

Consumer Attitude towards TV Advertising Based Upon Consumer Age & Gender

Sana Yasin¹ Saleem Anwar¹ Muhammad Sajid^{2*}

1. Institute of Management Sciences, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan
2. Lecturer, Department of Management Sciences and Commerce, Mohi-Ud-Din Islamic University Nerian Shaif, AJ&K, Pakistan

* E-mail of the corresponding author: chsajid_24@yahoo.com, Tel: 00923146160441

Abstract

Mass media has always been a useful way for marketers to attract consumers towards their products. But since the market is highly differentiated today the term “target market” is used widely. TV being the highly used media for advertisements even in the 21st century is part of this research showing how the consumers in Pakistan show their attitude towards TV advertisement, Consumers of old age group and young age group are both equally important as both are increasing in number today worldwide and that has made many researchers to focus their studies on different age groups and their attitudes to evaluate the importance each group gives to how they perceive the advertising. Also the result is tested if the gender of the consumer changes the attitude. The findings indicate old age group of consumers are relatively more interested in TV ads as compared to the young generation and gender has little significance in one’s attitude towards advertising.

Keywords: Consumer Attitude, TV Advertising, Consumer Age Groups, Consumer Genders, Pakistan

1. Introduction

Consumer behavior and consumer attitude are two highly researched phenomena. Throughout the world it has been researched heavily and still is the focus of further research. One of the dimensions that are being researched concerned with consumer attitude is advertisement in general and TV advertisement in particular. It has been seen worldwide that today many media styles are present in the market that are focusing on the aim to attract customers by making advertisements. These include radio advertisements (where sound is the way to attract customers), bill-boards, newspapers and other such mediums that focus on the picture and are known to be having better results in making an impression on the consumer mind, and then there is also TV advertisements that combine both sound and picture to attract customers and leave an impression. Here the common consumers are considered and not the B2B consumers etc. But how do these advertisements influence, how the advertisements make the customers retain their brand names and what makes a consumer buy the product? Of course it’s the needs/wants, but then there is also persuasion that is made through the advertisements and as a result the attitude that is formed by the consumers.

1.1 Background of the Study

TV advertisements are being displayed on TV since so long. In Pakistan TV advertisement’s influence on the attitude of the viewers have been studies at the children age group levels but not enough data was found on the consumer attitude towards TV ads as found adults and further ages. So in this research age variable is given high importance. This study will show how different ages perceive TV advertisements and which appeal (emotional, rational) effects which age category more. Also many researchers believe that as the age of a consumer increases, his/her attitude towards advertisement in general changes, the appeals they focus upon changes, the trust and other variables are found differentiated among different age groups. But this scenario has not been observed researched by the researcher in Pakistan and thus magnifying the result to be having similar effects in the Pakistani locality is measured. After the age groups show a specific behavior, the researcher will find out whether both genders show similar results or not.

1.2 Problem Statement

The problem statement includes the issue that the marketers use same appeal for all and try to capture the maximum market however as time is limited for the old generation and extended for the young ones, a difference appears in their way of perceiving the TV advertisement in particular and overall advertisement in general. So we may state the problem as “is there a difference prevailing in Pakistani market in the TV advertisement viewers depending on their ages? And does the difference prevail even when both genders are studied individually?”

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to find out:

- a. Whether there is any change in attitude of the consumers of TV advertisement based upon their age group in Pakistan,
- b. Whether the age of the consumer also effects the appeal they are more persuaded by,
- c. Does both genders of a specific age group follow the same result

1.4 Significance of the Study

As the best advertising is done by the satisfied consumers, satisfied consumer’s attitude is of immense importance. This research will be able to identify the basic Pakistani consumer’s attitude towards TV advertisements and will help the marketers to keep in mind the age factor and time span left for the consumers so that the consumers will be buy the products more by relating the products to their needs and desires.

1.5 Research Questions

Age and Advertisement:

Socio-emotional theory is the base of so many researches of this regard and the results have proved that age does effects the attitude formation of the consumers towards advertisements in general and TV advertisements in specific. Patti Williams and Aimee Drolet investigated that old aged consumers of TV advertisements gave more positive responses to emotional appeals and slogans rather than rational and knowledge related appeals. They investigated the influence of aging and its associated time horizon perspective on the responses towards emotional advertisements (Williams & Drolet, 2005).

RQ1: Different age groups of consumers perceive TV advertising differently.

