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The Impact of Advertising Appeals on Consumer Purchase Behavior

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Abstract

Organizations today use various appeals in their advertising practices in order to influence consumers' attitudes and further their intention to purchase a certain product or a service. Mainly, we divide advertising appeals into rational and emotional appeals. However, there are various other appeals that enhance an advertisement and make it a lot more attractive. It is known that there is no particular pattern to be followed in order to inculcate appeals in advertisements, this study thus aims at exploring the impact of rational and emotional appeal on individuals and their purchase behavior. Using a focused approach, the research generated certain results when it came to the population and how these appeals affect a particular gender. It was indicated that, for women, the emotional appeal and message in the advertisement had a stronger impact while for men, the rational appeal attracted their purchase intention. Thus, it can be implied that the product, its purpose and target group are all interdependent and thus can influence the advertiser to choose the right type of an appeal accordingly. One can also use a combination of various appeals in order to effectively influence the target market into purchasing a certain product or service.

Keywords: Advertising, Advertising appeals, Rational Appeal, Emotional Appeal, Consumer Behavior, Purchase Intention

Introduction

Definitions of Advertising:

- William J. Stanton defines advertising as "advertising consists of all the activities involved in presenting to an audience a non-personal, sponsor-identified, paid-for message about a product or organization." (Stanton, 2002)
- American Marketing Association (AMA) defines advertising, as "advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor".

New or old advertising is crucial for every business. From raising awareness about a product or service to building a brand positioning for the product or service, advertising is the very essence of marketing. A form of communication that informs, remind and persuades customers of the qualities of products and services. This impersonal form of promotion promises creation of demand and retention of the market. Along the years, I've gained keen interest in various concepts of advertising. Advertising appeals are one of the most influential strategies in marketing. On a daily basis, we come across several kinds of appeals through our network, exposure to social media, television etc. The extent of influence of such appeals on consumer purchase behavior is however debatable. Considering the growth in use of these appeals in today's world, I had an inclination towards choosing this topic making me ponder upon the actual impact of these appeals on consumer purchase intentions. Advertising Appeals refer to communication strategies often used by marketing and advertising professionals to attract and persuade people to purchase a product or a service.

It should thus be noted that advertising appeals are the very essence of an advertisement and can truly enhance the effect of how an advertisement influences the consumer and his/her purchase intention. The most effective ads use both emotional and rational appeals to motivate consumers. They reflect the advantage that consumers buy with emotion and justify the purchase with the rational information.

Literature Review

According to Jovanovic, Viastelica & Kostic, these appeals can be broadly divided into two- rational and emotional. This however totally depends on whether companies want to influence rational or the emotional motives of consumers to purchase the advertised product (Pedrag Jovanovic, 2016). In the words of Long-Yi Lin, advertising appeal can be referred as the direct or indirect delivery of certain benefits or the explanation as to why consumers should consider buying the product. It is observed that consumers are attracted and show interest due to the communication of advertising messages (Lin, 2011). In the words of Sanjeev Verma, these appeals through television, radio and the Internet, reach great numbers of individuals who represent a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. (Verma, 2009).

In the words of (Philip Kotler , 1997) rational appeal is defined as rationally oriented purchase stimulated by directly giving explanations of a product's advantages. This appeal mainly focuses on the benefits of a product or a service. On the other hand, he defined emotional appeal as the stimulation of consumers purchase intention by arousing positive or negative emotion.

According to (Sadeghi, 2015) rational appeals can be put to best use while advertising high involvement products as high involvement products are high in cost and value and thus involve a higher amount of risk requiring complete information about the product or service. On the other hand, (Siddiqui) states that emotional appeal is linked up to an individual's right brain thinking, where individual is prompt to satisfy his psychological needs through the advertised product. In his research he also states further classification of rational and emotional appeal into music, humor, fear, sex, romantic, statistic, comparison, adventure, and bandwagon appeals etc.

It was also observed by (Williams, 2000) that emotional appeals may not have traditionally performed well on memory tests, but the present research argues that they can have substantial impact upon the memory of the consumers.

