

EXPLORING DIMENSIONS OF CREATIVITY IN ADVERTISING: AN EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

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ABSTRACT

Creativity in advertising is extremely important in deciding success. In simplest form, creativity is the measure of fresh, unique presentation that makes an advertisement appealing and attention grabbing. This is only partially true. Creativity is much more than this, it includes everything that can make an advertisement likeable and creates lasting impressions. This research paper explores and explains the different dimensions of creativity and also studies the impact on demographic variables on selected dimensions of creativity. Advertisement synthesis, elaboration of the content, connectivity with the audience, hedonism and abstractness are identified as important factors in determining the creativity in advertising.

Key words: Creativity, dimensions, advertisement, appeal.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Advertisements are the soul of promotions. They come in many different forms and have evolved over a period of time. Traditionally, advertisement is a form of announcing a product

by a company and creating awareness amongst the masses. The advertising world is becoming more and more cluttered and therefore the emerging challenge is to stand out of the crowd. Creativity is an essential ingredient in advertising. Creativity means originality or out of the box thinking in simple terms. Creativity is the ability to perceive the world or showcase a situation in new way, to find hidden patterns in what is obvious, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena and to generate solutions. It is something that can give the much needed impetus and create successful campaigns that pull the attention of the target masses and convert into soaring sales figures. Creativity can allow the advertisement get past the normal filtering process. Creativity is the act of turning new, innovative and imaginative ideas into reality. Creativity brings in something new or modifies the old in a better way. There is no doubt of the fact that creativity is the heart of advertising and branding. It is what brings the much needed differentiation between competing campaigns and motivates the audience to act in the way chosen by the marketers. Creativity has no limit or boundaries.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Guilford (1950) is credited with bringing about some interesting facts in the relationship between creativity and intelligence. He strongly put forth his belief that the standard IQ tests of the 1950s omitted some important cognitive functions; these specifically were related with the ability to think divergently. Divergence is the most fundamental characteristic of advertisement creativity. The advertisement must contain elements that are novel, different, or unusual in some way. While the concept of divergence is clearly central to creativity it has received surprisingly little attention in field of marketing and particularly in advertising. **Clow et al (2001)** explored creativity from different dimensions and considered it a major form in the communication process. **Frith (1997)** stated that creativity is the key factor for success of any advertisement as the reminder value of creative advertisement is more. According to **Smith (2004)**, creativity works as an interface between divergence and relevance factors in an advertisement. The combination of divergence and relevant factors brings about creative advertisement. Determinants of a divergent advertisement can be emphatic or unusual perspective, thought provoking question, futuristic orientation, flexibility, uniqueness, elaboration of an idea, resistance to premature closure, synthesis or formation, humor, richness or colorfulness of imagery, fantasy and expression of emotion. The relevance of advertisement includes meaningfulness. **Yoong et al (2014)** concluded that people like to be amused, surprised and see new things or old things in a new or unique way. Further he summarized some of the characteristics present in the creative advertisements are originality, attractiveness, persuasiveness, and effective strategies. **Stuhlfaut (2006)** confirmed the purpose of advertising is to grab the attention of the people. In order to attract attention, an advertisement has to stand out of the many advertisements running parallel. With originality come uniqueness, innovation and newness. Based on the information gathered from **Belch (2012)** we are explaining certain dimensions of creativity commonly associated with advertisements.

- Uniqueness: advertisements should include the USP or unique selling proportion of the product or service or company which can convince them to switch brands or able them to uniquely identify the product out of the pile of different products.
- Novelty: sometime creative advertisement means some novel concept because the same old story would fail to grab the attention until it has some newness in it so to differentiate between many advertisements the content should be new in comparison to existing advertisements.
- Amusement: the element of amusement which provokes a feeling of laughter, smile or a pleasant shock in order to be amusing.

