageners Syndrome- A Case Report	Dr. Ramakrishna Ghubde, Dr. Archana Shekokar	Medical Science	140-141
49	Perceptual challenges in auditory neural processing in neurodegenerative conditions like Fredereich Ataxia	Mr. Ayas Muhammed, Ms. Archana, Dr. Rajashekhar	Medical Science	142-143
50	Transient Auditory Dysynchrony Due to Non-Maturational Causes Evidenced by ABR – A Case Report	HariPrakash. P, Sangeetha. G, Bhargavi P.G	Medical Science	144-146
51	Study on Sphenoid Sinsuses Variants in Magnetic Resonance Imaging of South Indian Population	Suresh Sukumar, Sushil Yadav	Medical Science	147-148
52	A Study to Find out the Prevalence and Effectiveness of Occupational Therapy Intervention for Pain and Activity Performance in Mobile Users with Risk of Repetitive Strain Injury	KR.Banumathe, V.Guruprasad, Leena Ann Lukose	Medical Science	149-151
53	Modified Falls Behavioral Scale for Indian Community Dwelling Older Adults	V.Guruprasad, Sebestina A D'Souza, KR.Banumathe	Medical Science	152-154
54	The Essence of Employees Training and its Impact on the Work Force in an Industry	Dr. Mohan Singhe	Organization Behavior	155-156
55	Scientific Behaviourism of Watson and Hull : A Philosophical Perspective	Dr. Jatinder Kumar Sharma	Philosophy	157-158
56	The growth of manganese oxide thin films by spray pyrolysis technique	M.Sudha, P.Duraisamy	Physics	159-161
57	Terrorism and Competitive Terrorism in India	S. Sreejith, P. Sakthivel	Political Science	162-164
58	Kuposhan Se Karahta Bachpan	Dr. Anup Chaturvedi	Social Science	165

FCB model of Advertising Strategy



Management

KEYWORDS : Promotional Strategy, Advertising Appeal and Objectives, Potential Customers

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ABSTRACT

Advertising is a form of promotion, and, as one of the four pillars of marketing (along with product, place, and price), promotion encompasses the variety of techniques an advertiser uses to communicate with current and potential consumers. The type of promotional effort employed by the firm depends on several things. Advertisers create ads with a variety of objectives in mind from getting people to sample a product, to donate money for an environmental cause. Advertisements work because they make an effective appeal to some need or desire in the people who view, read or listen to them. Once the advertising objectives and appeals have been decided, the creative advertising team must decide how to present the product so that the message will have the maximum impact on the target market. Advertisers are constantly trying to define how advertising works, and from advertising models reviewed in this paper; they often try to pick meaningful communications objectives. This paper reviews the current and past literature of advertising models; several different models will be examined in greater detail with an empirical comparison using advertisements.

Introduction

Advertising is a form of promotion, and promotion is the face of a company. As one of the four pillars of marketing (along with product, place, and price), promotion encompasses the variety of techniques an advertiser uses to communicate with current and potential consumers. The goal of promotion is to ensure that targeted customers know and like a company's products. This paper will focus specifically on advertising. There are many tools available to communicate a brand message to potential consumers, including ads on television and radio, print ads in newspapers and magazines, on the World Wide Web, outdoors on billboards and bus shelters, as well as in store promotions, coupons, direct mail, and many others. Ogilvy (1985) suggests that the average American family has the television turned on for six hours a day, and is exposed to 30,000 television commercials annually.