Certain observations by (1Muhammad Rizwan, 2013) were made in the case the TV advertising attitudes. These observations majorly focus on how rational appeals are more significant and beneficial than emotional appeals in case of advertisements shown on the television. However, emotional appeals are persuasive for psychologically attracting consumer attention towards the products or services that are being advertised. Another observation made by (Lin, 2011) in case of advertising appeals and role of spokespersons states that appeals have a notably positive influence on advertising attitudes further concluding that rational appeals are more significant than emotional appeals. Furthermore, in his observation (Lin, 2011) also claims that the influence of the combination of rational advertising and a celebrity spokesperson is more remarkable than the combination of emotional advertising and a celebrity spokes person in order to achieve favorable results.

When it comes to Social Media Advertising, (Qu, 2018) states that through his study, it can be concluded that enterprises can increase more professional information in social media advertising, let consumers understand more practical skills through advertising, broaden the knowledge side, display the high functionality of the product through advertising, and use a large number of data language to make consumers feel that the content is true and reliable, through multiple parties.

It is thus observed in all researches that appeals do have a strong influence on consumer purchase behavior. A marketer can thus make the best use of these appeals and cater to the needs of his target audiences.

Research Gap

After a thorough study of the papers mentioned above, I've realized that most of the papers have studied small sample sizes and have stuck to particular industries or sectors. It was also observed that most of the studies were confined to smaller geographical locations. There was no research conducted in the Middle East, which is a great avenue for marketing. Due to these gaps, it can be said that there could be certain biases with respect to the influence of advertising appeals on consumer purchase behavior. Most studies reveal only few repetitive sectors like electronics, cosmetics etc., this may also be treated as a gap in the research.

Research Objective

I wish to serve my paper with a study of mainly the Middle East part of the world- U.A.E precisely as this concrete jungle is one of the most developed cities in the world. The population includes people from all over the world. The country's population is said to be dominated by expats and hence will give me diverse opinions for my topic. I also wish to erase all possible gaps identified above. Advertising appeals can impact the purchase intention of a consumer greatly and this powerful tool can totally transform the marketing strategy and give us favorable results.

Methodology

Methodology refers to the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about a certain topic. This particular study is based on primary research, conducted through a self-administered questionnaire targeted towards a young adult population across India and United Arab Emirates. Using a questionnaire for this study as it provides us with an opportunity to both observe and measure the opinions portrayed by the respondents, further giving us an overall perspective on consumer belief and judgment regarding the impact of advertising appeals- mainly rational and emotion on consumer purchase intention. The questionnaire however, also helps in finding the extent of impact on of the individual appeals on different genders and how it affects their purchase behavior.

Type of Research: Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is adopted for this study, which refers to a systematic investigation of an event by gathering quantifiable information and performing statistical and mathematical techniques.

We can use this type of research to collect data or information from potential or existing customers using sampling method, sending out questionnaires, surveys, online polls etc. whose results can be depicted in a

numerical form in a proper report. These responses and feedbacks are reviewed carefully and then changes are made in a product or a service or anything to which the report was related.

My main objective is to study the impact of advertising appeals essentially, Rational and Emotional Appeals on consumer purchases. These consumers may be separated by gender, location, age and occupation. However, my aim is also to study the preference of either emotion or rational appeals amongst the various groups mentioned above.

Research Design

As mentioned above, Quantitative research is adopted for this study. Further, as the objective is to find out the effect of advertising appeals on consumer purchase behavior, we establish a cause-effect relationship. Hence, using a causal research also known as explanatory research design will be appropriate as it produces quantitative and statistically conclusive data, with an objective to test hypotheses about cause-and-effect relationships, which is the main purpose of this study. It has been opted for due to its high relevancy with the objective of the study. Moreover, the responses collected through 'Google Forms' (e-questionnaire) help us gain a deeper understanding of how the respondents are aware of various appeals and the effect of these appeals on their purchase decisions.

Sampling and Population

Population: The population considered for the study includes consumers of age groups 19-55 years who have different occupations belonging to various cities of India and United Arab Emirates. The group comprises of students, businesspersons, employees, job seekers etc.