- **Attraction:** the advertisement should be able to catch the attention of audience, it can be due to creative designing, presence of famous celebrity or powerful headline that can grab the attention of customers as people read the headline fast and if the headline is catchy, they read or watch the entire advertisement.
- **Sympathy& emotional touch:** Feelings are a way of relating with people as distant as audience to an advertisement. Marketers must try to deliver better than what is expected by the customers and add a touch of emotions which can be related to the product or service offering, this helps the company to retain the customers and also create the much needed goodwill in long term. This help the customers to return again and again and be emotionally connected. Such advertisements have high recognition and recall rate.
- **Memorability:** The purpose of advertisement is to instill a feeling to never forget referencing an emotion that already exist, only the flashing letter on screen cannot influence the audience, they need to return to it again and become connected to it.
- **Truthful and tasteful:** People have a lot of concern for the seller, who is unknown. It is important to build a relationship of trust through advertisement campaigns and this can be done by showing past experiences of customer satisfaction or delivering what you are promising or mentioning in your corporate ratings. If company sells their product with dishonest advertisement it can lost its credit worthiness for coming years.
- **Humor:** Marketers can present humor in a presentable and tasty way to be able to provoke laughter but humor requires to be used carefully without hurting anybody's sentiments.
- **Solution of day to day problems:** This kind of advertisements are used to influence the psyche of customers and make them realize that the utility of the product in their lives. These advertisements are informative and generate instant sales.
- **Visual elements:** The visual elements of the advertisement are generally dominant part as compared to other parts of advertisement as it creates a long term recognition of a product in the minds of consumer. Color, fonts, composition, imagery are parts of visual elements of an advertisement.
- **Celebrity Endorsements:** Another important aspect of visual element is featuring a famous personality or a known face. The advantage of celebrity endorsement is that people quickly recognize them and their social status enhances the credibility of the offering.
- **Graphics & Animation:** Plain text on a plain background can be boring, people don't always want to read everything that has been written in advertisement or an article, exciting graphics and animation can be added to give a special visualization. There can be 2D, 3D animation or jingles, music, illustration style or voiceover.
- **Originality:** When audience see something original to offer them, they will have a difficult time resisting it. Originality also means that organizations and advertisements should avoid making exaggerated claims about product attributes or performances.
- **Fantasy:** Fantasy typically means something which is untrue and unreal, related to the imagination of the audience. These fantasies often trigger the desires present at the sub-conscious level of the audience.
- **Vagueness or abstractedness:** Some advertisements are not directly related to the main idea of product, but weave weird stories, evidently loved by the audience. There is an element of vagueness that grabs the attention of the audience

- Comparison: A commonly adopted way, where a company’s offering is also compared to the competitor. The USP is featured directly against competitive offering often without naming or demeaning the competitors’ product.
- Artistic: Audience may not be ready to read an entire five words article on the benefits of the products or watching a 10 minutes long advertisement because there is no incentive for them to invest their time. Artistic advertisements are simple, short, crisp and provide complete details according to the culture, general habits, perception of the target audience.
- Ability to convey properly: An advertisement should convey the meaning for parties, the advertiser and audience. Advertiser should know why the advertisement is on air, the purpose of the advertisement and its objectives for audience must be known and conveyed in clear way.
- Call-to-action: the purpose of the advertisement is not just to plant the seed of inquisitiveness in the minds of customers but to move forward and convey about the offer. They should be able to create a sense of urgency and let the customers know that the right time to purchase the product is now.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology adopted for the study is both descriptive and exploratory. The different constructs for the study are explained based on the literature review as well as authors experience. Detailed questionnaire is developed and data is collected through online mode. The data was collected using digital platform from 325 respondents and 315 completely filled questionnaires are considered for the analysis. The study aims to identify the factors affecting creativity and understand the impact of selected variables of creativity on demographic factors like age, education, gender, occupation and income.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

315 completed questionnaires are considered for analysis. 35.5% of the respondents are males and 64.4% are females. 66.3% of the people are residing in cities. 21.9% are residents of towns, 3.8 % are kasba dwellers and 7.9% are living in the rural (village) areas. 70.2% of the sampled respondents are having a family income of upto 3 lakhs per annum. 19.4% have income between 3 and 6 lakhs per annum and 10.5% have incomes above 6 lakhs per annum.

