A Study on the Impact of Television Advertisements on the Buying Behaviour of Emerging Adults in India

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Abstract: The main challenge faced by the marketers and advertisers is regarding the calculation of return of investment on the marketing investments in earned media. In an emerging market like India where the emerging adults is also consumers and influential element in purchase decision, the scenario is more and more challenging as well as throws light on higher potential. Especially in television advertising the return of investment is better understood in terms of communication effectiveness and sales effectiveness. There are various factors that affect the effectiveness. The research study is to understand the antecedents to response to television advertising. Any audience watching television programs are interfered or interrupted by the advertisements. The gap in literature is on the identification of the most significant antecedents to the consumer's "perception of advertisement interference" or commercial breaks. As per the study the independent variables termed as viewer program variables" are "cognitive and emotional involvement of consumers during the television program", "viewers motive of watching television program" and "connectedness of television program". This study helps the advertisers and marketers to understand the different types of consumer's reactions and the effective way to communicate to the consumers amidst the clutter of advertisement they see during the commercial break of television program. The study was conducted by surveying 300 samples using a detailed questionnaire. The samples were selected from different cities in South India.

Key words: Communication, effectiveness, sales, advertisements, consumers, audience

INTRODUCTION

In Indian context, the popular television channels like STAR PLUS, Life OK, SONY, Colors, Zee TV, etc. and regional channels also follow the same pattern of the commercial breaks during their prime time. The programs taken for the study are the Hindi as well as the regional soaps that have got popularity amongst the Indian viewers. A scientific study on emerging adults in South Indian market is required to understand how commercial break works on viewers while watching their favourite television program rather that conducting a study on a single advertisement and measuring its response. The significance of such former research study looses when it gets aired among the clutters during their favourite television program and when the viewer environment variables are not considered.

The drawback in all research on advertising and consumer research is the less consideration of identification of real environmental or television program variables study wherein consumer's exposure to advertising happens. In fact, it is an underlying fact that consumers do not watch television to see advertisements, instead advertisements happen during their television viewing as interference in their "program-viewer environment". This interference into viewer's environment and its impact has to be studied in detail to understand the effectives of any particular advertisement that we intend to test. The media and advertisers usually goes with the program rating by which it gives them a scale to identify the popular programs to advertise their brands. As mentioned above all popular programs may not be always an effective carrier in advertising your brand. Popular programs may continue to be popular amongst viewers but that need not be an effective carrier of your advertisement creating an impact in converting viewers to consumers. The research determines to study on the impact of the program-viewer' variables on the dependent variable namely response to advertisements when mediated by the variable perceived interference of advertisements.

An effective advertisement works only if the program-viewers environment is favorable. What happens if the commercial break is perceived as interference or

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intrusive during the television program? Hence, we need to consider the significant role of commercial break and the perception of it in measuring the response. As we know that a commercial break is a sequential order of advertisements that happens during the television program where the viewers perceive it as an intrusion, obstruction or with a welcoming perception. It can be also take the state of a neutral perception and the viewers shuts off cognitively during the breaks. Commercial break in the real environment are advertisements containing a mixture of different appeals, mood and content with duration of 2 min (120 sec) in between the television program.

Normally each advertisement is about 10 sec and around 12 ads get aired in a 2 min commercial slot. This 120 sec interference of the advertisements affects the perception of the consumers on the interference of ad that in turn has got an effect on the overall response to the advertisement interference. This research study further throws light on another research to determine when perceived ad interference can be a disturbance or a noise. The research is conducted both as an descriptive and experimental method to study the influence of perception of advertisement interferences on viewer environment variables and response to advertisement interferences. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS and WarPLS is used for the analysis.

Number of people viewing a program and the statistics related to it may give only idea to identify the opportunities in advertising in that channel. To exploit the opportunities in the media the advertisers should understand when where and how to advertise in a popular television program that can help in reducing the wastage in advertisement. The different genre of programs has got its own share of viewers. In west the reality television programs dominate most of the television programs.

