

# Influence of Advertising Appeals on Buying Behaviour with Reference to Cosmetic Brands

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## **Abstract**

*Advertising plays an important role in influencing the consumers purchase decisions. By using different advertising appeals, the brands are able to both create awareness about their products, as well as build perceptions around them that touch the consumer's heart or reason. Awareness and perception go hand in hand forming purchase intent, leading to the final purchase. This is true of advertising for cosmetic brands that is one of the fastest growing market in India. Glossy print ads, celebrity endorsement, sex-appeal, humor and online influencers are some of the advertising appeals used to create awareness and build perceptions around the brands. This particular research aimed to find out how these advertising appeals influence the buying behavior of the residents of Delhi-NCR. The study found that while the advertising appeals has been successful in creating awareness and changing attitude towards cosmetics consumption among the respondents, but building brand perception is a more complex process which requires time, trust and technology.*

**Key words:** Advertising appeals, perception, consumer psyche, online advertising

## **I. Introduction**

India has burgeoned into a huge market, providing ample opportunities for lifestyle changes and spending avenues among consumers. The proliferation of brands and the rapidly changing technology that has given impetus to the growth of advertising and media industry, has also brought changes in the social and cultural norms around beauty, grooming and fashion.

Traditionally in India, beauty care products were limited to the herbs and home-made products, mostly used by women. Only certain products like soaps, hair oil, talcum powder and shampoos, manufactured by industry were available in the market. As awareness about hygiene and personal grooming increased across urban and rural areas in the country, several beauty and personal care categories developed. The marketing activities generally involved popular celebrities, and traditionally highlighted aspects such as elimination of body odor and dandruff, improved oral health, and the prevention of infection. This further boosted the demand for beauty and personal care products. ( S. Ramesh Kumar, Ande Teja and Syed Hussain, 2012)

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In 2020, the Indian beauty care industry has been estimated to reach at USD 2.68 Billion, with an annual growth rate at 15-20 percent. The beauty care market is likely to become the main contributor to the growth of Indian wellness industry consisting of salon, cosmetic products and cosmetics treatment. The tremendous growth in the cosmetic industry last decade, is due to the rising beauty concerns among both men and women. This boom can be ascribed to factors such as rising disposable income, changing lifestyle of young people, increase in the spending power of women. On an average, working women intend to spend 36% or more of their income on themselves. (Sneha Santra, 2018) This has attracted many international brands which have entered the Indian market with advertising campaigns, trying to cash in on the huge appetite for foreign cosmetic brands. Advertising is the activity of producing information for promoting the sale of commercial products or services by influencing consumer buying behaviour.

The role of advertising is to create awareness about the brand (product or service), among potential consumers by highlighting its uniqueness in comparison with competing brands. Advertising creates favourable attitude and strong perception towards the brand that impact the purchase intention often leading to the purchase of the advertised brand. In other words, advertising influences choice and buying decisions. To succeed, the advertisers need to understand what makes potential customers behave the way they do. This involves a systematic and evidence-based strategic planning process, that includes study of consumers behaviour: The choices made by consumers when they are searching, deciding (the mental and emotional processes) and the physical act of purchase and use of different products (brands) that they believe satisfy their needs.

Today's world is a consumer's world. There is an overload of brand messages that consumers are being exposed to every minute of their lives. This makes the task of advertising more challenging in terms of developing the right creative strategy that is able to deliver the brand messages by standing out in the media clutter. While the basis of a good advertising strategy lies on identifying the brand positioning, creative solutions, choice of media, time and intensity of communication (Vlastelica,T, 2016) - it is the message strategy or the advertising appeal that is often responsible for drawing the consumers' attention and influence the consumers' perception vis-a-vis the advertised brands, leading to the purchase intention (Predrag Jovanović 2016). Depending on the content of the message transmitted by the advertisement, advertising appeal can be categorized into rational and emotional appeal. (Lee and O'Connor, 2003).

## **II. Review of the Literature**

Over decades, several studies on the effect of advertising appeals on consumer decision making and purchase intention have been carried out by market researchers and academicians, to determine the persuasive factor in advertising appeals. Amongst the academic researchers, there is a certain agreement that consumers remember more easily those advertising messages and advertisements that cause positive emotions and it is more likely that in their purchasing intent they will be more inclined to the related advertised product (Kazmi and Batra, 2009).

