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EVALUATING ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS OF CREATIVE TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS FOR HIGH INVOLVEMENT PRODUCTS

Mazhar Ali¹

Abstract

This study investigates advertising effectiveness of creative TV advertisements (Ads) for high involvement products. The majority of such studies have been conducted using low involvement products. There is a need to conduct a research to find out the effectiveness of creative advertisements for high involvement products. This study will fill this knowledge gap. This study aimed at measuring the impact of creativity in Ads on Attitude toward Advertisement, Unaided Recall and Purchase intention. It involved 94 university students in an experimental research. Paired sample t-test was used for evaluating creative and control Ads. Data analysis reveals that creative Ads are better than control Ads in generating favorable attitude toward ad and high Ad recall but equally ineffective in persuading customers to buy. Binary logistic regression showed small role of creativity in causing high Ad recall while multiple regression analysis confirmed the supremacy of creative Ads for forming a favorable attitude toward Ad.

Keywords: Creativity, advertising effectiveness, purchase intention, Aided Recall, Un-aided Recall, Product involvement.

JEL Classification: Z000

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Introduction

With the advent of technology, it is becoming easier to avoid television advertisements (Ads). Consumer exposure to Ads has become a real challenge for marketers. Within the television media, the number of channels has remarkably increased (Till & Baack, 2005), giving consumer wide array of choices. Pakistan is no different. It has a plethora of channels (Ahmad & Mahmood, 2011) covering news, entertainment, sports, health, fashion e.t.c. The companies in Pakistan are using traditional means of reaching mass audience by intense reach and frequency strategies, which result into Ad clutter.

One solution to not only reach the audience, but also to persuade them to watch advertisements is by making creative Ads to gain attention (Yang & Smith, 2009) but the persuasive aspect of using creativity in Ads is open to skepticism (Till & Baack, 2005). Normally persuasion objective is to induce purchase intention in the target market; Though the purchase intention is not the sole advertising effectiveness variable. Advertising literature includes many other variables for measuring advertising effectiveness, such as Ad recall (Pieters, Warlop & Wedel, 2002). recognition (Singh, Rothschild & Churchill, 1988), attitude toward Ad (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989) and attitude toward the brand (Mitchell, 1986).

Advertising effectiveness is not a new concept, but what contributes to it has long been debated in academia and industry. The academia insists on the use of creativity in making advertisements for better results (Goldenberg, 1999). Advertising literature is divided when it comes to measuring advertising effectiveness of creative advertisements. There has been significant contribution in finding out effectiveness of creative advertisements, but consensus could not be reached.

The majority of studies have been conducted using low involvement products. There is a need to conduct a research to find

out the effectiveness of creative advertisements for high involvement products. This research study has been conducted to fill this knowledge gap for television advertisements. This study aims to measure the impact of creativity in Ads on Attitude toward Advertisement, Unaided Recall and Purchase intention.

The objective of research is to find out advertising effectiveness of creative TV Ads for high involvement products. It aims to answer the following questions:

- (1) What is the impact of advertising creativity on attitude toward Ad?
- (2) What is the impact of advertising creativity on Ad Recall?
- (3) What is the impact of advertising creativity on Purchase intention?

Theoretical Background

According to Attitude-toward-Ad Model², when a consumer gets exposed to an Ad he or she thinks (cognition) over the content of the ad. The outcome of this mind exercise produces a certain feeling (Affect). The Cognition and Affect lead to Attitude toward Ad which consequently leads to Attitude toward the brand.

As per Tri-component Model³, Cognition and Affect lead to willingness to perform a specific action. That willingness may be labeled as purchase intention. Purchase intention, though does not guarantee actual buying behavior, but often leads to buying behavior.

2- Edell, Julie A. and Marian Chapman Burke (1987), "The Power of Feelings in Understanding Advertising Effects," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14 (December), 421-433

3-Schiffman, L.G. and Kanuk, L.L. (1987), *Consumer Behavior*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ

Consumers put different levels of effort for buying different products. The level of effort is directly proportional to consumer involvement. Higher involvement leads to higher effort and vice versa. According to the Elaboration likelihood Model¹, Persuasion has two paths-Central and Peripheral. Rational consumers who are categorized by their higher involvement and eagerness for seeking information follow the Central route to persuasion. These consumers look for solid reasons for making purchase decision. On the other hand, people who are not highly involved in purchase process are persuaded through Peripheral route to persuasion, which involves the use of celebrity in advertisements, novel execution, beautiful photography, attractive location e.t.c.

The involvement in buying process itself is the function of the perceived cost of making an erroneous decision (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985). It is often witnessed that the products like soft drinks, chips, biscuits are purchased with minimal buying effort. In contrast to it, the products like car, home, and refrigerator are considered to be important, therefore; involve intense buying effort.