A scientific study is required to understand how commercial break works on viewers while watching their favourite Television program rather that conducting a study on a single advertisement and measuring its response which is exactly different when it gets aired among the clutters during their favourite television program

The gap in all research on advertising and consumer research is the identification of real environmental study in which consumers are exposed to advertising. In fact, it is an underlying fact that consumers do not watch television to see advertisements, instead advertisements happen during their television viewing as interference in their "program-viewer environment". This interference into viewer's environment and its impact has to be studied in detail to understand the effectives of any particular advertisement that we intend to test. The media and advertisers usually goes with the TAM/TRP or BARC rating by which it gives them a scale to identify the popular programs to advertise their brands. Popular programs may not be always an effective carrier in advertising your brand. Popular programs may continue to be popular amongst viewers but that need not be an effective carrier of your advertisement creating an impact in converting viewers to consumers. The research determines to study on the impact of the program-viewer' variables on the dependent variable namely response to advertisements when mediated by the variable perceived interference of advertisements.

Most of the advertising research is done by testing the single advertisement on viewer's. Here, the study proposes the actual response to it can be studied only if the advertisement is tested in a program-viewer environment by which we can reduce the exaggerated results and can understand actually how the advertisement works to bring about an impact in actual environment. An effective advertisement works only if the program-viewers environment is favorable. What happens if the commercial break is perceived as interference/intrusive during the television program? Hence, we need to consider the significant role of commercial break and the perception of it in measuring the response. A commercial break is a sequential order of advertisements that happens during the television program where in the viewers perceives as intrusion, obstruction or with a welcoming or neutral manner. Commercial break in the real environment are advertisements containing a mixture of different appeals, mood and content with duration of 2 min (120 sec) in between the television program.

If we consider each advertisement is about 10 sec around 12 ads get aired in 2 min commercial slot. In this 120 sec interference of the advertisements effects the perception of the consumers on the interference of Ad that in turn has got an effect on the overall response to the advertisement interference. This research study further throws light on another research to determine when Perceived Ad interference can be a disturbance or a noise

As per real time environment total advertisement or commercial break is 12 min in a 30 min soap these commercial breaks are inserted between the television programs. One commercial break (advertisement (s) interference) as mentioned below is a group of

advertisement played in sequential order. A usual commercial break is of 2 min that interferes 6 times averagely a viewer or consumer who watches their favorite or popular television program. These interferences have got significant influence on their consumer's response to advertisement (s). Hence, a popular television program will have 6 commercial breaks with 72 advertisements in a normal case.

Broach *et al.* (1995) in their findings titled, "Television Programming and its Influence on Viewer's Perceptions of Commercials: the Role of Program Arousal and Pleasantness", investigated the influence of television programs on viewer's perceptions of television commercials. The determinants of the study were program arousal and program pleasantness that were examined as potentially important determinants of viewer's emotional responses to advertising. The findings of the study is that an assimilation effect occurred in the high arousal condition and a contrast effect occurred in the low arousal condition.

Pelsmacker *et al.* (2002) tested humorous, warm and rational television and print advertisements on the impact of ad style/context style congruency and context appreciation on the attitude toward the ad and recall was studied. The perception of low involvement persons while watching ads when embedded in a congruent context is clearer and more likable. High involvement persons perceived ads embedded in a contrasting context as having a higher likeability and clarity. Ads shown in a highly appreciated television or print context resulted in a more positive attitude toward the ad. As opposed to a print environment in a television context, ad content and brand recall were positively influenced by a positively appreciated context.

The selection processing model of television advertisement is studied by Schumann and Thorson (1990), "the influence of viewing context on commercial effectiveness: a selection processing model"; the model details of how television programs can affect consumer responses to commercials. The selection-processing model distinguishes two kinds of response variables: selecting to view and processing activities once selection has occurred. It presents a series of viewer states and offers predictions as to when and in what manner the impact of commercial messages is likely to be influenced by the program in which a commercial.

Alexander (1985) and Babrow (1987) in their respective research studies has attempted to investigate the viwer's motives of watching soap opera.

Emerging adults spend more time using the media than they spend doing any other activity with the most time being spent on the internet and listening to music. We also find that exposure to certain types of media content can influence both positive and negative outcomes in emerging adulthood including, aggressive and prosocial behavior, body image, sexual behavior, friendship quality and academic achievement. We also show that emerging adults use the media to gratify certain needs; key among these are for autonomy, identity and intimacy needs.

