



Advertising Appeals, Messaging And Culture: A Case Study Of Audio-Visual Advertisements Of Titan Watches In Indian Market

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Abstract:

Advertising is one of the most prominent tools of marketing that can be used to tell the story about a brand. It is often responsible for selling a product or service directly or it may focus on creating brand awareness and more. In the age of social media, interactive and immersive media, brands have a better opportunity to tell stories, engage with their consumers without facing the limitations of conventional media outlets like radio, television and print. There are multiple appeals that are utilized by brands to create a beautiful storyline. The research paper is a case study of the audiovisual advertisements of Titan Watches in India. In 1984 Tata Industries engaged with TIDCO in a venture to form Titan Watches Ltd. Ever since then Titan has become a household name in India selling watches to millions with a 65% market share in the Indian organized watch market. The paper analyses landmark audio-visual advertisements of Titan Watches over the years that have been shared on social media platform like YouTube. The advertisements have been analyzed to study the messaging, storytelling, audience engagement and understanding the trend in the brand's advertising message.

Keywords: Advertising Appeals, Titan Watches, Advertising, Marketing

Introduction

An advertisement helps in informing, adding value, influencing consumers about a brand, product or service. It is important to identify a specific target audience for the message to be effective. Defining the brand message, choosing the right medium to persuade and influence the potential consumer is important for the success of the advertisement. It is a strategic process involving creativity. To optimize the results for a campaign the advertisement must create a clear sense of awareness about the product, service or brand. The brand identity must be built over the period by associating certain values and characteristics that would

separate it from its competitors. If the thing being advertised is a product the advertisement carries a clear persuasive message that makes the consumer decide in favour of the product. Through use of the right messaging, emotional appeals, rational appeals and brand identity, the perception of the consumer is shaped over the period. An advertisement helps in increasing sales and other marketing goals of the company. The most important part of an advertisement is that it is a paid message by a known group or identity. It must keep reminding the consumers about the brand without changing the attributes too much over the years unless the brand is going through an overhaul. Engagement is vital to the ultimate effectiveness of an advertisement. The contextual relevance of an advertisement, the believability of its core message increases the recall value of an ad and is essential in building a brand image and creating advertisement effectiveness (Wang, 2006). Research done on the Relevance Accessibility Model by Baker and Lutz shares an observation that the message and appeal of the message of an advertising influences brand choice when the message is both accessible and relevant. Accessibility is achieved when the message of the advertisement makes a mark in the consumer's memory (Baker & Lutz, 2000).

Understanding the Advertising Appeals is essential in understanding the strategy used to decide the advertising messaging. Ad Appeals refers to the approach and strategy used by advertisers to capture the attention of the consumers the advertisements are intended for. It is used to make the messages more compelling and effective. The emotional appeals refer to generic feelings of fear, sadness, happiness, joy, anger that a human being experiences in their daily life. These feelings and sentiments are connected to the brand or to the product. As compared to emotional appeals, there are rational appeals. The rational appeals refer to cognitive and logical reasoning that are used to target the consumers. These may be messages related to the characteristics of products or a comparative stance as compared to other existing products in the market.

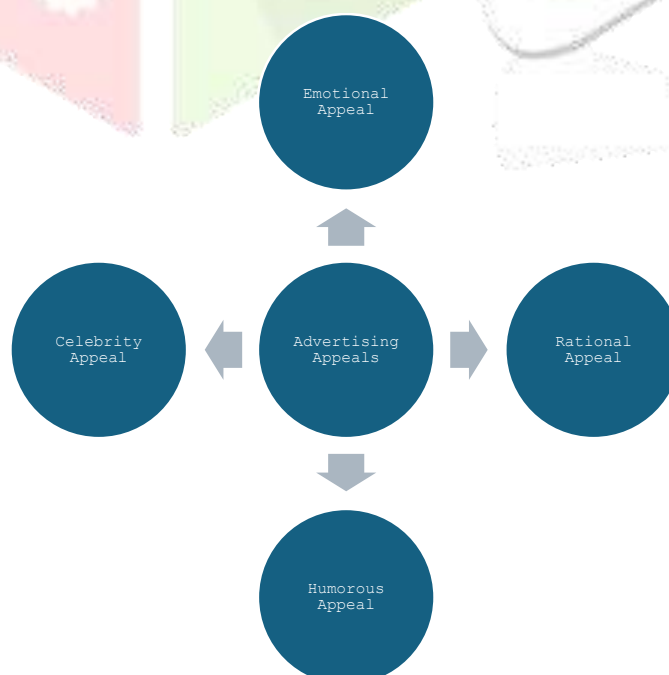


Figure: The Different Advertising Appeals that are used by advertisers to captivate consumer's attention.