Earlier studies conducted to measure advertising effectiveness of creativity were concentrated in low involvement products.

Literature Review

The review of Smith and Yang (2004) found out two main determinants of creativity-divergence and relevance. Divergence means being different or novel while relevance means the appropriateness of Ad to Consumer. Smith, MacKenzie, , Yang, Buchholz & Darle (2007) explored the determinants of creativity. They confirmed the previous dimensions of creativity like originality and added flexibility, synthesis, elaboration and artistic value. Stuhlfaut and Yoo (2011) further tried to drive the determinants of creativity. They categorized creative characteristics into four categories: Novelty, Affective, Utility and Humour. Novelty means being original or different. Affective connotes likability and emotionally engaging. Utility means

relevance of Ad to consumers. Ang, Lee, & Leong (2007) investigated the dimensions of creativity which are novelty, meaningfulness and connectedness. Meaningfulness is relevance to consumers while connectedness means how an Ad touches consumers emotionally.

The two main determinants of creativity-Novelty and Relevance to Consumer-have been very common in many studies. This study will also use them as determinants of creativity.

Novelty

Belch and Belch(2004) describe the novelty as unique or different. Batra, Myers & Aaker (1996) explain novelty as divergent thinking which again means unusual or out of the pattern. Haberland and Decin (1992) describe divergence or novelty as original or unexpected content. Sobel and Rothenberg (1980) mention the novelty as originality or newness.

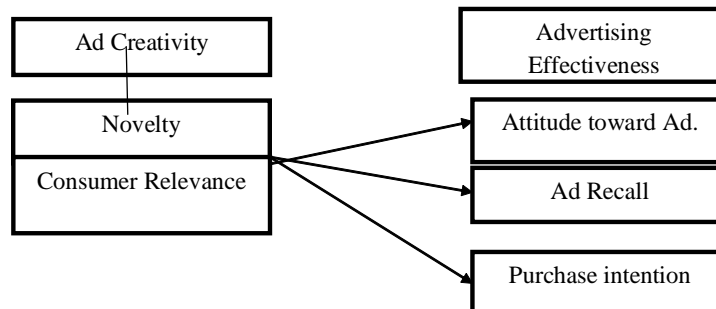
Consumer Relevance

Jackson and Messick (1965) describe the relevance as appropriateness. Besemer and O'Quinn (1986) describe the appropriateness as a solution to customer problems. Amabile (1983) describes relevance as usefulness. Wells (1989) and Thorson and Zhao (1997) describe the relevance as something close to personal interest. Therefore, it can be concluded that a creative Ad has to be different as well as useful or relevant to consumer.

Advertising Effectiveness

Advertising effectiveness is a multidimensional concept. It is the ability of an advertisement to produce the desired effect. (Corvi & Bonera, 2010). Advertising effectiveness is tied to the achievement of intended objectives (Colley, 1961). One obvious objective is sales. Product sale is an ultimate objective in the long term, but there are

short term objectives which lead to sales (Lavidge & Steiner,1961). Marketers may set different objectives for their advertising campaigns. The initial objective for a new product launch may be awareness or knowledge. Therefore, it can be concluded that an advertisement which achieves its objective is effective. The hierarchy of effects model points to the different stages that target market passes through, such as awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction and finally purchase. For this study, Ad Recall has been used to measure awareness, Attitude toward Ad to measure liking as mediator of brand liking (MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986) and purchase intention to measure conviction.



Creativity Effectiveness

Pieters et. al (2002) empirically prove that originality of Ad grabs attention and registers brand in memory. Heckler and Childers (1992) highlight the deep impact of unexpected or unusual information on memory which helps in recall. Brasini, Freo, Lezzi & Tassinari(2008) investigate the causal relationship between Ad likability and Recall. A positive relationship between them is found. Novel or unexpected information tends to be recalled easily (Hauser & Wernerfelt, 1990).Based on the ability of creative ads to aid recall, the following assumptions could be made.

H₀. Ad recall of creative and Control TV ads is not significantly different

H1: Ad recall of creative and Control TV ads is significantly different.

Creative advertisements cause favourable attitude toward Ad (Till & Baack, 2005). Favorable attitude toward Ad mediates Attitude toward brand (MacKenzie et. al 1986). The impact of advertisement on the Attitude toward Ad was conceptualized by Edell et. al (1987).

Therefore, a creative Ad is expected to leave its impact on the audience.

H₀: Attitude toward Ad for Creative and Control TV Ads is not significantly different

H2 Attitude toward Ad for Creative and Control TV Ads is significantly different.

