

Audience Behaviour towards Television Advertisements: An Empirical Study in Ahmedabad

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ABSTRACT

Rationale: The significance of television advertisements has grown profusely, and despite the growing preference for advertising on social networking platforms, importance of television advertisements cannot be undermined. As television advertisements increasingly compete for audience attention, it is imperative for the advertisement agencies to learn about the attributes which influence the audiences' attitudes towards such television advertisements. This would aid them in designing effective ads and thereby resulting in higher revenues for the concerned companies.

Purpose: The study indicates the factors which form the attitude of the audience towards television advertisements. Additionally the study also explores the attributes that makes audience avoid television advertisements.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Data are collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The sample size for the study is 279 respondents. The focal product for the study is television advertisement broadcasted in Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar districts of Gujarat state. Analysis is done by using multivariate technique like Factor Analysis followed by Independent Sample t test.

Findings: Five factors, namely, Knowledge and Creativity, Credibility, Recallability, Likeability, and Economic development influenced consumer attitudes towards television advertisements. Additionally, it is also found that four factors, viz. Obnoxious, Appalling, Irrelevant, and Dislike made the audience avoid television advertisements. Moreover, if the advertisements were obnoxious, females showed an even lower tolerance level than males.

Research Limitations/ Implications: A key limitation of this study is the sampling frame. Future studies should replicate this study in different contexts.

Keyword: Television Advertisements, Attitude, Avoidance Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a non-personal paid form where ideas, concepts, products or services, and information, are promoted through media (visual, verbal, and text) by an identified sponsor to persuade or influence behaviour (Ayanwale *et al.*, 2005; Bovee *et al.*, 1995). Advertising messages are usually paid by the sponsoring company and viewed via various media; including mass media such as newspaper, magazines, television advertisement, radio advertisement, outdoor advertising or direct mail, blogs, websites or text messages. In today's era of hyper competition, consumers are exposed to thousands of voices and images in magazines, newspapers, and on billboards, websites, radio and television.

The TV campaign is generally considered the most effective mass-market advertising format, as is reflected

by the high prices TV networks charge for commercial airtime during popular TV events. The very first television advertisement appeared on July 1, 1941 during a baseball game on a local New York channel and the rest is history. As every coin has two sides, so does television advertisement. The advantages and disadvantages of television advertisements have been discussed by several researchers. Despite the growing strength of social networking sites, television advertising is still the most influential medium for consumer's purchase decisions.

According to Global Media Report 2013 by Mc Kinsey and Company, digital advertising would be the fastest growing category over the next five years with a projected CAGR of 14.7% in 2017. The report further narrates; excluding digital advertising, television, out of home and cinema advertising will also generate share gains in the next five years. According to FICCI-KPMG Report 2014

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titled 'The Stage is Set', digital advertising has shown a promising growth of 38.7% in 2013 in India. As per the report, the size of the television industry in India was estimated at Rs. 417 billion in 2013, and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 16% over 2013-18 to reach Rs. 885 billion in 2018. Within TV, subscription revenues are expected to be three times more than the advertising revenues, by 2018. The report further states that the year 2014 is expected to perform better than 2013 with an expected advertising revenue growth rate of 13.1%.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Advertisers play a major role in shaping society's values, habits and direction (Dyer, 1996). Dunn *et al.* (1987) viewed advertising from its functional perspectives, hence they define it as a paid, non-personal communication through various media by business firms, non-profit organisation, and individuals who are in some way identified in the advertising message and who hope to inform or persuade members of a particular audience. Morden (1991) is of the opinion that advertising is used to establish a basic awareness of the product or service in the mind of the potential customer and to build up knowledge about it. The literature of advertising has covered studies from both advertisers' as well as consumers' perspectives.