Review of Literature

Zhang and Gelb's research paper in 1996 focused on the interconnection of Advertising appeals and the existent cultural values of the society where the campaign was being targeted. According to their empirical study of the US and China market, they found out that an advertiser who can design their ad message in alignment with the cultural values of the market tend to be more effective in their marketing. The concept of individualism and collectiveness of the messaging relating to the appeal also became a significant factor in their study (Zhang & Gelb, 1996). Chandy et al. in their work evaluate the impact and use of Advertising Appeals in an 'Evolving Market'. Their work is a detailed study on the evaluation of advertising cues in the markets that are constantly evolving. It studies the motivation of consumers and their ability for processing advertisement messages. Ability might mean a host of things starting from basic knowledge about the brand or product. The motivation here may refer to the interest that a consumer has to know about information related to a product or brand in particular. It studies the role that the age of the market plays in designing the advertising appeal and advertisement messaging. There is often a conflict between emotional appeals and use of argumentative logical reasoning in the messaging. Not just this, there is a strong impact of framing on consumer behavior. The use of expert characters in advertising messaging also has an impact on consumer behavior (Chandy et al., 2001). The question that becomes prominent is whether individualism triumphs over collectivism. Although persuasive messages of advertising do take into consideration the cultural values of the market where the campaign is run, do these values change when individualism is contrasted with collectivism? Han and Shavitt in their research paper 'Persuasion and Culture: Advertising Appeals in Individualistic and Collectivistic Societies' address this question. One of their observations about persuasion and culture shows that the persuasive styles of the advertisement messages differ when shifting from one culture to the other as past experiences play a significant role. According to their research, the social norms of a society, values and roles played by people in the society become a major factor in determining individual choices and preferences. The paper also talks about the importance of involvement and personal relevance of the message to facilitate involvement and thereby affecting persuasion (Han & Shavitt, 1994).

Internet has brought interactivity along with itself. What was a difficult metrics for companies to assess ad effectiveness and relevance and involvement can now be easily measured through reactions and sharing online on social media. The further sales figures can be tallied to see if the advertisement messaging did indeed convert into sales. But it's not always about inducing sales. At times, in today's digital world an advertisement can do for a brand what sales driven persuasion may fail to achieve (Dix & Marchegiani, 2013). The application of all these messages and strategies can be done through use of creativity in advertising. Belch and Belch's research work in 2013, shares how Miller's research in 1991 had showed that advertisements with creative messaging tends to be more effective. It helps in consumers choosing a brand over the other and the persuasiveness of the advertisement affects purchase decision. According to their research paper, creativity has increased over the time and is not a dying proposition. Creativity is a big factor in building brand identity (Belch & Belch, 2013). Zhang et al. in 2014's research paper, 'Be rational

or be emotional: advertising appeals, service types and consumer responses' shared their findings which showed that the appeal which works for a product or service is dependent on the product. A person willing to choose a restaurant will opt for emotional appeal while a person looking for a dentist is looking for rational appeal. Their work emphasised on the need to focus on brand trust and building consumer's confidence and association with the brand, more than with the product. Thus the emotions induced by the emotional appeal in the advertisements were crucial in deciding the buying decision. Quality and reliability are important attributes that people look into while choosing a brand for themselves. However, in all the cases there has to be a reflection of the culture of the region in the emotional ad appeals and messaging (H. Zhang et al., 2014).