Yang and Smith (2009) emphasized on the ability of novel Ads to cause purchase intention. Till and Baack (2005) showed the insignificant impact of creativity on purchase intention. The major part of their research was replicated by Ahmad and Mahmood (2011). They also mentioned mixed effect of creativity on Ad Recall, attitude toward the brand and purchase intention.

H₀: Purchase intention in response to Creative and Control TV Ads is not significantly different

H3: Purchase intention in response to Creative and Control TV Ads is significantly different

Research Methodology

This study was quantitative and its design was experimental. The element of creativity was manipulated in the pool of Ads used for data collection. It was a requirement of research to ensure that viewers of Ads had no existing attitude toward Ad or brand so that the true impact of advertisement could be obtained. The advertisements were downloaded from internet, and later selected by the creative director

of a leading advertising agency. She was first briefed about the concept of creativity in literature to ensure that there was no gap between her own understanding of creativity and the concept prevalent in the literature review. Afterwards, selected Ads were later edited to replace brand names. A pretesting study was conducted to ensure the students were not aware of ads.

Data Collection

A sample of 94 university students based on convenience was selected in this experimental study. University students have been used in earlier studies like that of Till and Baack (2005). The Ads were embedded in a focus group video. The students were told to watch the video to be discussed later. The Ads were repeated thrice for optimum impact (Krugman, 1972). The purpose of hiding the purpose of research was to create a natural environment for watching Ads. If the students were told that they would be shown Ads then students would actively process Ads which would have diluted natural setting close to their home environment.

There were six advertisements-3 creative and 3 control-selected by a creative director. Two Ads were about cars and one Ad was about car insurance. The data was collected through questionnaire after showing students complete video so that recall of Ads by students could be really tested. The questionnaire was a 7-point likert scale. Creativity, Attitude toward Ad and Purchase intention were measured through close-ended questions; while unaided recall of the brand and Ad content was measured through open ended questions. The questionnaire was adapted from Smith et al (2007), Burke & Edell (1986), Geuens & Pelsmacker (1998) and Till and Baack (2005).

Data Analysis

Paired sample t-test was used to compare means of Ad recall, Attitude toward ad and Purchase intention resulting from creative and control advertisements.

Table 4.1
Paired Sample T-Tests

	Ad Recall		Attitude toward Ad.		Purchase Intention	
	Creative	Control	Creative	Control	Creative	Control
Mean	0.741	0.612	5.861	3.542	3.666	3.297
Sig.(2-tailed)	0.009		0.000		0.069	
Sample(N)	94					
Confidence Interval	95%					

Ad Recall

The first hypothesis was about recall. Students were asked to recall the Ad content and brand name. The students who successfully recalled both Ad and brand were coded as 1 and those who failed to recall were coded as 0. As the table 4.1 shows, there is a significant difference between recall means of creative Ads and control Ads. The mean in response to creative Ads (0.741) is significantly greater than that of control ad (0.612). Therefore, one fails to accept the null hypothesis. This analysis shows superiority of creative Ads over control Ads, which is in line with the findings of Till & Baack (2005), Smith & Yang (2004) and Pieter & Warlop (2002).

Attitude toward Ad

It is clear from table 4.1 that the means of Attitude toward Ad for creative and control Ads are significantly different. Therefore, one fails to accept the null hypothesis. The mean of attitude toward creative Ads i.e 5.861 is significantly higher than that of control Ads i.e 3.542. It was a seven point likert scale whose neutral figure was 4; while the measure of attitude toward the creative ad is close to 6 which shows highly favourable attitude. The result is in conformity with Ahmad & Mahmood (2011), Mackenzie & Yang et.al (2009) and Stuhlfaut & Yoo (2011).

Purchase intention

The difference between purchase intention means of creative and control Ads is not significant. It means that purchase intention in response to creative Ads is not significantly different than that in response to control Ads. Therefore, one fails to reject the null hypothesis. The result confirms the findings of Smith & Yang (2009) and Till & Baack (2005).

As per the results of paired sample t-tests, advertising effectiveness of creative Ad is more than control Ads in terms of Ad recall and positive attitude toward Ad, but purchase intention as a result of exposure to both types of Ads is not significantly different from each other. To confirm that the difference between the advertising effectiveness of creative Ads and control Ads was because of creativity variables, regression analysis was run to find out the impact of predictors on advertising effectiveness. For Attitude toward Ad and Purchase intention, linear regression and for Ad Recall, binary logistic regression was used.

Table 4.2

Regression Table Summary

Variables	Attitude toward Ad.		Purchase intention	
	B	p<0.05	B	p<0.05
Constant	2.955		1.927	
Novelty	0.268	0.015	0.007	0.968
Ad to Consumer Relevance	0.321	0.001	0.380	0.007
R ²	0.229		0.088	
F	13.034		4.235	
Δ R ²	0.211		0.067	
*p < 0.05	0.000		0.018	

Table 4.3*Binary Logistic Regression*Ad Recall.