Emotional Appeal for Older Age Groups of Consumers:

Fung and Carstensen (2003) made a research that was the also referred in the Williams and Drolet’s study. Socio-emotional selectivity theory suggests that “age” is also responsible for difference in goals in life. Thus when people get older, their goals become more related to the emotional aspect rather than knowledge based or rational (Fung & Carstensen, 2003).

It is concluded that old people increase the focus on the emotional perspective of everything including TV advertisements because they perceive the time limited, but again when through some technique time period on the horizon was removed the older consumers still were having more positive attitude towards emotional appeals rather than rational appeals in TV advertisements unlike the young adults. Another result that came forward was that when time was limited both age groups were motivated towards the emotional appeals that removed negative frame and remember those more as well (Williams & Drolet, 2005). Another study in 2003 conducted by Charles also suggested that memory for emotional information especially for the positive emotions, is preserved with age.

RQ2.a: Old consumers are persuaded by emotional appeals in TV ads comparatively

RQ2.b: Both genders reveal parallel results for a single age group

Rational Appeal for Young Age Groups of Consumers:

A study by King, Reid, Tinkham and Pokrywczynski (1987) hypothesized that the advertising perceived informativeness was affected by the demographic factors to indicate which media type is considered the most valuable for advertising, and to provide media usage and demographic information (King, Reid, Tinkham, & Pokrywczynski, 1987). Data was measured via Likert scales. The data in this project displayed a tendency for younger respondents to judge the six media forms as having more informative advertising than did older respondents.

Therefore the hypothesis was supported. Demographic variables, particularly age, were significantly related to perceived advertising informativeness (King, Reid, Tinkham, & Pokrywczynski, 1987). Generation X is a consumer-savvy generation who looks for long-lasting value and demands fulfillment of promises made by advertisements (Mamey, 1993).

RQ3.a: Young consumers are more fascinated by rational appeals in TV as compared to emotional appeals.

RQ3.b: Both genders reveal parallel results for a single age group

2. Literature Review

Attitude creation towards any thing isn't just coincidence. Many steps are there that guide the mind to form an absolute attitude. Although this process does get influenced by other factors like the Age-group that the person belongs to, the Social-Class the person belongs to, the surroundings and the social circle, the Appeal any person is more interested in and so on. It all matters. My basic project rotates around the Attitude that is formed towards Television advertisements in general, what difference is seen in attitude towards advertising on TV between both genders of young consumers and older consumers.

2.1 Advertising:

Advertising is used by all kind of organizations to communicate messages (concerning themselves, their products, services, and causes). Advertising creates knowledge, enlighten, and influence the consumers. It is a highly complex in nature but still it has been seen that mostly advertising does not effect as it should. It is because of advertisement cluttering and advertisement variety. It's all about how the viewer will perceive it and behave on that perception. We all are exposed to ads in our routine lives. Both its form and functions are well-liked. Some people think advertising as a mirror and others see it as creator of culture. Some people are of view that advertising is merely an economic activity with one principle i.e., to sell. Many advertisers believe that advertising generates "magic in the market place" (J.T. Russell, & W. R. Lane, 1996).

It's obvious from definition of advertisement that as the time changes it also brings changes in the way how advertising is perceived. Still the belief is that advertising is a very strong tradition that continues to control our lives (Wells, Burnett, & Moriarity, 1995). So advertising is a way of gaining sales efficiency and of keeping selling expenses low. The advertiser wants to be certain that his/her brands are well-known in the advertisement, whether he is not there to convey the message personally to the consumers. Advertisement is always a helpful tool used by the companies to achieve their economical objectives in specific. "The marketers are devising ways to make advertising more flourishing. Despite the fact that advertising is an effective tool for the industry, the public image of advertising is still of concern" (O'Donohoe, 1995).

Lowett & Nunes (2007) have researched that as compared to 79% usage of internet, TV consumers viewing advertisement have approached 97% in the last year i.e. 2006-07 (Lowett & Nunes, 2007). They also concluded that advertising's influence is more on younger consumers instead of older consumers (Lowett & Nunes, 2007). Advertising is disapproved of for its confusing act done through false information, supporting poor values, fake claims, hidden seduction messages and persuading viewers to buy unneeded products and services (Pollay & Mittal, 1993). "These aspects are suitable to block its effectiveness as well as efficiency as a marketing tool", (Pollay & Mittal, 1993). TV advertisements help in taking the consumer from stage of unawareness to stage of awareness and ultimately taking the consumer to purchase phase by influencing the attitude. According to Paul and Eric TV advertisements are seen to be increasing awareness up to 97% (Lowett & Nunes, 2007).

