



## EMOTION IN ADVERTISING: ROLE AND IMPORTANCE



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### ABSTRACT

*Plato, a Greek philosopher and Mathematician quoted, "All learning has an emotional base." This statement has validity and implications for present day marketers and advertisers as it is observed that advertisements with strong emotional appeal have a significant impact on consumers buying decisions. Emotions interplay with rational and economic thought and influence the decision to buy a particular product or a brand. In this paper, we attempt to explore how emotions affect the consumers' choices for different brands and product by looking into their concept, processing mechanisms and outcomes for the customers. Some illustrative examples are given to highlight how advertisements carry emotional appeal based on different kinds of emotions like love, care, sympathy, fear, pride etc. This strategy for designing advertisements with an emotional appeal has implications for the markets and consumers which are also highlighted in this paper.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Emotion, Advertising, Emotional versus rational, consumer decision making.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

It is a well stated fact that human beings are rational and their decisions are guided by careful analysis and evaluation. But is it only the rationality that plays an instrumental role, or is it something else that affects the consumers' decision making process. It is common to find situations and experiences where consumers' buying decisions are guided by their "emotions". Many a times, a certain advertisement on an electronic media, may be television, radio, online, or in print media i.e. in magazines, newspapers or otherwise may invoke a plethora of emotions like happiness, excitement, fear, pride, jealousy etc. Marketers or advertisers have well recognized this fact and have used it as a strategy to connect to their customers and ensure long lasting relationships with their customers. Emotions are such attributes which distinguish us, they make us what we are i.e. humans with a blend of analytics of mind and the real feelings of the heart.

Every consumer faces a tradeoff between the rationality of mind and overpowering feelings of the heart. "The more experience I have had, the more I am convinced that far more of life is governed by automatic emotional forces than man is willing to acknowledge (Bowen 1976, p. 60)." Emotions not only influence the attitude of customers but also their purchase and repurchase intentions. A large number of advertisements can be characterized by their emotional aspects (Stayman, Aaker and Bruzzone 1989), and emotional responses are central to consumers' perceptions of and reactions to advertisements (Aaker and Bruzzone 1981).

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ◆ To understand the concept of emotions and their role in advertising in influencing the brand choice.
- ◆ To explore the impact of emotions on consumer decision making.
- ◆ To study the impact of emotional appeals in advertisements.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The current study attempts to explain how emotions interplay with rationality and have significant influence on consumer purchase decisions. The study is largely descriptive in nature which involves the detailed study of previous researches in the related area, journals, blogs, websites and other relevant secondary sources. An attempt has been made to look into the marketing strategies of some firms and companies who try to design and develop their advertisements which are emotionally appealing and assessing the impact thereof based on the web-based research and review of available literature.

### **4. EMOTIONAL VERSUS RATIONAL: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

It might appear to the marketer that the emotional and rational components are two different concepts and work individually and distinctively but for the consumers they work hand in hand. There are cases where a particular buying decision is either strengthened or weakened by the emotional aspects. There we say emotional can have both negative as well as positive effects.

The importance of emotions in consumer decision making is realized long back like as described in the model of Lavidge & Steiner(1962),but in their model the role emotion is limited to 'liking and preferences. Since then many researchers, academicians, psychologists and others have studied and developed models to measure and assess the impact of emotions, their processing and consequences on consumer decision making and buying behaviors. For marketers and advertisers, it is imperative to understand the role and strength of emotions and develop their strategies accordingly.

#### **4.1 EMOTION AND ADVERTISING**

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), through their Hedonic Experiential Model (HEM) highlighted emotion to be having a more independent role in advertising. They extended the earlier models where emotions were not only limited to liking or disliking but also encompass emotions such as 'love, hate, fear, joy, boredom, anxiety, pride, anger, disgust, sadness, sympathy, lust, ecstasy, greed, guilt, elation, shame, & awe.' Various other notions have been developed by researchers where emotions were suggested to be playing a supportive role to information processing and not their individual role. Jones' describes of effective advertising as a '... rational idea enclosed as it were in an emotional envelope' (2002). Ray & Batra (1983) postulated that emotion increases attention and memory: '...affective advertising may ... be more effective ... because it is attended to more, processed more, evaluated more

favorably, and remembered more'. Attention is a crucial area where emotions play a significant role, then the processing of emotions take place whether intentionally or in sub-conscious mind and exert influence on buying decisions. Kotler et al., for example, assert that "The advertiser has to turn the 'big idea' into an actual ad execution that will capture the target market's attention and their interest".