Table 1 Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Student	288	91.4	91.4	91.4
Service	11	3.5	3.5	94.9
Professional	4	1.3	1.3	96.2
House wife	5	1.6	1.6	97.8
self employed	7	2.2	2.2	100.0
Total	315	100.0	100.0	

Occupational status of the respondents is shown in table 1. Students comprise of 91.4% of the total respondents followed by people employed in the service sector (3.5%). Professionals comprise of 1.3%, housewives. 1.6% and self employed 2.2% of the data.

The cronbach alpha value is found to be 0.803 and it shows the statistical fitness of the data. KMO value of 0.822 shows that sophisticated analysis can be conducted. Highest value 0.920

is generated as extraction value for communality and it is for “advertisement affects my purchase intent” followed by 0.709 for “humour appeal impresses me”.

A total of seventeen constructs were tested. Five factors are identified using principal axis factoring as shown in table 2. The identified factors are advertisement synthesis, elaboration of content, connectivity with audience, hedonism, abstractness.

Advertisement synthesis comprises of the following five variables

Content of the advertisement is most important to me

I like the advertisement only if it is meaningful

Designing (graphics, colour, celebrity, audio) plays a major role in effective advertisement

The persuasiveness of the message in the advertisement impresses me

I get influences by the artistic nature of the advertisement

Elaboration of the content

Advertisement that has weird/incomplete/impossible story annoys me

Social appeal in the advertisement appeals me

Advertisement affects my purchase intent

I compare advertisements to choose products

Connectivity with audience

The relateability of the advertisement impresses me

I like the advertisement that can relate to my own experiences

I like the advertisement that provides complete details

Hedonism

The happiness quotient of the advertisement impresses me

Fun element impresses me

The humour appeal impresses me

Abstractness

Novelty of the advertisement impresses me

The abstract theme used in the advertisement impresses me

Table 2 Rotated Factor Matrix^a

	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
content of the advertisement is most important for me	.353				
I like the advertisement only if it is meaningful	.598				
Designing(Graphics,colours,celebrity,audio) plays a major role in an effective advertisement	.291				
Advertisement which has weird/incomplete/impossible story annoys me		.429			
The relateability of the advertisement impresses me			.507		

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I like the advertisement that can relate to my experiences			.549		
The happiness quotient of the advertisement impresses me				.308	
The fun element impresses me				.745	
The novelty of the advertisement impresses me					.358
Social appeal in the advertisement impresses me		.318			
Abstract theme used in the advertisement impresses me					.417.
The persuasiveness of the message in adv impresses me	.146				
The humor appeal impresses me				.756	
I get influenced by the artistic nature of the advertisement	.223				
Advertisement affects my purchase intent		.142			
I compare the advertisements to choose products		.409			
I like the advertisement if provides complete details			.207		
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.					
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.					

Further one way ANOVA is applied between the constructs of creativity in advertising and demographic variables

On applying one way ANOVA between dimensions of creativity and occupation, the following results are obtained.

Table 3 ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
content of the advertisement is most important for me	Between Groups	1.387	4	.347	.490	.743
	Within Groups	219.356	310	.708		
	Total	220.743	314			
I like the advertisement only if it is meaningful	Between Groups	2.556	4	.639	.866	.484
	Within Groups	228.631	310	.738		
	Total	231.187	314			
Designing (Graphics,colours,cleberity,audio) plays a major role in an effective advertisement	Between Groups	9.371	4	2.343	3.169	.014
	Within Groups	229.200	310	.739		
	Total	238.571	314			
Advertisement which has weird/incomplete/impossible story annoys me	Between Groups	1.003	4	.251	.278	.892
	Within Groups	279.683	310	.902		
	Total	280.686	314			
The relatability of the advertisement impresses me	Between Groups	2.295	4	.574	.978	.420
	Within Groups	181.788	310	.586		
	Total	184.083	314			
I like the advertisement that can relate to my experiences	Between Groups	5.367	4	1.342	2.069	.085
	Within Groups	201.077	310	.649		