2.2 Attitude

Attitude in words can be defined as an opinion, just like you may have heard words "like", "dislike", "don't care" etc. so when a friend or family member use these terms he/she is showing the attitude towards something or someone. An attitude is thus any mental position that cannot be observed directly and there is a need to study the attitude of consumers. Many written definitions have been seen for this specific term but Schiffman and Kanuk defined it as "a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way with respect to a given object." (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004) Attitude is, in a word, how you express your likes and dislikes towards particular people, things, and occurrences. Attitudes can be positive, negative, or neutral. It is also common to have more than one of these feelings towards something – when that happens, for example, in the case of a person both likes and dislikes something at once, we say that that person's attitude is

“ambivalent”.

Attitudes and its formation are the two phenomenons that are studied mostly in the communication process. Various theories have explained how formation of attitude takes place and how they may be reinforced or customized. The behavior of consumers includes the psychological processes that consumers go through in understanding their needs and up to finding the solution to satisfy that need.

e.g. As seen in my neighborhood, Senior citizens would go for a simple mobile set that will be given definite specifications and contain basic needs but young adults and teenagers need mobile handsets giving entertainment, MP3, radio FM, video and picture camera, Bluetooth, touch-screen and the list goes on. This example gives a view that youngsters will be more motivated and have a positive attitude towards ads having entertainment in more quantity.

Attitudes are typically derived from judgments, which everyone makes. In psychology, it is believed that attitudes are rooted in an ABC approach: that is, affect, behavioral change, and cognition.

Lackenby & Sandage (1980) and Rettie, Robinson, & Jenner (2010) suggested that “using prying tactics in advertising while competing for consumers’ interest can be frustrating to the audiences and can lead to similarity of generally pessimistic public attitude towards advertising” (Lackenby & Sandage, 1980), (Rettie, Robinson, & Jenner, 2010). Attitude is defined as an individual tendency to assess some body, thing or feature around him in an approving or disapproving manner. “If the decision-makers’ behavior is positive towards advertising, he/she will be inclined toward advertising” (Pollay & Mittal, 1993).

Attitude in three Mediums:

Attitude Change and Retention of Message Content as a Function of Medium and Message Difficulty (Chaiken & Egly, 1976)

	Easy Message			Difficult Message		
	Written	Audio	Video	Written	Audio	Video
Attitude change	2.94	3.75	4.78	4.73	2.32	3.02
Number of messages recalled	2.45	2.21	2.17	2.29	1.74	1.67
Number of short answer items correct	4.57	3.93	4.45	4.21	3.71	3.36
Perceived message difficulty	4.76	4.21	4.83	5.31	2.32	7.43

Note: Higher numbers indicate greater attitude change; message comprehension, and perceived message difficulty. (Chaiken & Egly, 1976)

Above table has shown that message transferred through video has the maximum effect as compared to other means of delivering messages.

Consumer purchase decisions are often made on the basis of both emotional and rational motives and both must be given importance in developing effective advertising (DeJesus, 2007). “Advertising appeals that focus on the practical, functional, or utilitarian need for a product or service and emphasize features benefits or reasons for owning or using the brand. Content of these messages emphasizes facts, learning, and the logic of persuasion. Rational based appeals tend to be informative and advertisers using generally attempt to convince customers that their brand has a particular attribute(s) or provides a specific benefit that satisfies their needs.

3. Research Methodology

As our research is about consumer behaviour so, survey method was adopted in which questionnaires were used to obtain data for further processing of the research topic. The nature of this research is descriptive and type of the research is survey based. This research methodology was selected because of its consumer based aspect, as usually the consumer based researches cannot be done without making surveys, questionnaires to be more specific.

3.1 Instrument

The survey instrument comprised of questions that were used to find out whether the consumer watch TV, it also consisted of questions showing the importance given to various TV advertisement variables that affect the attitude or behaviour of the respondent. These questions used 5 point scale (very important to very unimportant and strongly agree to strongly disagree).

Some other questions that followed were related to demographics to know the age of the consumer along with the respondent's education level, occupation, gender and family income level. Another question was used to find out whether the respondent's memory/cognitive ability differed with age when it came to recalling the product or service advertised on TV.