Research Questions and Methodology followed

The research tries to find out

1. To analyse the basic message, storyline, argument, emotion, frame and prominence of the messages in the selected Advertisements.
2. To study if there has been any major change or if a trend is observable in the ads over the years
3. To study the audience engagement of these advertisements with viewers on YouTube platform

For the research paper, analysis of 16 different advertisements shared by the two YouTube pages of Titan have been done (a. titanindustriesltd and b. TitanWatches) have been done. The advertisements selected all have some social message attached in them. This was the basis for their selection. These advertisements have been made at different time frames. But only the time of their publication on YouTube is available during research. For accessing the data of engagement with audience, application and extension called TubeBuddy has been used for the advertisements in these two channels.

Analysis of the Advertisements

Sl No	Year of sharing on social media & Engagement with Audience	Argument or Emotion, Appeal Frame & Appeal Prominence	Basic Messaging & Storyline
1.	16 Years ago. 136k views, 56 comments, 925 Likes, SEO Score 70	Joy of gifting, emotion of daughter and father, joy of gifting on an occasion as special as a wedding. Although the product is being pitched as a valuable gift fit as a father's gift to	'Pyaar ke baad sabse pyaara uphar'. The advertisement is set up in the backdrop of a wedding of the eldest daughter. Father gifts her a titan as the younger sister plays the titan tune on a piano. URL: https://youtu.be/SvRx1C0oxOQ

		the daughter, yet the focus is on the relationship. This ad engages with the audience in a beautiful way. Most recall the time frame of 90s, some reflect their relation with their father, the memory of their first watch from the brand. The music has been talked of by the viewers.	
2.	16 Years ago. 17.9K Views, 6 comments, 52 Likes, SEO score 70	Joy of giving is the main focus of the advertisement. The relationship between the husband and the wife is the main focus here. There is little engagement with the audience as compared to other advertisements of Titan Watches. Most talk of the beauty of the music and the reference to Mozart.	‘Rediscover the Joy of Giving’. The advertisement is set in the backdrop of a diner is a restaurant in a fine diner. The young couple are greeted by musicians who play the titan theme music. The husband gifts his wife a titan watch on her birthday. The advertisement focuses on the joy of giving something special to a loved one. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVY19YrNzC8
3.	16 Years ago, 650k views, 73 comments, 1.23k Likes, SEO score 60	Focus is on joy of gifting in a relationship between a husband and wife. The comments do not reflect much about the product or brand. Most are personal comments on the actors, some are comments of nostalgia about being a 90s kid. Music of the advertisement has been talked about.	‘Could any Diwali gift mean quite as much to her as a titan quartz?’ The advertisement focuses on the joy of gifting loved one a titan watch on the occasion of Diwali. Ad featured Aishwarya Ray who was then just a model and not a film star during the filming and telecast of the ad. URL: https://youtu.be/qlUgr4mVris

4.	16 years ago, 37.6K views, 6 comments, 86 Likes, SEO score 70	The focus is both on the joy of gifting something special to someone and on the attachment of sentimental value to the material things that our loved ones gift to us. How we treasure them and when time comes, we gift it to the person who deserves it the most. Here the watch signifies time and feelings. There is less engagement but effective engagement. People love recalling the ad, the message of the campaign and nostalgia attached to it. The music and reference to Mozart is there.	‘Rediscover the Joy of Giving’. The advertisement is set in the backdrop of a church wedding. A couple is getting married. The bride’s friend comes late, hesitantly watches the couple get married with love in the eyes. She discovers him, he remembers old times where she had gifted him a watch. He had treasured the watch with a lot of love for all this while. He gifts the same watch to her husband and they both look each other admiring the value attached to the watch that made it an item to love, cherish and give after all these years. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VK0xO59BmQ
5.	16 Years ago, 13K views, 48 Likes, 3 Comments, SEO Score 65	Focus is divided between celebrating the different cultures and people who have been touched by Titan Watches and also on the models and new age models of Titan watches from their different collection. Although the engagement is low they are direct, people calling it the most beautiful titan ad at that time.	‘Celebrating 50 Million Watches, Celebrating 50 million Happy faces’. The ad is an iconic one as it celebrates the brands feat of selling 50 million watches. The ad shows a variety of different people, across India, different age groups, different culture and demographics humming the Titan music theme. They are all people from different walks of society and life who have valued a Titan Watch in their life. The music has been used brilliantly through different instruments and humming. There is also a lot of focus on different watch models throughout the advertisement and also at the end of the ad. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYG5_PDPwX4