	Total	206.444	314			
The happiness quotient of the advertisement impresses me	Between Groups	1.169	4	.292	.535	.710
	Within Groups	169.402	310	.546		
	Total	170.571	314			
The fun element impresses me	Between Groups	2.793	4	.698	1.062	.375
	Within Groups	203.778	310	.657		
	Total	206.571	314			
The novelty of the advertisement impresses me	Between Groups	2.244	4	.561	.793	.531
	Within Groups	219.356	310	.708		
	Total	221.600	314			
Social appeal in the advertisement impresses me	Between Groups	3.125	4	.781	1.223	.301
	Within Groups	197.986	310	.639		
	Total	201.111	314			
Abstract theme used in the advertisement impresses me	Between Groups	9.246	4	2.312	3.257	.012
	Within Groups	219.314	309	.710		
	Total	228.561	313			
The persuasiveness of the message in adv impresses me	Between Groups	5.997	4	1.499	2.630	.034
	Within Groups	176.118	309	.570		
	Total	182.115	313			
The humour appeal impresses me	Between Groups	1.491	4	.373	.466	.761
	Within Groups	248.172	310	.801		
	Total	249.663	314			
I get influenced by the artistic nature of the advertisement	Between Groups	5.250	4	1.313	1.904	.110
	Within Groups	213.721	310	.689		
	Total	218.971	314			
Advertisement affects my purchase intent	Between Groups	10.834	4	2.709	2.892	.022
	Within Groups	290.308	310	.936		
	Total	301.143	314			
I compare the advertisements to choose products	Between Groups	9.210	4	2.302	2.262	.062
	Within Groups	315.476	310	1.018		
	Total	324.686	314			
I like the advertisement if provides complete details	Between Groups	5.618	4	1.404	2.654	.033
	Within Groups	164.046	310	.529		
	Total	169.663	314			

The significance value for designing that includes graphic, colours, celebrity, audio is 0.01; abstract theme is 0.01, persuasive message is 0.03, purchase intent 0.02 and advertisement that provides complete details is 0.03. As these values are less than 0.05, it can be concluded that occupation has positive influence for these dimensions of creativity. Significant impact is found for occupational status of the respondents on the different dimensions of creativity. In the same way one way ANOVA is also applied on other demographic variables like gender and education pursued by the respondents. It is also found to have no effect on any particular dimension of creativity in advertising. When one way ANOVA is applied for income, significant impact is seen on purchase intent of the product due to difference in the income levels.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Creativity is an individualistic trait. It is a very important element in advertising and based on the findings of the study, it can be stated that females are more responsive in judging creativity in advertising. Urban dwellers with income upto 3 lakhs per annum are more active in

responding towards dimensions of creativity. Occupational wise analysis shows that maximum responses are found amongst students followed by people employed in the service sector. The study confirms positive influence of advertisements on purchase intent. Five broad factors like advertisement synthesis, elaboration of the concept, connectivity with the audience, hedonism and abstractness are identified to affect creativity in advertisements. Further on studying the impact of demographic factors on the different variables of creativity, it is found that gender, age and education does not have any influence on chosen dimensions of creativity. Occupation pursued by the respondent is found to influence the choice of graphics, colour, celebrity, audio, abstract theme, persuasiveness of message in an advertisement.

6. LIMITATION AND SCOPE OF FURTHER STUDIES

The findings of the study are based on the responses received at one time and cannot be generalized. The study was conducted in a short span of time and this may limit the accuracy of the results. The study explores the dimensions of creativity in advertising in a broad way and does not differentiate between the different types of advertisements. Future researches may be conducted on different types of advertisements and include one or more of the identified variables.

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