Fishbein (1967) defines attitude as a learned predisposition of human beings. As part of a learned pre disposition of human behaviour, Kotler (2000) further elaborates attitude as an individual personal evaluation, emotional feeling attached and action tendency toward some objects or ideas. In relations to the advertising industry, Bauer and Greysier (1968) take the view of attitude towards advertising as the audience behaviour towards the advertising. According to Mehta (2000), consumers' attitude towards advertising is one of the influential indicators of advertising effectiveness because consumer's cognitive ability towards the advertising are reflected in their thoughts and feelings and subsequently will influence their attitude towards advertising (Mackenzie and Lutz, 1989). Several studies have cited that attitudes toward advertising are a function of consumer's perceptions of the various dimensions of advertising such as its informational value and its use of idealized images (Andrews, Durvasula, and Netemeyer, 1994; Muehling, 1987; Pollay and Mittal, 1993). When

consumer views an advertisement about the brand, they develop likeness for the brand and then eventually the willingness to purchase it (Goldsmith and Lafferty, 2002). Another component of effective advertisement that creates emotional response is the consumer ability to recall the brand ad (Goldsmith, Lafferty and Newell, 2002). Edith *et al.* (2006) studied the effects of advertising likeability and assessed the reactions of audience to 3000 commercials during 1992-2001. Audiences perceived the commercials as less likeable and less effective. The influence of advertising likeability differed for different types of products. For advertisers, India could represent a golden opportunity for airing television advertisements (Fam and Waller, 2008).

Rana (1995) undertook a study on television advertisements and expressed that among the available media, the impact of television advertisement on social behaviour as well as purchasing behaviour is the greatest. Numerous methods have been used to forecast the extent to which television audiences actually watch advertisements. Nuttall (1962) tested day-after recall. Allen (1965) used time-lapse cameras to photograph the behaviour of television audiences in selected households. Saxena *et al.* (2007) discussed the importance of television channels and the time of appearance of advertisements in television channels to the target audience. They felt these factors play 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. A study by Mittal (2009) shows that television advertisements were found to be more effective in creating a desire among children to own the advertised product. Wang, Sun, Lei and Toncar (2009) identified five factors influencing consumer attitudes namely entertainment, information, credibility, economy, value corruption.

In a study conducted in rural and urban areas of Kerala by Manimala and Mukunda (2004), majority of the respondents participated in the study 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.

Many researchers have also gone to the extent to study the reasons why the audience dislikes the advertisements. Zwaga (1992) suggested that the audiences for television programmes largely ignore the advertisements, provoked considerable interest from the media and a strongly defensive reaction from the television industry (McLeod 1992; O'Neill 1993). Alwitt and Prabhaker (1994) in their study identified people who dislike television advertising with specific interaction between demographics and viewers' reasons for their attitude to television advertising. Heeter and Greenberg (1985) studied the television viewing behaviour of audience and identified the reasons for zapping and it was termed as commercial zapping behaviour of audience. The study reported that the percentage of audience who zaps the commercials is more male than female audiences. The reasons given by the respondents for zapping the commercials include boredom, to avoid commercials and to watch other channels. The study also revealed that among men, youth zap more commercials than old men and children zap more than parents. In the Asian context, empirical studies found that sexist themes, fear, nudity and cultural insensitivity were the most frequently cited reasons for finding advertisements offensive (Phau and Prendergast, 2001; Prendergast *et al.*, 2002).

Advertisements play very important role in marketing as well as success or failure of the product. It is an accepted fact that all ads do not work and are not equally effective. But the reasons or factors responsible for success or failure of the ads are not clearly known to the interested groups. By understanding consumers' attitude towards advertising, designers and marketers can better strategize their advertising designs. If an advertisement is not watched by an audience all the marketing efforts result in vain. This study also focuses on the reasons for avoiding the advertisements when they appear on television.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To explore the factors influencing consumer attitude towards television advertisements

- To explore the attributes that makes audience avoid television advertisements

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design for the study is descriptive in nature and the sampling unit was young audience up to age of 35 years who watched television. The respondents belonged to Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar districts of Gujarat state and the duration of survey was from January 2014 to April 2014. The questionnaire constructed for the study included several questions which were continuous and categorical in nature. A scale was constructed with five point Likert type statements in which respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). The questionnaire for the study was based on two developed scales; one regarding the perception towards television advertisement (comprising 19 items) by Ling, Piew and Chai (2010) and second regarding the advertisement avoidance behaviour (comprising 12 items) by Parameswaran (2013). The sampling technique used for the study was convenient sampling. Responses were obtained from 279 respondents. SPSS 19 was used to analyze the data. Factor Analysis along with frequency tabulations have been used to analyze the data collected.

DATA ANALYSIS

The breakup of the sample on demographic variables is provided below.