6.	16 Years ago, 2.8K Views, 0 comments, 3 likes, SEO score 65	The focus is on the fusion of Indian style, contemporary and modern design. The appeal is on fusion, trendy and not just on the emotional appeal. A great amount of focused is placed on the rational approach, focusing on the watches, their design and variety.	‘Titan Raga Feel Beautiful’. The advertisement is set in the backdrop of an Indian fusion fashion show. The watches are shown in details along the storyline to focus on the collection. The advertisement end with a ramp walk, fire show and smiling faces and a slogan, Titan Raga Feel Beautiful. This is possibly the initial few of Raga ads and is was different than the ads of Titan Raga in the later days. URL: https://youtu.be/WHtRA7HBQ1Q
7.	Released in 2006 but shared 16 years ago. 157K views, 16 Comments and 412 Likes.	The fun innocent relationship of a grand mother and grandson are showcased in the ad. The watch is shown at the end but not in great details. The focus is on gifting a Titan not just on special occasions but also as a celebration of life during rest of the days. There is engagement with the audience, but it is restricted to comments about the characters.	‘Kabhi kisi mauke pe, kabhi yunhi’. The advertisement is set in the backdrop of a family where the grand mother and grandson are talking to each other. The fun banter is about grandmother getting married again at this age. Then the grandson shows her the gift. It’s a titan watch. The ad showcases Amir Khan. The focus is on the relationship of the two and on the joy of gifting. The Titan theme music is played in Indian way with Punjabi flavor. URL: https://youtu.be/y2Xhrbz45-w
8.	2008, 466K views, 75 Comments, 1.10K Likes SEO Score 55	Focus is on self-discovery. The watch surfaces with its new design and collection. But it never steals the limelight. The focus is on self-discovery. The engagement is great with this ad. The people	‘Be Born Every Day’ The advertisement focuses on living your life of dreams and wishes that one might have had in childhood. The ad talks of personal freedom to be what one wants to be. The ad talks of exploring the unexplored, making one’s own mistakes and learning on the go. It talks about reliving our childhood fantasies and discovering a new self each

		celebrate this message very well. They speak of the perfection of Amit Khan, Joy of Self Discovery and the need for more such ads from Titan.	day. Be born everyday, is one of the first ads from the brand that focused on working on one's own self. URL: https://youtu.be/i9X7Lr-uplo
9.	2024, 14.7 Million Views, 0 Comments, 14.6 K Likes, SEO Score 0	The ad focuses on emotional appeal. New age belief of inclusivity. The designs of the watches are used carefully to denote the change in mindset of the people who are new leaders of today or influencer figures of today. The viewership of the ad, whether organic or not is huge as compared to ads published 16 years ago. However there are no comments in this ad.	'#BeautifulTogether'. The main narrative line of the advertisement sets the mood of the ad. It says, Yeh ek bari special baat hai..meri khubsurati main, tumhara bhi hath hai... The ad is set in backdrop of two separate storylines. But they have one thing in common. Alia Bhat the star, makes an effort to contribute, mentor and nurture young talent and be there with them to share the joy and go through challenges together. URL: https://youtu.be/bxhfXSVemOc
10.	2023, 1.1 Million Views, 22 Comments, 878 Likes, SEO Score 05	The ad focuses on emotional appeal. Talks of acceptance of the self. The watches and their different models are shown beautifully to compliment the words shared. The engagement is lot at 101 Million views but there are hardly 22 comments. The comments are either talking of Alia Bhat, or about the	#LoveYourselfBodly Do Labels Really Define You? The ad has Alia Bhat in it. It is set in a private apartment where the star is getting ready. She chooses her watch, Titan Raga from a collection of watches. While making the decision she faces a question, what should she choose to sport to not be judged. Through the dialogues the multiple 'labels' prejudices are talked of. The music is used beautifully as a humming. The underlying message is, because people judge us, we should not stop loving who we are and should continue being as we like to be. URL: https://youtu.be/UqwcHoWZerk