Kotler (1997) defined advertising appeal as the theme of an advertisement. He divided advertising appeals into rational and emotional appeals. Rational appeal is rationally oriented purchase, stimulated by directly

giving explanations of a product's advantages, and it focuses on the benefits consumers may enjoy. On the other hand, emotional appeal is the stimulation of consumers purchase intention by arousing positive or negative emotion. Positive emotional appeals are humour, love, happiness, sex, music, adventure, romance, emotional and sensitive words, while negative emotional appeals involve guilt, fear, violence, envy.

Some studies have found that rational appeals are particularly effective in high-involvement decision making, whereas emotional appeals work better in low-involvement situations. ( Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007)

In the paper written by Predrag Jovanović, Et al (2016), the authors explore the impact of the emotional and rational appeals on the purchase intention. The results of the empirical research, conducted among a group of young students found that the different advertising appeal have a different impact on the consumer's purchase intention. For the women students, the emotional appeal had a stronger impact, while for men the rational appeal worked better. Similarly, the 'fear appeal' or the negative emotional appeal was effective only till a certain point, after which it caused selective perception and rejection. The implication of the study on advertisers is to recognise that they can choose the type of appeal, combination of appeals and their creative presentation, based on the empirical confirmation of the efficiency the approach.

A study by Shaina Tehria (2016), to find out how effectively advertising influences the buying behaviour of consumers in Haryana shows that while majority of consumers are affected by advertising while taking their buying decisions, there is no association between gender and appeal.

Some studies have found that advertising messages using humour appeal are the ones that consumers remember most often out of all the advertising messages they are exposed to. Advertisers use the humour appeal primarily because it attracts the recipient's attention and keeps it during the time of the advertisement. (Belch and Belch, 2004).

In a study conducted by Nilesh Anute, Et al (2016) on consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products in Pune city, found that respondents in the age of group of 15-30 years were most likely to be cosmetic users. 65% respondents preferred domestic brand, and 60% preferred organic cosmetic product. Half of the respondents get to know cosmetic product through television, and spend around 1000-2000 Rs per month on cosmetic product and they purchase it from shopping mall.

Samar Fatima and Sabreen Lodhi (2015), studied the Impact of advertisement on buying behaviours of the consumers in Karachi City, found how the advertising appeals are helpful in creating the awareness and perception among the customers of cosmetic products, that influences the buying behaviours of the people.

### **III. Objectives of the Study**

- a) This paper aims to determine the effectiveness as well as limitations of different advertising appeals (rational and emotional) used for cosmetics brands and products, among consumers living in Delhi-NCR area.
- b) To understand the factors that affect the purchase decisions among different age groups of consumers.

c) To study the demographic profile of consumers of cosmetic products and examine their brand preference, if any.

#### IV. Research Design

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was collected from database sites and articles.

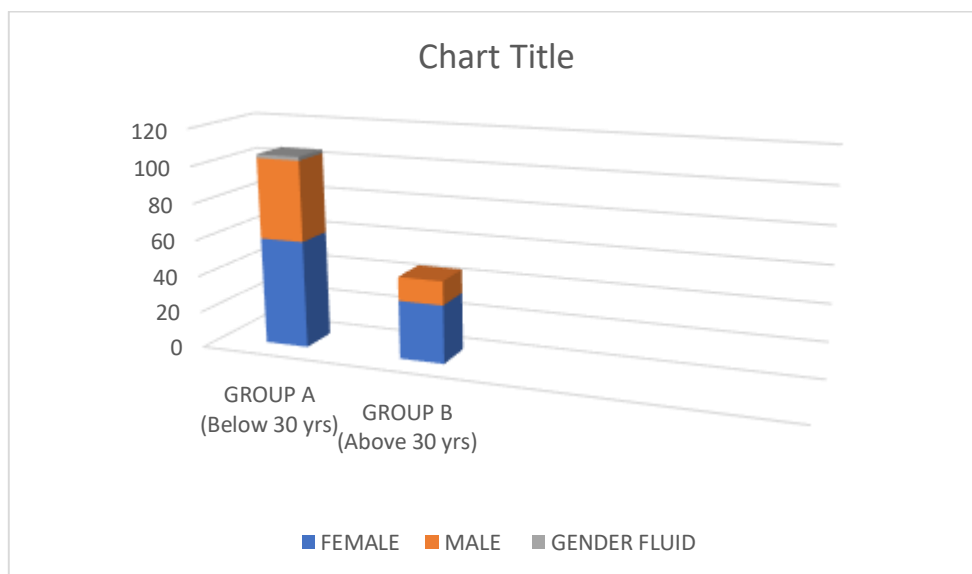
The primary data was collected in two stages.