Table 1: Demographics

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	158	56.6
	Female	121	43.4
Age (Years)	<20	60	21.5
	20-30	208	74.6
	30-35	11	3.9
Education	Undergraduate	40	14.3
	Graduate	108	38.7
	Post Graduate	131	47
Marital Status	Married	29	10.4
	Unmarried	250	89.6

Occupation	Student	219	78.5
	Employer	21	7.5
	Professional	19	6.8
	Businessman	13	4.7
	Housewife	7	2.5
Income Level	Below 3 lakhs	96	34.4
	3-6 lakhs	117	41.9
	Above 6 lakhs	66	23.7

Interpretation

As shown in Table 1, demographics of respondents who watched television advertisements were classified according to their age, gender, education, annual income, and occupation. Out of the total respondents, 56.6% were males and the rest were females. Majority of respondents were graduates (38.7%) and 74.6% respondents belonged to the age group between 20 to 30 years. 41.9% of respondents had their annual income in the range of Rs. 3 lakhs to 6 lakhs.

Factors Influencing Consumer Attitude towards Television Advertisements

To determine the important factors influencing consumer attitude towards television advertisements, the Principal Component Factor Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was performed for the 19 items measuring perceptions of consumers. The result indicated that the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) was significant (Chi-Square 703.193, p -value < 0.0001). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was high at 0.841. This KMO value of 0.841 was excellent since it exceeded the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1974). The two results of (KMO and Bartlett's) suggested that the data is appropriate to proceed with the factor analysis procedure (Malhotra, 2010). Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed and only those factors were retained which had an eigen value more than 1 since they are considered significant. The result was that there were a total of 5 factors, which explained for 51.789 % of the total variance. The below mentioned table shows the rotated

Table 2: Factors Related to Television Advertisement Attitude formation

	<i>Component</i>				
	<i>Knowledge and Creativity</i>	<i>Credibility</i>	<i>Recallability</i>	<i>Likeability</i>	<i>Economic Development</i>
Factor 1					
I support advertising because it is where creativity is highly appreciated	0.676				
Advertising contains a lot of excitement and surprises	0.599				
Advertising keeps me up to date about products/services available in the marketplace	0.596				
Advertising is a valuable source of information about sales	0.591				
Advertising tells me which brands have the features I am looking for	0.446				
Most of the time advertising contains funny characters and is enjoyable	0.435				
Factor 2					
The television advertisement is believable		0.725			
The television advertisement is trustworthy		0.69			
The television advertisement is credible		0.463			
Factor 3					
Sometimes advertisements are even more enjoyable than other media content			0.653		
People wear branded clothes because of advertising			0.636		

Sometimes I take pleasure in thinking about what I saw or heard in advertisement			0.617		
Factor 4					
I support advertising because it plays important role in my buying behaviour				0.717	
I consider advertising is useful as it promotes latest products				0.516	
My general opinion of advertising is favourable				0.502	
Through advertising I got to know more innovative ideas				0.432	
Factor 5					
I refer to advertising because it allows me to enjoy the best deal out of the competing products advertised					-0.718
Advertising helps to raise our standard of living					0.543
In general advertising helps our nation's economy					-0.723

component matrix dimensions for better understanding the factors.

Factor 1 loaded on six variables could be labeled as “Knowledge & Creativity” as it comprised information about latest products and their features along with entertainment quotient. The items received a mean of 3.35 on a scale of 1 to 5 where majority agreed that advertising keeps them well informed and is backed with creativity and excitement. Studies such as Ramaprasad and Thurwanger (1998); Haghirian and Madlberger (2005); and Ducoffe (1996), lend support that there is a strong and positive relationship between information and consumers’ attitude towards advertising. Surendra and Jacqueline (1989) also examined the effects of viewer excitement as evoked by TV programmes and concluded that creativity is an important factor influencing the attitude formation in the audience. This study also reveals strong relationship between knowledge and attitude towards advertisements. Factor 2 loaded on three variables could be labeled as “Credibility” as it comprises of dimensions like believability, credibility, and trustworthiness regarding television advertisements. The items received a mean of 2.95 on a scale of 1 to 5 where majority had a neutral opinion towards credibility. This study reveals the similar result as conducted by Ling, Piew and Chai in the year 2010. Adler and Rodman (2000) define credibility as the believability of the addressor and its perception in the listener’s mind. In the context of advertising industry, Mac Kenzie and Lutz (1989) identify advertising credibility as consumers’ general perception towards the truthfulness, reliability, trustworthiness and believability of an advertisement.