Relations between gratifications sought and obtained: a study of television news by Philip Palmgreen, Lawrence. Wenner Rayburn in 1980 investigates the relationship between Gratifications Sought (GS) from television news and Gratifications Obtained (GO) from network evening news programs

In Indian context, the popular television channels like STAR PLUS, Life OK, SONY, Colors, Zee TV, etc., follow the same pattern of the commercial breaks during their prime time. The study was conducted amongst the viewers who watch television programs. The programs taken for the study are the Hindi and regional soaps that have got popularity amongst the Indian viewers. The basic assumption of being interrupted during a television program can also effect

Objective:
- To establish the structural relationship between the antecedents of perception of advertisement's interference and response to advertisements
- To understand the effect of the variable "perception of ad interference" on "response to advertisements interferences among emerging adults
- To study how "viewer program variables" affect "response to advertisement interferences"

The research study investigates the relationship and the strength of the relationship between the program- viewer environment variables and the dependent variable namely response to advertisement interferences. The program-viewer environment variables consists of the independent variables namely consumer's motives of watching the television program, cognitive and emotional involvement of consumers during the television program and connectedness of television program. The study finds the effect of the mediating variable perceived advertisement interferences on the relationship between independent variable and dependent variable.

Consumer's motives of watching the television program studies the objective of every television viewer in watching a television program. Most of the television program has redefined the objective of the viewer in watching the programs in it. As per the study the influence of interferences of advertisement on the

viewers/consumer's motives of watching a television program should be studied to understand their responses to interferences of advertisements or commercial break. The study also investigates the intensity of the impact of advertisement interferences can bring about while a viewer is interrupted in fulfilling the motive of watching his favourite program advertisement and in turn how do it affect their responses to the advertisement interferences.

The motives of viewer's watching reality shows were studied by Papacharissi and Mendelson (2007). The study found that habitual pass time and reality entertainment are the motives of viewers that motivated them to watch such shows. The scales used for measuring the variable consumer's motives of watching a television program was prepared from the former mentioned study conducted by Papacharissi and Mendelson in their study titled, "A Exploratory Study of Reality Appeal: Uses and Gratifications of Reality Tv Shows Published in Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media in 2007" and another study titled, "Audience Activity and Reality Television: Identification, Online Activity and Satisfaction" by Godlewski and Perse (2010). In 1983 according to Rubin, the nine reoccurring television motives such as relaxation, companionship, entertainment, social interaction, information, habit, pass time, arousal and escape was identified as an additional motives namely parasocial interaction for news watching and surveillance and voyeurism for certain program types.

Cognitive and emotional involvement of consumers during the television program: The key objective of every message content in the television is to engage the viewers in the activity of involvement both cognitively and emotionally (Godlewski and Perse, 2010). Hence, the involvement of viewers has to be considered to know their response to commercial breaks. The cognitive involvement defines the usage of knowledge they perceive while watching the television program to relate with their own personal experiences or ideas they knew before. The audience/viewer tries to interpret the content/situation of the program during their viewing and the evaluation of their interpretation of the program content also happens during their reception named as elaboration (Rubin and Perse, 1987). In every television program the viewer's are engaged in the involvement activity but the intensity of the involvement depends upon how much he is connected to the content and degree to which he interacts psychologically with the content. In the journal "How advertising works? What do we really know? the researchers proposes that the advertising effects should be studied in a space with affect, cognition and experience as three dimensions.
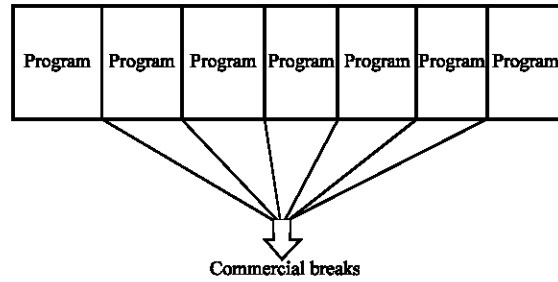

Fig. 1: Network evening news program

As mentioned in the Fig. 1, this involvement happens continuously during the viewing of the television program. The study investigates the degree to which an audience perceives and responds to interruptions in the form of commercial breaks; at frequent intervals during their involvement process. Emotional involvement defines the range of emotions the audience perceives after viewing the program.