Sampling Frame: A sampling frame refers to a list of items or people forming a population from which a sample is considered. As mentioned above, for the research, the population chosen is consumers of age groups 19-55 years of various occupations belonging to different regions.

Sampling Size and Sampling Calculation: We know that a sample is a subset of the entire population. In this research, the sample size included around 196 respondents in total. Using the Cochran formula, considering the confidence level at 95%, margin of error at 7% and an approximate population of 80,000,000 (UAE and India).

Sampling Technique: Sampling Technique refers to process by which the elements of the sample have been selected. In this study, stratified sampling technique was adopted as the sampling technique

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses have been curated in order to understand the extent of impact of Rational and Emotional Appeals on consumer purchase intention.

H₀: Advertising Appeals have no impact on consumer purchase behavior.

H₁: Advertising Appeals have an impact on consumer purchase behavior.

Variables

Variables include Independent variables and dependent variables. As mentioned above, a causal study requires a cause and effect relationship. Cause and effect determination is one of the most integral aspects to scientific research. In this study, independent variables refer to the 'cause' and dependent variables are the 'effect'. The independent variables include gender, age, city, occupation and the two main types of Advertising Appeals (Emotional & Rational).

The dependent variable involved in this study is consumer purchase behavior as we see that the advertising appeals affect the purchase behavior and intention of consumers. Hence, these make up the variables of the research.

Scales

- i) **Nominal**- A nominal scale has been used within the questionnaire to ascertain the gender, occupation of the respondents, the country the respondents are currently residing in etc.
- ii) **Ordinal**- An ordinal scale is the 2nd level of measurement reports the ranking and ordering of the data without actually establishing the degree of variation between them. The ordinal scale used here is a 5-point **Likert scale**. The 5 points included are Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The main advantage of Likert Scale is that it uses a universal method of collecting data, which means it is easy to understand them. Working with quantitative data, it is easy to draw conclusions, reports, results and graphs from the responses.
- iii) **Ratio**- Ratio scale is a type of variable measurement scale that is quantitative in nature. Ratio scale allows any researcher to compare the intervals or differences. It is the 4th level of measurement and possesses a zero point or character of origin. Ratio scale is a type of variable measurement scale and is quantitative in nature. The ratio scale has been used here to record the age groups of the respondents of the study.

Tools and Instruments used

Tools used: MS Excel and SPSS, an IBM software was used for the process for best and accurate results. The instrument used to study the responses was 'Questionnaire'. The questionnaire was made using Google Forms and was spread across WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Gmail in order to generate responses. The questions also included pictures of various advertisements and their influence on consumer purchase decision.

3. Data Interpretation and Analysis

Research data analysis refers to a process used by researchers for reducing data to a story and interpreting it to derive insights. The data analysis process helps in reducing a large chunk of data into smaller fragments, which makes sense. Three essential things take place during the data analysis process — the first data organization. Summarization and categorization together contribute to becoming the second known method used for data reduction. It helps in finding patterns and themes in the data for easy identification and linking. Third and the last way is data analysis – researchers do it in both top-down or bottom-up fashion. The objective of the study was to validate the main hypothesis of the study, which assumed the impact of advertising appeals on consumer purchase behavior.

A total of **201** individuals responded to the questionnaire on impact and influence of Emotional and Rational Appeals on consumer purchase intention.

Fig 1.**Gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	108	53.7	53.7	53.7
	Male	88	43.8	43.8	97.5
	Prefer not to say	5	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	100.0	

In Fig 1, we see that the sample frame consisted of 108 Females (53.7%) and 88 Males (43.8%) while the rest preferred not to specify. The main intention behind acknowledging the respondent's gender was to analyze which gender prefers which appeal (rational/ emotional) the most.