While advertising is usually involved in selling a company's goods or services, there are other purposes of advertising including selling ideas, gaining political support, persuading people or firms to take an action or so on. This article, however, will focus on advertising and how it relates to selling a company's goods or services. The type of promotional effort employed by the firm depends on several things. One of the preliminary questions that should be addressed is whether the firm should adopt a push or pull strategy. A push strategy is one where a firm focuses its promotions on wholesalers or retailers and encourages these companies to push the products directly onto consumers. By contrast, a pull strategy occurs when a firm creates demand at the customer end and relies on this demand to pull products through the marketing channel as customers ask retailers, and retailers ask wholesalers, and wholesalers ask a firm for the product (Bovee et al., 1995). In addition, different products, at different stages of the product life cycle, require different promotional strategies to achieve different objectives. To pull buyers to a store or to push the distribution channel to stock and sell, there are five general categories of promotion:

- Advertising
- Personal selling
- Sales promotion
- Public relations and publicity
- Direct selling

Given the tremendous expenses involved in the typical advertising campaign, it will be useful to understand how advertising works, which message strategy is appropriate for certain products, or generally how to increase the return on the advertising investment. The conventional wisdom is that most cases, more advertising is preferable to less, and that advertising takes a long time (many months, or in some cases even years) to increase sales. Abraham and Lodish (1990) disagree and suggest that the actual return on advertising investment is extremely low "...only 16% of trade promotions are profitable – and for many, the cost of an extra one dollar of sales is greater than one

dollar". The famous suggestion that "half of the money spent on advertising is wasted, but it is not clear which half" indicates that pursuing effective advertising can be a challenge.

Advertising purpose, appeal and message strategies

Advertisers create ads with a variety of objectives in mind from getting people to sample a product, to persuading them to donate money for an environmental cause or vote for a political candidate. Here are six categories of advertising purpose, arranged from most direct to most indirect (Jones 1992 and Bovee et al., 1995):

To prompt action: Direct action advertising is designed to motivate people to act. It involves ads that try to persuade people to make a purchase, call a phone number, or mail/fax/email an order form, and includes many of the common ads consumers see in newspapers, in-store advertising and package advertising.

To encourage information search: In some cases, it is unreasonable to assume that a consumer is ready to make an immediate purchase based solely on advertising. In these cases, consumers need more information – a test drive or a demonstration – before making up their minds. This is often the case for big-ticket items and such ads often include a telephone number or website so the consumer can seek more information.

To relate product to needs: A less direct form of advertising, this category includes those ads that draw a link in the consumers' minds between the product and their needs as a consumer.

To encourage recall of past product satisfaction and prompt a repurchase: Ads of this nature are designed to summon memories of past satisfaction and get customers to purchase a product again.

To modify attitudes: One of the more challenging objectives facing advertisers is to modify attitudes towards a product. This is often appropriate when a firm's product has received a bad reputation for one reason or another or if a firm is attempting to recapture customers they lost to a competitor. Tylenol employed this strategy after its headache medication was sabotaged with cyanide.

To reinforce attitudes: The final category of advertising objectives seeks to reinforce attitudes that customers already have towards a product. Market leaders (such as Coke or McDonald's) often use this to maintain their market share and volume. Advertisements work because they make an effective appeal to some need or desire in the people who view, read or listen to them. The advertising appeal is an attempt to draw a connection between the product and the audience. At the broadest level, there are two main types of appeals: logical and emotional. Logical appeals aim for the buyer's head, while emotional appeals aim for the buyer's heart. Appeals can be either positive or negative. The most common types of appeals are based on price

or value; quality; star identification; ego; fear and/or anger; the five senses; sex, love and social acceptance; and novelty (Jones 1992).

Once the advertising objectives and appeals have been decided, the creative advertising team must decide how best to present the product so that the message will have the maximum impact on the target market. Some of the more common message strategies used for creative execution are (Tuckwell 1998):

Testimonials: In a testimonial ad, a typical user of the product presents the message. Since ordinary people are used, (as opposed to models or celebrities), the message is usually perceived as being believable.

Endorsements: An endorsement is essentially a celebrity testimonial, where the advertiser attempts to capitalize on the popularity of the celebrity. Some of the more prominent celebrities endorsing products include Amitabh Bacchan for Binani Cement, Shahrukh Khan for Dish T.V, Sachin Tendulkar for Coke.

Product demonstration: The use of a product demonstration is quite common in advertising and centers on product performance. Several execution formats are available including the "before and after", which is often appropriate for diet related products, or a simple demonstration of the product at work, which is regularly used for many household products.