3.2 Population/Sample Size

The researcher designed the instrument to cover a sample of 200 randomly selected respondents from Sahiwal, Lahore, Multan and Faisalabad. The respondents were mainly TV viewers, ranging from age 16 to 50 and above, comprising of both genders (53.5% females). Other data has been provided in the tables in the analysis section.

3.3 Sampling Technique

Random sampling was used in this research.

3.4 Profile of Respondents

The profile of the respondents is shown in Table 3.1; the total respondents for this study are 459. The study sample comprises respondents who vary on such characteristics as gender, age, marital status, education level, household income and living area. Such a difference is a natural reflection of the true consumer population of Pakistan. Moreover, the samples were selected through random sampling method, a kind of probability sampling, where the whole elements in representative organizations were randomly selected. In terms of location, 48 respondents are from Sahiwal, 62 respondents are from Lahore, 45 respondents are from Multan and 45 respondents are from the Faisalabad. The respondents comprise of male and female. In terms of gender, 53.5% of the respondents were females while 46.5% were male. The below given table shows that 5 age groups/sections ranging from 16 years to 50 and above. In terms of age groups, 43 respondents are from 16-22 age groups, 42 people responds from 23-30 age group, 43 people responds from 31-45 age group and 72 people respond from 46 & above age group. In this research 41.5 respondents were single while 58.5% were married. 35.5% of the respondents were having post-graduate degree. The occupation table shows that 37% of all respondents were students while 17% were teachers and remaining contributed to personal businesses, government servants and others (others included house wives, jobless at the time etc). The income level of maximum respondents was found to be Rs. 21,000 – Rs. 30,000 as it scored 34% in the frequency table.

Table 3.1: Description of Respondents

Item	Description	Frequency	Percentage
City	Sahiwal	48	24.0
	Lahore	62	31.0
	Multan	45	22.5
	Faisalabad	45	22.5
Gender	Male	93	46.5
	Female	107	53.5

Age	16-22	43	21.5
	23-30	42	21.0
	31-40	43	21.5
	41-50	43	21.5
	50+	29	14.5
Marital Status	Single	83	41.5
	Married	117	58.5
Education	Matriculation or Less	25	12.5
	Intermediate	34	17.0
	Graduate	63	31.5
	Post-graduate	71	35.5
	Others	7	3.5
Occupation	Student	74	37.0
	Teacher	35	17.5
	Business Man/Woman	18	9.0
	Govt. Servant	40	20.0
	Others	33	16.5
Household Income (Rupee)	Below 10000	3	1.5
	10000-20000	26	13.0
	21000-30000	68	34.0
	31000-40000	56	28.0
	41000-50000	22	11.0
	Above 50000	25	12.5

4. Results and Discussions

Frequency analysis and cross tabulation was used for finding out these results.

RQ1: Different age groups of consumers perceive TV advertising differently

From the results of the questionnaires it is seen that definitely age effects the perception. Different age groups of TV advertisement viewers at some places were found to be having very different perceptions however at other options they had similar views. But age is a factor that does affect the perception of the viewer. Table 4.1 shows that young adults consider TV advertisements boring but age 31+ disagreed.

Table 4.1: Age * TV Advertisements' Nature.

		For you, TV Advertisements have become Boring.					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Age	16-22	1	11	26	3	2	43
	23-30	6	5	18	12	1	42
	31-40	3	8	13	17	2	43
	41-50	10	5	11	14	3	43
	50+	2	7	15	3	2	29
Total		22	36	83	49	10	200

Table 4.2 show that the same age group that finds TV advertisements boring also find it to becoming trustworthy with the passage of time while ages 31+ viewers give a response with neutral behavior along with some disagreement to this point. Young age groups 16-22 and 23-30 also gave votes that TV advertisements are becoming offensive in nature while age group 31-40, 41-50 and 50+ disagreed.

Table 4.2: Age * Trusting TV Advertisements

		For you, TV Advertisements have become Trustworthy.					Total
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Age	16-22	0	28	8	6	1	43
	23-30	4	20	8	7	3	42
	31-40	2	8	18	9	6	43
	41-50	4	17	11	10	1	43
	50+	1	9	8	4	7	29
Total		11	82	53	36	18	200

Also according to the table 4.3, age group 16-22 didn't agree to the TV advertisements becoming a total wastage of time although age group 41-50 and 50+ agreed to this perspective. The reason behind is that age group 16-22 is of students mostly and this age group doesn't find entertainment a complete wastage of time although age group 41-50 and 50+ thinks it to be somewhat wasting of time as they are more professional towards life.