Credibility of an advertisement is affected by various factors, particularly by the company’s credibility and the person who brings a message (Goldsmith, Lafferty and Newell, 2000). Factor 3 consisting of three variables could be labeled as “Recallability” as it contains pleasure and enjoyment consumers feel when they watch ads. This ultimately makes them remember the advertisements for a longer duration of time. The items received mean of 3.26 on the scale of 1-5 where majority of them consider ads more enjoyable than any other media. Brown (1985) in his study on “Ad recall” opined that among different commercials that do the same job, better-recalled commercials play a better role in changing the attitudes than the less recalled commercials. Factor 4 containing four variables can be named as “Likeability” as these variables reveal that actually consumers have favourable opinion about ads. The items received mean of 3.48 on the scale of 1-5. Audience behaviour towards the advertising can be indicated through consumers’ favourable or unfavourable response towards a particular advertisement (Mac Kenzie and Lutz, 1989). Edith *et al.* (2006) studied the effects of advertising likeability and assessed the reactions of audience to 3000 commercials during 1992-2001 and concluded that audiences perceived the commercials as less likeable and less effective and hence formed a negative attitude towards advertisements; which contradicts the findings of the present study. Factor 5 loaded on three variables can be titled as “Economic Development”. The items received the mean of 3.20 on the scale of 1-5. This dimension explains that customers can raise their standard of living by following advertisements.

It is also evident that factor loadings are negatively correlated for the two variables, viz. best deals can be enjoyed by comparing advertisements and advertisements help in boosting the nation's economy. Hence, it can be interpreted that consumers do not watch advertisements for learning about the best deals, and at the same time they do not feel that ads impact a nation's economy in any manner.

Additionally it was also found out from the study that there is a significant relationship between all the factors influencing attitude towards advertising and the frequency of watching the advertising.

Attributes that make audience avoid Television Advertisements

To determine the important factors that result in avoiding television advertisements, the Principal Component Factor Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was performed for the 12 items measuring avoidance behaviour of audience. The result indicated that the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) was significant (Chi-Square 822.265, p -value < 0.0001). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was high at 0.725.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed and only those factors were retained which had an eigen value more than 1 since they were considered significant. The result was that there were a total of 4 factors, which explained for 61.706 % of the total variance. Table 3 shows the rotated component matrix dimensions for better understanding the factors.

Factor 1 loaded with three factors can be labeled as "Obnoxious", as it contains variables that make audience uncomfortable in watching such ads with family members. These ads contain lewd postures and pictures that family members would not like to watch together, even though the product behind such an ad is useful. These ads contain vile words and images that force the audience to ignore or avoid the ads. The mean of this variable is 3.48 on the scale of 1-5. Previous studies also cite that sexism and racial discrimination are two offensive appeals of major concern in Western literature (Boddewyn, 1991; Ma, 1996). Factor 2 is loaded with two variables, namely, thundering voices and fear of negative ads. This factor can be labeled as "Apalling". These items have a mean value of 2.92 on the scale of 1-5. The comparative mean of this factor is least in relation to other factors. Phau and Prendergast (2001) and Prendergast *et al.* (2002) also

Table 3: Factors Making the Audience Uncomfortable in Watching Advertisements

	<i>Obnoxious</i>	<i>Apalling</i>	<i>Irrelevant</i>	<i>Dislike</i>
Factor 1				
Sexy postures	.868			
Too much of vulgarity in the Jargon	.868			
Unable to see along with family members	.716			
Factor 2				
Creates a fear by seeing the negative Ads		.693		
Sudden emergence of thundering voices		.755		
Factor 3				
Irrelevant to the product			.609	
Meaningless ads			.739	
Frequency of Ads			.697	
Factor 4				
Offensive				.516
Impolite				.735
Disgusting				.809
Irritating				.758

showed through their study that fear is one of the reasons which bothered the audience in watching advertisements. Factor 3 consists of three variables and can be named as “Irrelevant”. This includes variables like repetitive and meaningless ads which don’t have any match with the product. The item received mean of 3.37 on the scale of 1-5. Such ads are avoided by the audience as they reveal useless information about the product, and ultimately don’t help the consumers in making good decisions. If the same ad is hammered repetitively on the audience, it would result into frustration. Factor 4 loaded with four factors can be labeled as “Dislike” as it contains advertising related dimensions like offensive, irritating, etc. Audience has the tendency to avoid advertisements because they are too many and some of them are very bugging. The mean of this item is 3.29 on the scale of 1-5. Boddewyn (1991) also argued that people avoid advertisements as they involve products, services, concepts, claims and/or imageries that elicit reaction of distaste, disgust or outrage.