Fig 2.**Country**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bahrain	3	1.5	1.5	1.5
	India	111	55.2	55.2	56.7
	Kuwait	1	.5	.5	57.2
	Lagos	3	1.5	1.5	58.7
	Uganda	4	2.0	2.0	60.7
	United Arab Emirates	75	37.3	37.3	98.0
	United Kingdom	4	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	100.0	

In Fig 2, we can see the countries in which the respondents are currently residing in. We see a major percentage of respondents residing in India. Out of 201, 111 are currently staying in India which constitutes more than 55% of the entire sample size. Secondly, we can observe that 75 (37.3%) people reside in the United Arab Emirates which thus meets our research objective to cover a sample frame in the UAE. Other Middle Eastern countries where the respondents reside in- include, Kuwait and Bahrain. Apart from these other responses from various other countries have also been observed. Here, we can analyze how these appeals have impacted individuals residing in different parts of the world.

Fig 3.**Age * Occupation Cross tabulation**

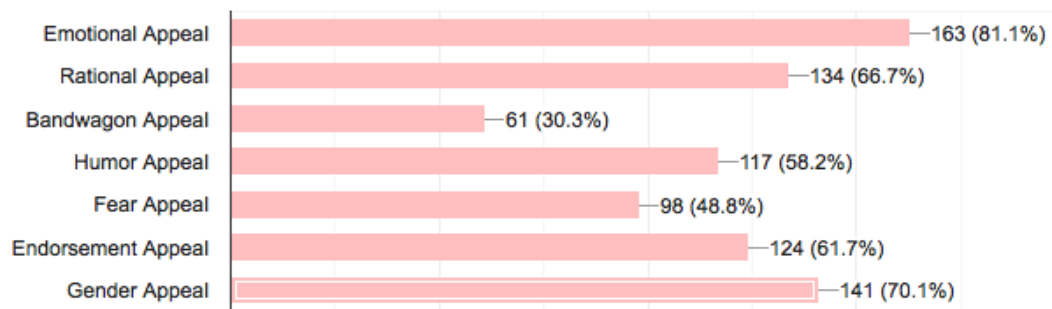
Count

Age	Occupation						Total
		Employee/ Service	Home-maker	Job Seeker	Self Employed/ Business	Student	
18-25	0	11	0	5	9	131	156
26-32	0	2	1	1	1	0	5
33-49	1	13	2	1	0	0	17
50+	0	1	4	0	3	2	10
Below 18	0	0	0	0	1	12	13
Total	1	27	7	7	14	145	201

Upon asking the respondents their ages and occupation, we can observe the data mentioned in Fig 3. Above we can see that out of 201 respondents, 156 belong to the age group of 18-35. Amongst these 156 individuals we see that 131 are students while 11 are employees, 5 job seekers and 9 own a business. Further, we observe only 5 people belonging to the age group of 26-32. 17 people belong to the category of 33-49 years wherein, most of the respondents are employees while none of them own a business. Lastly, a small proportion, 13 individuals, are below 18 and our majorly students. We can see how these appeals affect purchase behavior of individuals of different age groups.

Fig 4.**Which of these appeals are you aware of?**

201 responses

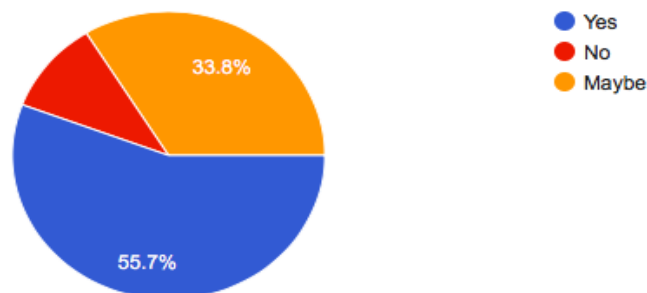


Upon asking the respondents about which of the above appeals are the aware of, we can observe that 163 (81.1%) individuals out of 201 were aware of the emotional appeal. This shows how most people are aware of this certain appeal and identify the emotional aspect of any given advertisement. Secondly, we see how 141 individuals, 70.1% of the entire sample size are aware of gender appeal which is observed in various ads like Gillette, Axe, Fem etc. This appeal is found very commonly. Next, we observe how 124 individuals (66.7%) know about the rational appeal. This thus shows how Emotional and Rational appeals are one of the most significant appeals in advertising.