Product as Hero: In the case of product-as-hero, the advertiser presents a problem situation (using a negative appeal strategy), which is quickly solved when the product comes to the rescue. For example, television commercials always show Sensodyne tooth pest for cure to Sensitive Teet.

Torture test: In a torture test, a product is exposed to exaggerated punishment or abuse in order to substantiate a product claim that is known to be of interest to consumers. The MRF Tyre is a classic case of the creative execution of a message strategy that uses torture testing.

Product comparisons: A final message strategy compares one product against another in the same category. To be successful, the attribute singled out must be important to consumers. A successful comparison campaign is the one used by JK Wall Putty against ordinary Putty. Product comparisons are illegal in some markets (Ogilvy 1985).

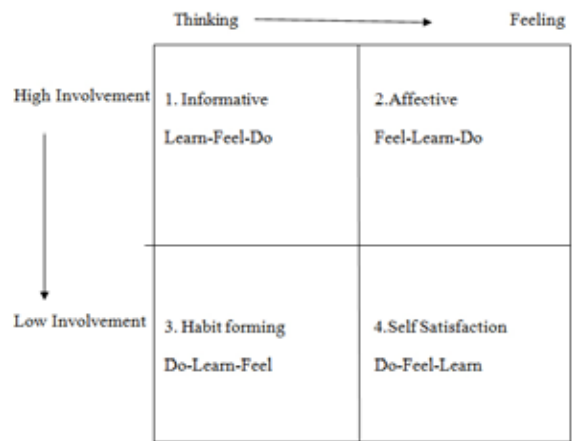
How Advertising Works: Models of advertising

Advertisers are constantly trying to define and model how advertising works, and from these models, they often try to pick meaningful communications objectives (Bovee et al.1995). This section reviews the current and past literature of advertising models. Several different models of advertising are presented and two models will then be examined in greater detail with an empirical comparison.

2- The FCB Model of Advertising Strategy

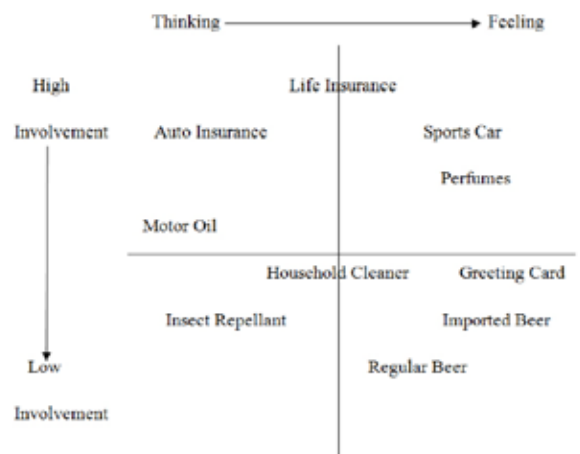
An admired paper by Richard Vaughn (1980, see also Vaughn 1986) researched how advertising works, and how best to establish communications objectives. This introduced the Foote, Cone, Belding (FCB) strategy matrix, suggesting that advertising works differently depending on the product involved. Vaughn's work allows advertisers to select the communication method based on the type of product they are advertising, and the attitudes that consumers are likely to have towards the product.

Vaughn (1980) suggests: Not all advertising works in the same way. Sometimes communication of key information and salient emotion will be needed to get a sale; at other times, consumers will need one, but not both; and often, a purchase may occur with little or no information and emotion. The purpose of strategy planning is to identify the information, emotion or action leverage for a particular product, build the appropriate advertising model and then execute it. These differences are summarized in the popular FCB Matrix reproduced below:



The matrix divides advertising strategy into two dimensions based on thinking versus feeling, and low involvement versus high involvement. Vaughn points out "... this suggests there are purchase decisions where thinking is most involved and others where feeling dominated; there are situations that require more involvement and those that require less."