HYPOTHESIS

Ho: Attributes towards avoiding television advertisements are not significantly different between male and female.

H1: Attributes towards avoiding television advertisements are significantly different between male and female.

The Independent Sample t test is used to test for a difference between two independent groups (like males and females) on the means of a continuous variable.

An independent sample t test was run to determine if there were differences in avoiding television advertisements between males and females. Attribute scores of mean, median and mode showed that data was normally distributed. Only one (Obnoxious) out of the four attributes showed a significance value less than 0.05.

Obnoxious

Homogeneity of variance was assessed by Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances ($p = .878$). Dimension Obnoxious scores were higher for females ($M = 3.66$, $SD = .542$) than for males ($M = 3.35$, $SD = .503$), a statistically significant difference, $M = -.313$ 95% CI $[-.565, -.060]$, $t(277) = -2.444$, $p = .015$. As $p < .05$, we rejected the null hypothesis which was stated as attributes towards avoiding television advertisements are not significantly different between male and female. Previous literature has also cited that female consumers had a lower tolerance

Table 4: Independent Sample t test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference (M)	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Obnoxious	Equal variances assumed	.024	.878	-2.444	277	.015	-.313	.128	-.565	-.061
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.439	256.485	.015	-.313	.128	-.566	-.060
Apalling	Equal variances assumed	1.159	.283	-.173	277	.863	-.025	.143	-.305	.256
	Equal variances not assumed			-.180	276.933	.858	-.025	.137	-.295	.246
Irrelevant	Equal variances assumed	.004	.951	-.591	277	.555	-.060	.101	-.258	.139
	Equal variances not assumed			-.592	260.522	.554	-.060	.101	-.258	.139
Dislike	Equal variances assumed	.000	.995	-.011	277	.991	-.001	.105	-.208	.206
	Equal variances not assumed			-.011	253.363	.991	-.001	.106	-.209	.207

level toward advertisements illustrating nudity than male consumers (Prendergast *et al.*, 2002).

LIMITATIONS

The study has been conducted based on the data acquired from the audience of Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar districts of Gujarat state and the findings may not be applicable to other states of India because of socio-cultural differences. Future studies can be replicated with larger sample size in different context.

CONCLUSION

Advertising is a non-personal paid form where ideas, concepts, products or services, and information, are promoted through media (visual, verbal, and text) by an identified sponsor to persuade or influence behaviour. According to FICCI-KPMG Report 2014 titled 'The Stage is Set', the size of the television industry in India was estimated at Rs. 417 billion in 2013, and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 16% over 2013-18 to reach Rs. 885 billion in 2018. Despite the growing strength of social networking sites, television advertising is still the most influential medium for consumer's purchase decisions. The present study is an attempt to identify the factors influencing consumer attitude towards television advertisements as well as to explore the attributes that makes audience avoid television advertisements.

A study was conducted on the audience of Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar districts of Gujarat and it was found that five factors, namely, Knowledge and Creativity, Credibility, Recallability, Likeability, and Economic development influenced consumer attitudes towards televisions advertisements. Knowledge and creativity reflected consumers' attitudes that advertisements gave good information and were backed with creativity. Consumers also showed more reliability and trustworthiness on the products which were displayed in television advertisements. Audience could easily recall the ads which they had enjoyed and they actually favoured certain advertisements as they were likeable. Also, respondents felt that advertisements could help them raise their standard of living.

Additionally, the researchers also found that four factors, viz. Obnoxious, Appalling, Irrelevant, and Dislike

made the audience avoid television advertisements. Advertisements containing lewd postures and remarks or creating fearful feelings could not engage the audience. Similarly, advertisements with content which did not align to the products or were shown repetitively were also not preferred by the audience. Moreover, if the advertisements were obnoxious, females showed an even lower tolerance level than males as proved by the t-test. Thus, the above findings can help ad agencies in designing audience-friendly ads, which ultimately can generate higher sales of the concerned products.

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