		necessity of the ad in other regional languages.	
11.	5 years ago. 3.7 Million views, 21 Comments, 413 Likes SEO Score 0	The message focuses on emotional appeal and motivates people to accept themselves for the battles that they have fought instead of lamenting the scars that the battle has left behind. The audience engagement is there, and we see that all the comments appreciate the beauty of the message of the ad. The portrayal strikes a chord with the people seeing it.	‘#FlauntYourFlaw’ The ad is designed to send the message that one needs to accept themselves as they are. It shows different characters, one is a working professional who has no sleep at night and gets a dark circle. It shows a female army personnel who has a scar on her face, a sitar player with a bruised finger, a mother with a scarred belly due to her childbirth, a cancer survivor who has lost both her breasts to surgery. The ad asks the characters to flaunt what makes them special, what reflects the battles that they have won. The slogan used is Titan Raga, ‘I am’. The watch is shown on the hands of all these fighters. URL https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Tx7vf9MJpA
12.	4 Years ago, 11.4K views, 3 Comments, 179 Likes, SEO Score 20	The ad showcases the two models of Titan Raga for a brief period of time and the rest is based on the messaging. Hence it is more inclined towards the emotional appeal aspect rather than rational appeal. The audience engagement is not much. The comments appreciate the thought behind the ad and Titan’s approach to addressing important issues.	‘What You Feel is Who You Are’. The ad is set in close ups. We see a lady put make up, lipstick and get ready. She selects a Titan Raga out of two models and wears it. We then see a wider shot and we get to see her admiring herself in the mirror and we realize that she belongs to the third gender. The ad ends with the message that What you feel is who you are. Take Pride. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgxr3BPMd2I
13.	3 Years ago, 1.3 Million	The focus is not on the watch but in choosing	Happy International Women’s Day, the advertisement is set in the backdrop of a corporate office. There is a

	Views, 45 Comments, 3.08K Likes, SEO Score 5	one's own self first before the pressures of workplace. The focus is on 'Time' rather than the timepiece. The focus is on finding time for self-discovery and doing something that gives us happiness.	female member of the team who is leading a presentation. It gets appreciated. The dialogues reflect a post covid time. There is a proposal to celebrate the success of the presentation. The female member is asked to join the party beyond her office hours. She prioritizes her guitar class over the pressures of joining the party and instead offers to meet for breakfast next day to celebrate, which her team and seniors appreciate. The messaging is clear, 'Making time for yourself, makes you better at everything you do.'
			URL: https://youtu.be/A8hlDUA9500
14	7 Years ago, 1.29 Million Views, 143 Comments, 9.45K Likes SEO Score 45	The ad focuses on emotional appeal rather than a rational one. It focuses on the taboos and labels that mothers go through the challenges of working mothers. The watch is a point of highlight and has been shown twice showcasing self-worth and value associated with one's own self. This particular ad has a lot of engagement with the consumers. Most appreciate the beautiful message portrayed though the Raga Ads, specially this one. The audience also engage in debate about ideal parenting and more.	#MomByChoice is a beautiful messaging example. The ad starts in the backdrop of a probable baby shower or a celebration of a would-be mom with her family. The lead character expresses herself saying that maybe she will be a mother who would not be making circular rotis for her children or wait for her children to return home. She questions the many stigmas and taboos that the society puts on mothers specially working mothers. She says that she would rather be like her mother one who kept travelling, someone whose travel stories became her fairytales. She thanks her mother for doing her PhD at 45. She praises mothers for choosing to love their own lives as much as they love their children as being a mom is not a sacrifice but a choice. The ad uses the slogan, 'Titan Raga Khud Se Naya Rishta'. URL: https://youtu.be/TfYyAnJRkh0