Table 4.3: Age * TV Advertisements' time Consideration

		For you, TV Advertisements have become time wasting.					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Age	16-22	10	9	4	20	0	43
	23-30	9	8	9	13	3	42
	31-40	4	15	20	4	0	43
	41-50	8	12	11	12	0	43
	50+	1	5	12	10	1	29
Total		32	49	56	59	4	200

This group also accepts these advertisements to be satisfying and enjoyable.

RQ2.a: Old consumers are persuaded by emotional appeals in TV ads comparatively

RQ2.b: Both genders reveal parallel results for a single age group

Although a huge difference was not observed, still Table 4.4 and onwards suggest that age groups 41-50 and 50+ like creativity, humor and other emotional attractions more than other age groups.

Table 4.4: Age * "Creative", Ad attribute's appeal

		"Creative", ad attribute (s) is/are more appealing for you.					
		Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Total
Age	16-22	16	9	14	3	1	43
	23-30	14	19	9	0	0	42
	31-40	17	20	6	0	0	43
	41-50	18	16	8	1	0	43
	50+	9	16	4	0	0	29
Total		74	80	41	4	1	200

Table 4.5 and other followed tables suggest that both genders show somewhat similar results. However this doesn't mean that young adults are not attracted towards the emotional appeal, in-fact the results show that as compared to other appeals as the age level increases, the time span left of the life decreases thus the time becomes limited, age groups start getting attracted to emotional appeals more comparatively.

Table 4.5: Gender * "Cheerful", Ad attribute's appeal

		"Cheerful", Ad attribute (s) is/are more appealing for you.				
		Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Total
Gender	Male	18	46	22	7	93
	Female	24	50	28	5	107
Total		42	96	50	12	200

RQ3.a: Young consumers are more fascinated by rational appeals in TV as compared to emotional appeals.

RQ3.b: Both genders reveal parallel results for a single age group

The responses shown in the table 4.6 showed that old consumers were more interested in emotional appeals also showed that young consumers were more interested in rational or knowledge based appeal as compared with other appeals. The reasons included the technology advancement, social circles and need to survive in the market with an aim to create difference, that's how young consumers want to be and this is an aim for which they are looking for knowledge rather than simple music and color effects to decide and shop.

Table 4.6: Age * "Creative", Ad attribute (s) appeal

		"Creative", ad attribute (s) is/are more appealing for you.					Total
		Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	
Age	16-22	16	9	14	3	1	43
	23-30	14	19	9	0	0	42
	31-40	17	20	6	0	0	43
	41-50	18	16	8	1	0	43
	50+	9	16	4	0	0	29
Total		74	80	41	4	1	200

Results show that both genders are happy about the rational appeals being used, females give more importance to emotional appeals, but they also at the same time gives importance to the rational appeal and knowledge based appeals.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

From this research it has been seen that TV advertisements have not lost its charm in fact it is seen that definitely age effects the perception of the consumer. Now old age group consumers are more interested in TV ads thus they should be provided with more products of their use, if marketed well the marketers can get maximum out of these consumers. Young people are more likely to be consumers when they are able to put facts in front of them; they are motivated through rational appeals and thus need more than just colors and jingles in the advertisements in general and TV ads in specific. Frequency analysis and cross tabulation showed that young adults are losing interest in TV ads and thus the marketers claiming them to be their market must use internet or other means to attract this age group with a potential success.

Limitations of the Study:

1. This research had a time span of few weeks and only four cities were included in this research from where the instrument i.e. the questionnaire was filled.
2. Nowadays people were found more inclined towards internet browsing, many possible respondents were found to be using very less time for watching TV, TV advertisements etc but still those who were TV viewers successfully responded.
3. Lack of interest in filling questionnaires, lack of time for filling the questionnaires and few irresponsible behaviors caused difficulty in collecting the data.

Future Suggestions:

This research covered four major cities and included demographics esp. age groups and gender but there is a place for future researches which may include other cities and even villages, as majority of population lives in those areas of Pakistan and along the way the researcher can also include psychographics of the consumers like lifestyle. Another aspect is to include other means of communication like below the line advertising.

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