<u>Variables</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>p<0.05</u>
Constant	2.955	
Novelty	0.376	0.047
Ad to Consumer Relevance	-0.214	0.192
Nagelkerke R ²	0.069	

The table 4.2 shows that creativity is explaining 21% variance in Attitude toward Ad. Novelty and ad to consumer relevance have significant relationship with attitude toward Ad. The finding of this research is in agreement with those of Mackenzie & Yang et al (2009) which state that the two dimensions of creativity affecting attitude to Ad and brand are divergence (novelty) and relevance (consumer relevance). The findings of this research are also similar to those of Ang et al(2007).

The impact of advertising effectiveness on the purchase intention can be judged from adjusted R square value in Table 4.2 i.e 0.067, which means that novelty and ad to consumer relevance are explaining 6.7% variance in purchase intention. The coefficient matrix, at 5% significance level, is showing that the relationship between consumer relevance and purchase intention is significant but the relationship between novelty and purchase intention is insignificant. The results are in line with the findings of Till and Baack (2005) and Ahmad and Mahmood (2001). The majority of researchers have not made a difference between execution related novelty and brand related novelty. Because execution related novelty has to deal with advertising while brand related divergence has to deal with products. You may be able to accommodate execution related divergence/novelty, but may be difficult to include brand related divergence/novelty in every advertisement. According to Yang and Smith (2009),

brand related divergence is required for inducing purchase intention and execution related divergence (novelty) for recall. The selected Ads for the experiment also had mainly execution related novelty.

The impact of creativity on Ad Recall is reflected in in table 4.3. **Negelkerke R²** shows that there is approximately 7% contribution of creativity in causing ad recall. Apparently, the contribution of creativity in successful ad recall is only 7%, but this recall is unaided which respondents always find more difficult to recall. The same fact is also witnessed in the study of Heckler & Childers (1992), which states that recognition (aided recall) is a lot easier for respondents to recall than unaided recall.

Conclusion

The aim of conducting this research was to find out advertising effectiveness of creative TV Ads for high involvement goods. Many advertising researches were conducted addressing the effectiveness of creativity, but majority of them were limited to low involvement products. This research used high involvement products.

Data analysis reveals that creative TV Ads are more effective in causing positive attitude toward Ad and better Ad recall, both of which, are very important tools of measuring advertising effectiveness.

Regression analysis shows that creativity is significantly contributing in creating positive attitude toward Ad which often transfers to brand. On the other hand, creativity had a small contribution in the successful Ad recall. That means there might be some other factors important for helping Ad recall like repetition of Ad or the simplicity of the message. This small contribution is also very strong because un-aided recall is always difficult for respondents, especially in case of new brands and with a frequency of as low as 3 exposures.

The third important advertising effectiveness variable was purchase intention. There was not much difference between the performance of the creative and control Ads in generating purchase intention. The presence or absence of creativity didn't have any major influencing impact on willingness to buy.

This research was conducted for high involvement products. The purchase intention and risk have indirect relationship. The lesser the risk, the easier it is to generate the willingness to purchase. As it happens in case of low involvement products. We easily try new items without obtaining much information. On the other hand, we acquire a lot of information from formal and informal sources before buying a high priced item. For example; in case of car insurance, an individual is worried about the promptness of service and the extent of claim reimbursement. The situation gets even tense in high accident and car theft scenario. Therefore, a TV Ad alone may not do job.

Managerial application

A TV advertisement is normally produced by an advertising agency on the demand of client. The objectives behind making of advertisement provide direction to advertising agency in deciding the content and its execution. Keeping the same order, recommendations are based on the objectives of the advertiser or client.

- (1) If a company has to launch a new brand then a creative Ad having a sufficient level of novelty and consumer relevance will be a good choice. On one side it will break the Ad clutter and on other side, it will induce positive feelings about the brand.

- (2) If the main purpose of AD is recall and the advertised brand is established, then a creative Ad having dominantly novelty should be used.
- (3) For inducing purchase intention, consumer relevance is more important than novelty .A creative TV Ad is not very effective in causing purchase intention for high involvement products like car and car insurance without the help of other forms of promotion.

Future Research

This research fills the gap by finding out advertising effectiveness of high involvement products, but still there is a lot to be desired for. It is suggested to use more product categories for evaluating advertising effectiveness coupled with an appreciable number of commercials so that results could be somewhat generalized. In addition to it, product selection should be made on the basis of product importance/involvement scales available in some research studies.

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