

**IMPACT OF FEAR APPEAL IN ADVERTISEMENT ON
CONSUMER BUYING DECISION**

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ABSTRACT

Fear appeals are commonly used in many types of marketing communications, e.g., the marketing of products, services, social causes, and ideas. Also, they are frequently used to get people to help themselves, and generally are effective in increasing ad interest, involvement, recall, and persuasiveness. The literature conventionally agrees that more effective fear appeals result from a higher fear arousal followed by consequences and recommendations to reduce the negativity. However, fear appeals have impact on purchasing decision of customer.

The purpose of this research paper is to answer the following questions:-

- a) Impact of fear appeal in advertisement on consumer buying decision.*
- b) Impact of demographic factors i.e. gender, age, marital status and education on fear appeal effectiveness.*

To develop the conclusions descriptive research design is used. Primary data is collected with the help of questionnaire and data is analyzed with the help of various statistical techniques.

Conclusions of the paper help in identifying the impact of fear appeal used in advertisement on purchasing behavior of the customer.

Key Words: Fear Appeal, Advertisements, Consumer Buying Decision.

Introduction:

Advertisements is a form of communication that typically attempts to persuade potential customers to purchase or to consume more of a particular brand of product or service one element in corporate strategies to create, organize and where possible control markets, especially for mass produced consumer goods. Many advertisements are designed to generate increased consumption of those products and services through the creation and reinvention of the “brand image”. Every major medium is used to deliver these messages, including television, radio, cinema, magazines, newspapers, and video games, the Internet, carrier bags and billboards. Advertisements played a vital role in buying decision. Through advertisement, Consumers are come to know about the product, its uses, benefits, availability, and brand name of products. At the time of buying a product, they recall the advertisement and then they take their buying decision in many cases.

An appeal is the motive to which an ad is directed. Its purpose is to move the audience toward a goal set by the advertiser. Fear appeals are commonly used in many types of marketing communications, e.g., the marketing of products, services, social causes, and ideas. The basic message is “if you don’t do this (buy, vote, believe, support, learn, etc.), some particular dire consequences will occur” (Glascoff, 2000). That is, advertisers invoke fear by identifying the negative results of not using the product or the negative results of engaging in unsafe behavior.

Literature Review:

Fear appeal is pervasive in advertising and is used with increasing frequency. As advertisers seek out ways to break through clutter and draw attention to their messages, the use of fear appeal have been used as a communication technique.

Nabi, Roskos-Ewoldsen, and Carpentier (2008) stated that fear appeal should contain threat and efficacy information sufficient to both evoke fear and inform about adaptive behavioral responses.

Researchers like William (2007) believe that Fear appeals can be used successfully to increase advertising’s effect on consumer interest, recall, persuasiveness, and behavior change. The

bottom line of fear appeals is that they work; threatening information does motivate people to safer and recommended behavior.

Boster & Mongeau (1984) studied the relationship between age & fear appeal effectiveness & they analysed that fear appeals are more effective for older audiences. Perceived vulnerability to health and safety threats increases directly with age. Younger people generally feel that unintentional injury, death, and disease happen to elders or perhaps to other younger people

Objective:

The purpose of this research paper is to answer following questions:-

- a) Impact of fear appeal in advertisement on consumer buying decision.
- b) Impact of demographic factors i.e. gender, age, marital status and education on fear appeal effectiveness.

Research Methodology

(a) Research Design: - To have a better understanding about the issue descriptive research design was used to get the primary data with the help of close ended questionnaire.

(b) Sample Design: - 50 respondents were selected through convenience sampling.

(c) Analysis: - The data collected was analyzed with the help of various statistical tools like Chi-square test, ANOVA etc.

Analysis & Interpretations

1. 76% of the respondent belongs to the age group of 15-30 years of age, 12% from 30-45 years of age, 8% from 45-60 years of age and 4% from 60 & above years of age
2. 56% of the respondents were male & rests 44% of respondent were female
3. 4% of the respondents were 12th passed, 24% were graduate, 70% were post graduate & rests 2% of respondents have some other qualification
4. When asked about the relation between fear appeal & product purchase decision; 30% of the respondents accepted that they buy product seeing fear appeal in the advertisement and rests 70% do not purchase product due to fear appeal shown in the advertisement.
5. 38% of the respondents believes that advertisement containing fear appeal makes it more effective where 14% believes that it does not makes any effect and 48% respondents were neutral on this issue.

6. Four print advertisements containing fear appeal (Refer Appendix) were shown & respondents were asked to disclose their views. The results were as follow:-

| Response | Ad 1 | Ad 2 | Ad 3 | Ad 4 | Total | Percentage |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|------------|
| Fearing | 12 | 13 | 32 | 18 | 75 | 37.5% |
| Interesting | 23 | 20 | 5 | 19 | 67 | 33.5% |
| Really Nice | 13 | 13 | 9 | 8 | 43 | 21.5% |
| Unaffected / Bored | 2 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 15 | 7.5% |
| Total | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 200 | 100% |

Approximate equal numbers of customers have found the advertisements fearing & interesting i.e. 37.5% & 33.5% respectively followed by 21.5% respondents who found advertisements nice & very few respondents got unaffected.

7. Majority of Respondents (i.e. 78%) replied that they would purchase the product based on the advertisements & the fear appeal used in ads changed their purchase decision.

(c) Hypothesis Testing: -

H_{01} = There is no association between fear appeal used in advertisements and purchasing decision of consumer.