15.	8 years ago, 1.70 Million Views, 477 Comments, 19.8K Likes, SEO Score 35	The advertisement is purely based on emotional appeals. Not for once was any model of Titan Raga watch shown in the entire advertisement. The ad ended with a logo of Titan Raga but nothing beyond that is promoted in sync with the product. This ad has one of the best audience engagements for Titan. The message resonates with everyone. There is an unanimous support for the messaging with people praising Titan for the brilliant advertisement concept they have presented.	‘BreakTheBias’ is one of the most iconic ads by Titan. We see the ad start with a board room discussion of senior management where they are discussing performance and promotion. Kiran is a candidate in consideration. Kiran is described as ‘the star of Rajat’s team’. Kiran is described to be a young fresher but someone who has the full trust of Rajat the team leader. They have a chemistry where they are always seen working together in office and weekend. We see visuals of a team leader with a female colleague on screen. The top bosses which also includes a female executive are seen giggling at the chemistry being talked about. A male aged board member asks to see Kiran himself with a smile. The door is knocked, and a guy enters the room. He is Kiran. All the board members are surprised and lose their smile. A message appears on screen, change the way you look at a woman’s success’ ‘She is unstoppable Now’. URL: https://youtu.be/hNqwBTCslMw
16.	9 Years ago, 1.31 Million Views, 54 Comments, 1.34 Likes, SEO Score 85	The ad again focuses on the emotional appeal of self-confidence, self-made man, young India, Start-up India. The watch is also shown on display many times and becomes a tool to make the young entrepreneur more confident about himself. The ad has a good audience connect and the chemistry between Asif Basra and Rajkumar Rao has been	#YourTimeToStartup is set at a time frame when the startup story was taking a lead in India. We can see a young employee in conversation with his ex-boss. It becomes clear from the conversation that it was the boss who had given him confident to start his own business and within two years he has become a phenomenon, creating a successful company with big revenue. The young entrepreneur shyly hires his ex-boss as the CEO of the company. The messaging is clear and that of self-confidence and believing in one’s own self. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMT36Ci5Lis

		appreciated along with the message, theme and music of the advertisement.	
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Conclusion & Recommendations:

Titan Watches have been a pioneer in going beyond selling their product and sharing different ideas and voicing different issues in their advertisements. The ads over the years have never been just about the watch. It has been about lives of the consumers, about people who make Titan Watches what it is. Ever since its inception, the advertisements have been appreciated by the people and engagement has been there. Even the advertisements that were published 16 years back have traction today. Their ads have not been dependent on celebrity endorsements only. The celebrities who have been brand ambassador for the brand have added their personal touch and stardom but while fitting into the mold that Titan Watches has built through their messaging over the years. The ideas that have been advocated by Titan have been in parity with the changes that have been evident in the society. We may add that the messaging has become stronger and more direct with the brand as time has passed. From being a brand that focused on using the power of relationships in the advertising it has moved to become a motivational brand voicing for causes more than basic relationships. From the joy of gifting, it has shifted to realizing the true potential of one's own self. Although the focus is on finding one's true self but somewhere down the line, the focus has mostly been on women's empowerment barring a few ads that have focused on men. Like Amir Khan's ad as a young CEO who goes to service a computer in a clients' home to their surprise. Titan has focused on ads about men but they do lack in number. But where it has focused its attention, it has successfully cut across the audience and has engaged brilliantly with the masses. The messaging has always been very clear for Titan and it has worked very well for the brand. Both the channels have a big following online. The later channel called Titan Watches has a viewership of 243 million while the older YouTube channel has a 2.23 million views too. It must be kept in mind that these kinds of viewership is great for the brand and also for the marketing of Titan Watches. But interestingly the SEO Score hardly matches to the popularity of the videos online. Even some videos with great SEO score don't engage that well while some with very average SEO Score outperform other ads. The campaigns also show that it is not about celebrity endorsement but about the concept and messaging and music. But the story telling has evolved with the change in society. Titan watches are no more just gadgets that is gifted to a wife by a husband but here the independent woman and her relation with the watch has become independent too. The entire storytelling, framing of the message is far more important than the face selling the story. The way in which Titan has been able to plug its models of watches in a subtle way over the years is a beautiful trend set by the company. The advertisement and marketing campaigns by Titan Watches across the year show that they have been able to maintain consistency for what their brand stands for. Not just watches but the focus has always been on time, the essence of it. It would be great to see more watches that equally focus on men's collection and issues. But then, that is also the discretion of the brand to decide on which product line up they would concentrate upon and promote in their media strategy.

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