Fig 5.

Do you think any of the above appeals influence your purchase decision?

201 responses

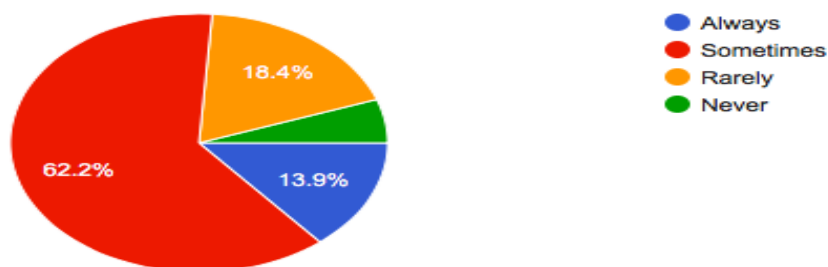


In Fig 5, we can analyze that most individuals consider these appeals and they eventually influence their purchase decision. We can see that more than 55% of the sample let these appeal influence their purchase decision. However, I personally believe that ad appeals are the very essence of an advertisement and give the advertisement a wonderful shape to it as it caters to a given appeal hence catering to a given need.

Fig 6.

How often do you identify the above appeals while looking at an advertisement?

201 responses



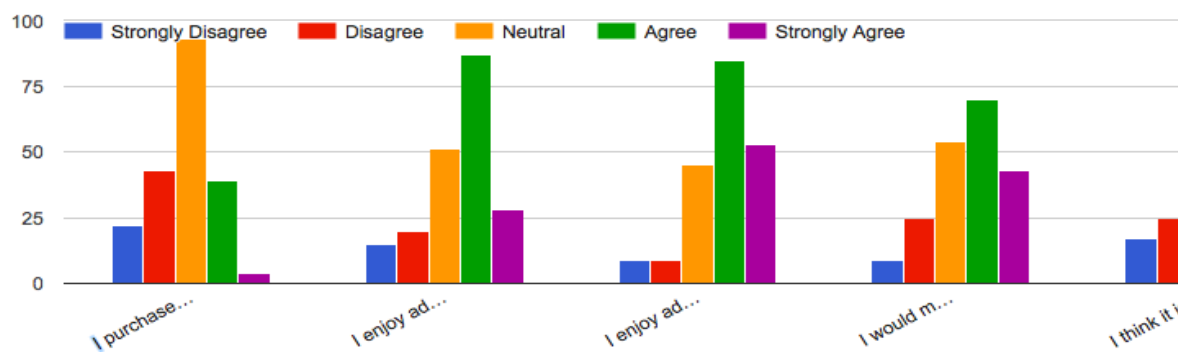
On asking how often do the respondents identify the various advertising appeals upon coming across advertisements, most individuals said 'sometimes' comprising 62.2% of the entire sample size. While we see 18.4% claim to rarely ever notice these appeals. Finally, we can see only a 13.9% 'always' able to identify the various advertising appeals. Sometimes, these appeals are hidden with various ads for instance print ads, video ads, etc however making it hard for one to notice their existence.

For the next segment, in order to test the influence of advertising appeals **Likert Scale** was used. The statements were as follows:

- (i) I purchase products on the basis of their advertisements.
- (ii) I enjoy advertisements that I can emotionally connect with.
- (iii) I enjoy advertisements that speak about the advantages and disadvantages of the product.
- (iv) I would much rather depend on my rational instincts over my emotional instincts while purchasing a product.
- (v) I think it is essential to bring an emotional aspect in an advertisement.

Fig 7.