Emotion is believed to have many forms like happiness, anger, joy, jealousy, pride, love and care etc. and affect consumers belonging to different age groups and also to other social and cultural groups.

#### **4.2 IMPORTANCE OF PRODUCT QUALITY AND FACTUAL APPEAL**

Many a times an advertisement may be emotionally appealing and may trigger responses but whether it leads to actual purchase of products is a highly debatable issue and a concern for the marketers. You may become happy, excited or ecstatic by viewing your favorite celebrity wearing a particular dress, riding a car or bike, enjoying a drink or food or wearing cosmetics and many other but whether it forces you to buy that product is not essential. Similarly, many advertisements which focus on self-dependence, pride, love and care may instill certain feelings or an urge to buy but the same has to be backed by the purchasing power to convert it into a meaningful demand. At the same time product quality and specifications are the main drivers. A factual claim may be required to activate the full power of the emotional response by helping people justify their brand choices. The previous experiences with the product, word of mouth also form the basis for people to emotionally connect or disconnect with the brands. People may need evidence to justify their choices which is not solely based on feelings but also rationality. A conscious thought combined with an emotional thought is what the marketer should focus upon.

#### **5. EVALUATING EMOTIONAL APPEAL IN ADVERTISEMENTS**

Does emotional content in advertisements always provide favorable results? It is true that it may support or discourage a rational thought or choice of a brand or a product category, but it may have some other serious implications too. It is blamed to promote materialism and the consequences may be severe when people especially children, adolescents etc, get emotionally attached with the products. It has also been found that many a times products which belong to low involvement category, like cement, electric appliances, switches etc. decision to

purchase or repurchase should be based upon a rational though where engineering and other technical specifications should form the basis of decision making. Considering emotional appeal only is not a wise choice, it may strengthen or weaken your choice but may not trigger the demand for it.

## 6. SOME EXAMPLES OF ADVERTISEMENTS WITH EMOTIONAL APPEAL

Today marketers work upon different areas of human psychology in order to better understand, analyze and predict consumer behavior and factors affecting it. We see advertisements where different emotions like love, care, happiness, togetherness, pride jealously sentiments etc. are reflected upon which generate similar responses in viewers also. Not only personal feelings are reflected, but also social feelings which play a primary role in fulfilling social needs like recognition, self respect, status, rejection, affiliation etc. are also highlighted to elicit desired responses from viewers or potential customers.

- ✧ Raymond's -The Complete Man, a premium brand for men clothing is symbolic of pride, attitude and a class.
- ✧ Cadbury Dairy Milk, *kuch meetha ho jae*, reflects happiness and joy in sharing and nurturing relationships and celebrating small and happy moments in life.
- ✧ Mountain Dew and Pepsi, examples of advertisements which show adventure, excitement and are favorites amongst youngsters.
- ✧ Ponds, Johnsons&Johnsons, Pampers etc are best examples for motherly love, care and bonding.
- ✧ ICICI Prudential, HDFC and Reliance Insurance, come up with advertisements which instill the feeling of self pride, respect and independence in people to secure their present as well as future and live a happy life.

## 7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Designing advertisements which have an emotional appeal is undoubtedly a useful and successful strategy for the marketers. It gives them an opportunity to create a long lasting impression of their brand and products on consumers' mind as they feel emotionally connected with the brand. As compared to other promotional tools, like price discounts and other offers which may result in short term benefits, using promotional strategies like this may yield long term benefits for the firms which can expect repeated patronage from their

customers. Therefore, there is an important implication for the marketing managers who can use this strategy as an effective tool for STP (Segmenting, Targeting and Positioning) their brands. Especially in country like India, which is rich in social and cultural traditions, marketers and advertisers can make great uses of opportunities during festive times to connect emotionally to their customers. It creates a positive feeling which strengthens the brand image and also creates value for the customers. It helps in bringing repeated purchase of the same brand and also results in positive word of mouth. But at the same time, the emotional content should not outdo the factual appeal or the quality of the products. It is the responsibility of the company to ensure quality standards and meet all the product specifications and not just exploit the emotions of the customers. A factual appeal or a rational decision supported by an emotional appeal or an emotional though is a win-win situation for both the customer as well as the marketer.

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