H_{11} = There is an association between fear appeal used in advertisements and purchasing decision of consumer.

| Fear Appeal Used in Advertisement Influenced You | Due to Fear Appeal Used in Advertisement You Purchased Product | | | |
|--|--|----------|---------|-------|
| | Agree | Disagree | Neutral | Total |
| Yes | 52 | 4 | 4 | 60 |
| No | 84 | 29 | 27 | 140 |
| Total | 136 | 33 | 31 | 200 |

Note : - Data is clubbed for all the 4 advertisements

| χ^2 test | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Calculated Value | Degree of Freedom | Level of Significance | Tabulated Value |
| 13.73 | 2 | 5% | 5.99 |

The analysis provides enough evidence to reject the null Hypothesis. In other words there is an association between fear appeal used in advertisements and purchasing decision of consume.

H_{02} = Degree of fear appeal advertisements' effectiveness will be the same irrespective of the gender of adolescents.

H_{12} = Degree of fear appeal advertisements' effectiveness will not be the same irrespective of the gender of adolescents.

| Gender | Degree of Effectiveness | | | Total |
|--------|-------------------------|---------------|---------|-------|
| | Effective | Not Effective | Neutral | |
| Male | 15 | 4 | 9 | 28 |
| Female | 4 | 3 | 15 | 22 |
| Total | 19 | 7 | 24 | 50 |

| χ^2 test | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Calculated Value | Degree of Freedom | Level of Significance | Tabulated Value |
| 7.398 | 2 | 5% | 5.99 |

The result of the study shows that the null-hypothesis holds to be invalid thus there is an association between fear appeal advertisements' effectiveness & gender of respondents.

H_{03} = Degree of fear appeal advertisements' effectiveness will be the same irrespective of the age of respondents.

H₁₃ = Degree of fear appeal advertisements' effectiveness will not be the same irrespective of the age of respondents.

| Age (In Years) | Degree of Effectiveness | | | Total |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---------|-------|
| | Effective | Not Effective | Neutral | |
| 15-30 | 15 | 5 | 18 | 38 |
| 30-45 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 6 |
| 45 – 60 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| 60 & above | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 19 | 7 | 24 | 50 |

| χ^2 test | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Calculated Value | Degree of Freedom | Level of Significance | Tabulated Value |
| 6.989 | 6 | 5% | 12.592 |

The analysis supports the null-hypothesis that Degree of fear appeal advertisements' effectiveness will be the same irrespective of the age of respondents.

H₀₄ = Degree of fear appeal advertisements' effectiveness will be the same irrespective of the education of respondents.

H₁₄ = Degree of fear appeal advertisements' effectiveness will not be the same irrespective of the education of respondents.

| Age (In Years) | Degree of Effectiveness | | | Total |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---------|-------|
| | Effective | Not Effective | Neutral | |
| 12 th | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Graduation | 4 | 3 | 5 | 12 |
| Post Graduation | 15 | 3 | 17 | 35 |
| Others | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 19 | 7 | 24 | 50 |

| χ^2 test | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Calculated Value | Degree of Freedom | Level of Significance | Tabulated Value |
| 5.859 | 6 | 5% | 12.592 |

The analysis provides enough evidence to accept the null Hypothesis. In other words Degree of fear appeal advertisements' effectiveness will be the same irrespective of the education of respondents.

Conclusions:

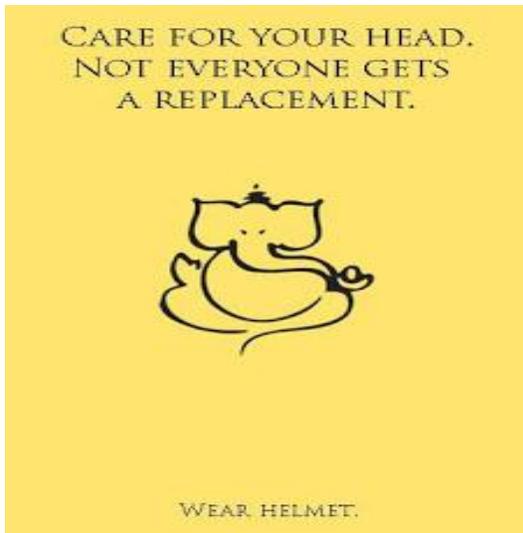
It is a big question in market that how the fear appeal used in advertisements, is perceived by customers. In the same line this research was conducted and following conclusions were drawn:-

1. Fear appeal used in advertisements motivated the respondents to purchase the product as well as many times fear appeal changed their buying decision.
2. Fear appeal not only makes the advertisements fearful, but it also makes it interesting & creative.
3. Gender & Education of respondents' significantly affect the effectiveness of fear appeal used in advertisements, but the respondents of all age groups found the fear appeal advertisements equally effective.

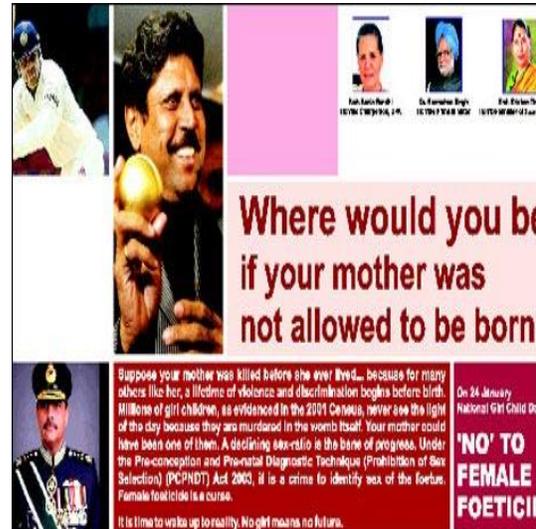
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Appendix:



Advertisement 1



Advertisement 2



Advertisement 3



Advertisement 4