Influence of these appeals on your purchase intention



In fig 7,

- I purchase products on the basis of their advertisements.
 - For this statement, 22 individuals strongly disagree, 43 simply disagree, 93 remain neutral while 39 agree and 4 strongly agree.
- I enjoy advertisements that I can emotionally connect with.
 - For this statement, 15 individuals strongly disagree, 20 simply disagree, 51 remain neutral while 87 agree and 28 strongly agree.
- I enjoy advertisements that speak about the advantages and disadvantages of the product.
 - For this statement, 9 individuals strongly disagree, 9 simply disagree, 45 remain neutral while 85 agree and 53 strongly agree.
- I would much rather depend on my rational instincts over my emotional instincts while purchasing a product.
 - For this statement, 9 individuals strongly disagree, 25 simply disagree, 54 remain neutral while 70 agree and 43 strongly agree.
- I think it is essential to bring an emotional aspect in an advertisement.
 - For this statement, 17 individuals strongly disagree, 25 simply disagree, 75 remain neutral while 62 agree and 23 strongly agree.

We can thus observe referring to the data analyzed above that most individuals remain neutral while considering advertisements for their purchase. Secondly, ads that help individuals emotionally connect to them receive a better response. Further, we can also analyze, how most people also appreciate rational aspects of an advertisements. Lastly, we can analyze how most individuals remain neutral when the emotional aspect of an advertisement is mentioned.

Fig. 8

GENDER * Which of these two ads influence you into purchasing the product? Cross Tabulation

Count

		Which of these two ads influence you into purchasing the product?		
		Rational	Emotional	Total
GENDER	Female	49	59	108
	Male	51	37	88
	Prefer not to say	5	0	5
Total		105	96	201

In Fig 8, I have compared how 2 advertisements of AIRTEL (one emotional and one rational) influence the gender. Above we can identify that, 59 females prefer the emotional advertisement of AIRTEL whereas, 51 men prefer the rational advertisement. This shows the inclination of females on the emotional aspect as most women chose the emotional ad where it shows the inclination of males towards the rational aspect of the advertisement.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study on how advertising appeals, mainly Rational and Emotional appeals, impact the consumer consumer behavior has thus helped one realize the importance of these appeals. It was observed that different individuals mainly on the basis of their gender have a different approach on these appeals. Women felt that they could resonate to the emotional ads and their appeal rather than the rational aspect of it. However, it was observed how men were more inclined towards the factual and rational aspect of an advertisement and could thus not resonate to the emotional approach more. Moreover, it was also observed how most individuals prefer knowing the advantages and disadvantages of a product and consider their rational instincts rather than considering the emotional instincts in any given advertisements. I used 4 advertisements, two from AIRTEL and two from Dominos, each set consisting of an emotional ad appeal and a rational ad appeal. Respondents gave a mixed opinion on these ads, as mentioned above, females selected the emotional ads while males chose the rational ads. Thus, using this we can say that emotional and rational appeals are both equally important in order to deliver a successful ad however, certain products require the emotional aspect more and certain products require the rational aspect to it more. In addition, all participants agree that in general, the purchase decision is made based on rational motives for purchasing, whilst emotional motives for the purchase intention are decisive only when they have already used a certain brand and when they are, in a way, emotionally attached to the brand and do not consider competitor brands in this case.

5. Limitations

The research however met only a small sample size of 201 respondents. I believe a larger sample size could give a better view on how the emotional and rational appeal influence consumer purchase intention. However, the research comprises of various geographical locations but however each location had very few participants except India and UAE and thus the study cannot be generalized only on such a small sample size. Approaching a larger sample size that is spread across the world can help give a better view on how these

appeals affect purchase behavior and which of the two are more significant and influential for products and services. Moreover, I believe that these limitations can simply be solved using a larger sample size and more varied responses. Most people do not really read much into appeals and may often categorize them as insignificant. However, it should be noted that these appeals are not insignificant and thus are the very essence of an advertisement.

6. Managerial Implications

After analyzing the entire study, we can see how various appeals influence buying behavior. Hence companies should definitely keep discovering advertising appeals and inculcate them into their advertisements. This can make the advertisement much more attractive and persuasive by itself. Furthermore, these advertisements can most certainly result in increased awareness which eventually results in increased sales and revenue of the product. It is also scientifically proven that any advertisement that may come out to be relatable to a consumer, he/she will definitely want to purchase it. This relatability factor can thus act as an important element in advertising and thus aim at higher sales.

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