At the first stage, an online survey was conducted among 150 respondents living in Delhi-NCR area, who regularly bought cosmetic products and were willing to participate in the survey. The group comprising men and women of different age groups participated in the survey held using convenient sampling method.

At the second stage, a total of 50 respondents were selected from the group, half below the age of thirty years and half above that age, for a Depth Interview (DI) to probe on decision making influences and other purchase related aspects that were derived from the survey. The DIs were conducted telephonically.

#### V. Discussion and Analysis

##### Demographic Details



Out of the 150 respondents, 60% were females, 38% males and 2% described themselves as gender fluid.

The analysis of survey revealed that 70% of the total respondents were below the age of thirty years (Group A), while 30% (Group B) were above thirty years of age.

In Group A, 56 % were females, 41.9% males and 1.90% described themselves as gender fluid. In Group B, 71 % were females, while 29% respondents were males.

Around 55% of the respondents in Group A were students of medicine, fashion design, management and media studies, while 45% were young professionals in academia and private sector. In Group B, most females were home makers or employed in schools, while males were either entrepreneurs, or working in the tertiary sector. The average annual income of the families in both the groups was around 15 lakh per annum.

### **Cosmetic Usage Practice**

Over all, a total of 84% respondents said that they use cosmetics on daily basis. More than half of the respondents (54%) used all the categories of cosmetics range given in the survey.

CATEGORIES OF COSMETICS	% age USERS
Face & Nail Makeup	57
Body Texturing	94
Fragrance	90
All the above	54

In the Group A most male respondents used fragrances and texturing lotions and 10% use face makeup. In group B, most men used fragrances only. In the DI some respondents described wearing cosmetics as a 'part of their persona'. They used phrases like 'feeling incomplete without putting it', 'it instills confidence' etc. These observations came from across genders in Group A. In group B, the male respondents referred to beauty products as 'body care products' and 'perfumes' avoiding the word beauty. Cosmetics, according to some of them was for women only.

### **Brand Choice**

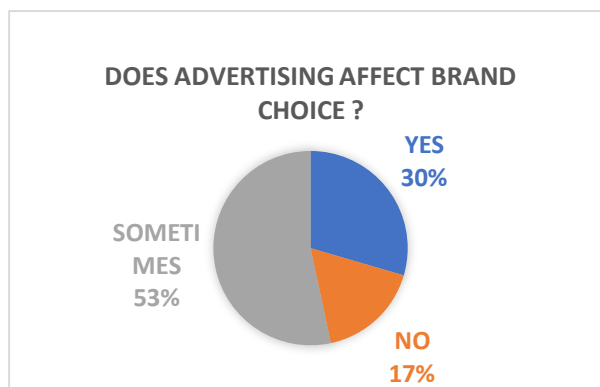
Top 10 Brands used by Respondents		
Face & Nail Makeup	Body Texturing	Fragrance
LAKME	NIVEA	ZARA
NYX	BIOTIQUE	PARK AVENUE
PLUM	LAKME	DKYN
MAYBELLINE	MAYBELLINE	CALVIN KLEIN
COLORBAR	BODYSHOP	FA DEO
FACES CANADA	KHADI	NINA RICCI
LOREAL	PONDS	ARMANI

BIOTIN	BIO OIL	TITAN SKINN
BODYSHOP	VASELINE	BURBERRY
NYAKA	PONDS	FOGG

According to the choices of the brands given in the survey, the above-mentioned brands featured as the most popular brands in the three categories of cosmetics mentioned in the survey. When asked whether advertising affects their brand choice, 29.5 % said a Yes, while 17 % said No and 53% said Sometimes.

### **Brand Advertising**

Almost all the respondents confirmed having seen different cosmetics brand advertising on mass media like television, radio, print, hoardings and internet. When asked to recall the advertisements of the cosmetics brand they use, 65% respondents from Group A, were able to do so, unaided. In the Group B only 31% respondents were able to recall but with some prompting.