The model is powerful because it accommodates different versions of the learn-feel-do sequence and suggests different advertising strategies for each of the four quadrants. This grid delineates four primary advertising strategies - "informative", "affective", "habitual" and "satisfaction" - with their most appropriate traditional and variant hierarchy-of-effects models. Vaughn identified 250 product categories for recently purchased products on the basis of involvement and the think - feel dimensionality. Representative product categories are illustrated below:



The grid suggests a different advertising strategy based on the level of thinking / feeling and involvement associated with each of the four quadrants. Vaughn is careful to point out that the dashed line separating the quadrants should not be interpreted as a black and white distinction between thinking and feeling or high involvement and low involvement. Rather, it simply represents a guideline. The strategy for each quadrant is discussed separately below.

Quadrant 1 - High involvement / Thinking (Informative)

This quadrant implies that a large amount of information is necessary because of the importance of the product. Many major purchases qualify, (cars, homes, electronic equipment), and these are likely to include almost any product which needs to convey what it is, its function, price and availability. The basic strategy model is to adopt the Learn - Feel - Do sequence where information is designed to build attitudinal acceptance and subsequent purchase. Vaughn (1980) suggests, "... consumers may be thought of as thinkers. Creatively, specific information and demonstration are possibilities. Long Time ads and reflect-

tive, involving media may be necessary to get through with key points of consumer interest’.

Quadrant 2 – High involvement / Feeling (Affective)

This product decision has high involvement but requires less specific information, therefore and attitude or feeling towards the product is more important. This is a psychological model, because the importance of the product is connected to the consumers’ self esteem. Perfume, expensive watches, and sports cars are product examples that might fall into this quadrant. The advertising strategy requires emotional involvement on the part of the consumers so that they become connected with the product being advertised and subsequently become “feelers”. Therefore, the proposed model is Feel – Learn – Do. Vaughn (1980) suggests “Creatively, executional impact is a possible goal, while media considerations suggest dramatic print exposure or “image” broadcast specials.”

Quadrant 3 – Low involvement / Thinking (Doer)

Products in this category (including many common household items such as razors, insect repellent and household cleaners) involve little thought and a tendency to form buying habits for convenience. The hierarchy model is a Do – Learn – Feel pattern suggesting that simply inducing trial (through coupons or samples) can often generate subsequent purchases more efficiently than “undifferentiating copy points”, leading in turn to increased brand loyalty. According to Vaughn (1980), the most effective creative strategy is to stimulate a reminder for the product.

Quadrant 4 – Low involvement / Feeling (Self-satisfaction)

This product decision is emotional but requires little involvement, and is reserved for those products that satisfy personal taste (for example, cigarettes, candy, beer or snack food). This is a Do – Feel – Learn model where imagery and quick satisfaction are involved, and the consumer is considered a reactor whose interest will be hard to hold.

Vaughn (1980) argues that the creative objective is to get attention with some sort of consistency, and suitable methods may include billboards, point-of-sale or newspaper advertising. This paper will now focus on a several advertisements and analyze them from the Perspective of the two advertising models discussed.

Empirical examination of advertisements

This paper now focuses on evaluating several different advertisements. Each brand will be discussed generally, and each ad will be described briefly before discussing how the advertising strategies previously discussed may affect the proposed marketing communication.

Surf Excel’s Advertisement (Brother & Sister Duo)



Hindustan Unilever Limited introduced Surf in 1959, introducing the first detergent powder into the country. At the time, housewives used laundry soap bars to wash clothes. Surf offered them significantly better clean, with much less effort. The promise of ‘superlative whiteness’ – the articulation of a great clean at the time, connected with consumers and helped to establish the brand. Surf was the first national detergent brand on TV; the brand used TV to effectively educate their consumers on how to use detergent powders in a bucket for a better wash. Surf Excel made a big “splash” with their “Daag Achhe Hain” advertising campaign. The following is an analysis of the first such commercial.