While probing during DI some interesting insights were revealed; that across groups, respondents admitted that it was the quality of the brand or product that is the ultimate motivating factor for any brand purchase. The role of advertising was seen primarily in creating awareness by giving information about the brand, but for making the actual purchase the respondents relied on the actual brand experience, either of their own or of someone close to them. Female respondents in Group B emphasized the role of their peers, friends or some relatives. The male respondents in the same group identified other factors like pricing and brand value, as an important criterion for their decision to buy a brand. Further they recalled how TV and magazine advertising has been the most reliable source of information for cosmetics brands over time, making some cosmetic brands a household name due to their memorable advertising and celebrity endorsement.

### **Advertising Appeals and Decision-Making Process**

To understand how the advertising appeals, work on the purchase intention, three video clips on different brand were shared with the respondents and questions based on these visuals were asked.

- a) The first was a 60 second online promotional advertisement for a cosmetics range, using a fashion celebrity. It uses a positive emotional appeal and life story line around women’s daily routine in home and at work, while promoting an entire range of cosmetics prepares her to face these situations.
- b) The second was a 30 second TV commercial from the campaign series of one of the popular deodorant brands that uses humor and sex appeal to tell the story of a young brand user who is able to convert a negative situation to his advantage.

c) The third video was a beauty Influencer's promotional video that gives information on a cosmetics range, a recommended brand to choose and why it is the brand of her choice.

The overall response to all the three visuals was as follows:

In Group A, most of the female respondents found the online ad very relatable and appreciated the fresh approach to storytelling. 30% respondents in the same group said that they had seen the ad before and that they were familiar with the brand and the protagonist, who is a well-known online cosmetic influencer.

In the DI, the young respondents revealed that the beauty influencers who make online Vlogs and write blogs to review cosmetic products and brands, are very popular among the young consumers. Through these platforms the consumers engage with the influencers while chatting and receive well-researched information. These online platforms carry an emotional appeal with a rational presentation. The respondents used words like 'find myself', 'convincing and reassuring' to describe these. The respondents said that most of the times if convinced by these vlogs they had ordered the product online and found them satisfactory. Male respondents in the group also saw these vlogs. Group B respondents on the other hand were either not aware of these blogs or saw them as online programs – just like the ads – and sought to find out or discuss it with their friends or relatives whose opinion matters to them in buying cosmetic products.

Deodorant Ads based on sex appeal and humor had a good recall among the Group A respondents. All the respondents had seen it before. But overall, the group felt that ads based on sex appeal depict stereotypes and are not sensitive in their gender portrayal. The humor appeal is at best appreciated from the point of view of the craft but does not affect their purchase intention.

About the celebrity endorsement, most of the respondents were favorably inclined, and were able to recall celebrities and their brands. When asked if they would try out a new brand because of the celebrity, the answer was by and large in negative (60%) while 13% said they would. The attitude towards adopting a celebrity in advertising was more positive among the respondents in the group B. Most of the respondents said that film celebrities and cosmetics go together. The respondents in group A did not associate only film celebrities with glamour and cosmetics. There emerged a clear difference in the perception of the two groups. The presence of a celebrity in an advertisement does not make much perceptual change in the minds of the consumer as they consider it to an 'act' of endorsing. Presence of celebrity however created brand awareness and recall. Celebrities appearing on beauty vlogs or interviews where they talk about the brands that they use, helps in perception change, as reported by some young respondents in the DI.

## **VI. Conclusion**

This research was conducted to find out the influence of appeals used in cosmetic advertising to influence the purchase decision among the consumers. The study confirms that the advertising appeals are very useful in creating the awareness among the people, but they are often not able to build strong brand perceptions among the consumers. For that other factors like recommendation of the peers, friends, colleagues that is based on product experience, become important as they build strong brand perception. Another significant finding of the study was

the difference in the way young consumers below the age of thirty years, seek information, choose, decide and purchase cosmetic brands in India. In the post digital era, the younger generation seek global brands options, choose online information, engage with international vloggers and celebrity influencers that help build perceptions about brands that they choose to purchase. The cosmetic brand advertising needs to build innovative creative strategies through new media channels to be able to influence the consumer purchase decisions strongly.

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