The advertisement features a brother and sister duo walking home from school, when the little girl falls into a puddle of mud. Crying, she looks to her brother for help. Her brother gets an idea and starts “beating up” the puddle of mud, demanding an apology. After a time and a lot of mud on his uniform, he stands up and says, “Sorry bola.” The narrator then removes all apprehensions of dirt and stains and says, “Daag Achhe Hain.”

This advertisement is universally well-loved. This is so because it does a lot of things right. It makes use of children’s appeal to get the advertising message across. The advertisement does what seldom others do – cater to the emotions and sentiments of the viewers – and succeeds with it. Not only do the children lower your guard to the advertisement, but the story, too, warms the heart of the viewers. The advertisement generates a sense of bonding. Viewers without siblings, too, can relate to the advertisement and the actions of the little boy.

FCB Grid

The FCB grid places Detergent products in quadrant 3: low involvement, thinking (habit forming). The FCB model suggests products in this category adopt a Do Learn Feel hierarchy of consumer behaviour, and that product decisions in this area involve minimal thought and consumers tend to form buying habits for convenience. Although for many consumers brand loyalty will be a function of habit, it is possible that consumers have several acceptable brands in the same product category.

Mercedes-Benz



FCB Grid

The FCB grid places vehicle purchases in quadrant 2: high involvement, affective (feeling). There is a lot of consumer involvement in these decisions, but specific information is less important than an attitude or holistic feeling. This suggests the product is important and this relates to a consumer’s sense of self-esteem. The recommended strategy requires emotional involvement on the part of consumers so that they become “feelers” about the product. Therefore, the FCB model suggests products in this category adopt a Feel Learn Do psychological hierarchy of consumer behaviour. Vaughn (1979) argues that media considerations suggest dramatic print exposure or “image” broadcast specials. The spot captures the emotional linkage between the consumer and Mercedes-Benz. Those who are interested in purchasing a sport utility vehicle are likely to seek the off road potential that vehicle allows; whether the customer actually ever takes the car off road is another story. The FCB model of advertising strategy emphasizes the importance of establishing an emotional connection to the brand and this Mercedes-Benz advertisement is consistent with the FCB theory.

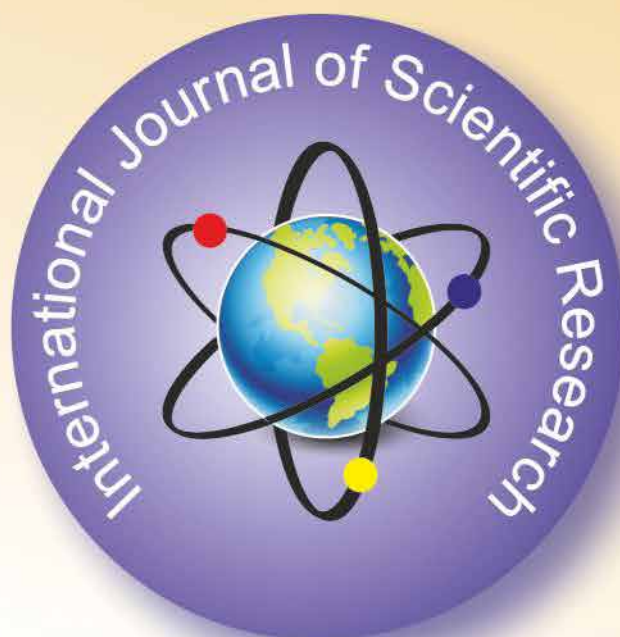
Conclusion

This paper explored several advertisements and evaluated them on the practicality and consistency with the advertising models presented. Despite widespread popularity and near universal acceptance, the standard hierarchical advertising model suggesting consumers move from a level of awareness, to interest, to desire and finally to action appear to be inconsistent with the actual communication strategies employed by the firms in this paper. A more appropriate model is the FCB grid that recognizes that different categories of products involve different stages of consumer action and therefore require different advertising

strategies to achieve the desired objective. This grid divides category purchases into four quadrants with low involvement versus high involvement on one axis and thinking versus feeling on the other.

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