Connectedness of television program: Television program and the characters or participants in it should be able to connect with the viewers throughout. Television characters has got the power to appear for the viewers as fictional characters despite of the fictional element in it. The degree and type of connection the consumers develop with program and (or) characters also determines their responses to commercial breaks. Connectedness is the level of intensity of relationship (s) that a viewer develops with the characters and contextual settings of a program in the parasocial television environment (Russell *et al.*, 2004). In the research study the scales administered for the measuring the variables are used with situational and contextual changes originally developed by Russell *et al.* (2004).

Perceived advertisements interferences: The intrusiveness of television advertisements or commercial breaks during an exciting scene that happens in a television program are always the common complaints of viewers. This negative feeling is a perception that develops when advertisement interfere into the viewer-program environmental variables. In fact this feeling of intrusion drives the response of a consumer towards advertisements unfavourably for the advertisers. Hence, the marketers, advertisers should carefully understand the significance of the perception of advertisements interferences during their consumer's involvement, connectedness etc that get affected during
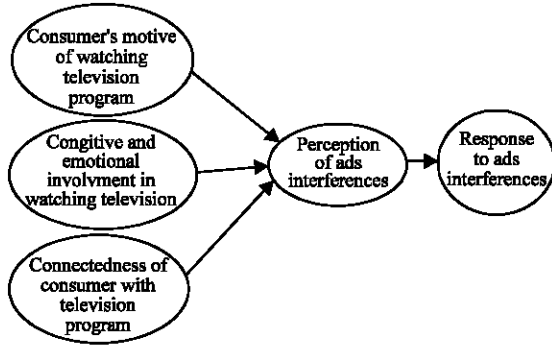
Fig. 2: Theoretical framework

their television viewing even when the motives of watching a television program gets disturbed it can also adversely affect their perception towards advertisements interference. For the study in measuring the actual perception of interference of advertisements the new scales has been developed and it has been also taken from the research study titled, "Measuring the Intrusiveness of Advertisements: Scale Development and Validation" by Li *et al.* (2002) published in Journal of advertising, 39(2). The Perceived Ad Interference is considered to be a critical variable determining the response to advertisement (s).

Response to advertisement interferences: The response to advertisements can be of basically two types. The one could be positive and other negative. The positive response could be any favourable response towards the objective of advertisements like; attitude towards the advertisements, attitude towards the product or brand Purchase Intention, Re-purchase Intention, Recall of the advertise during the purchase. The negative can be; Cognitive Avoidance, Behavioural Avoidance, Mechanical Avoidance of advertisements (Li *et al.*, 2002). The research has made maximum effort to understand the responses of viewers towards advertisement interferences due to the perception they develop during the viewing of the television program (Fig. 2).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was conducted using questionnaire survey to collect empirical data amongst certain cities of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The sample size is 437. Apart from the few questions incorporated; majority of the questions were used based on the literature. The respondents were asked to mark their response via. 5 point likert scale from strong disagree to strongly

agree. The questionnaire was administered to respondents through online as well directly. The viewers motive of watching television program contains 31 questions, cognitive and emotional involvement of consumers with television program contains 24 questions and connectedness of consumers with television program contains 16 questions. The variables perceived advertisement interference and response to advertisement interference contain 16 questions each.

Hypothesis:
- H_1: consumer motive has impact on perception of Ads interference
- H_2: cognitive and emotional involvement has impact on perception of ads interference
- H_3: connectedness to TV program has no impact on perception of ads interferences
- H_4: perception of ads interferences has no impact on response to ads interferences

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall structural equation model was tested using AMOS. The theoretical model of the research study is being tested using amos. Perceived ad interference has got significant influence on the consumer's response to advertisement interference. At the same time "connectedness of viewers with television program" and cognitive and emotional involvement of consumers with television program" has got significant influence on perceived kd interference. The motive of viewer watching television program has got insignificant influence on their perceived ad interference.

Testing of hypothesis
Structural equation modelling: The observed, endogenous variables were:

- Perception of ads interferences
- Response to ads interferences

The observed, exogenous variables were:

- Consumer's motive of watching television
- Cognitive and emotional involvement
- Connectedness of television program

The unobserved, exogenous variables were:

- e1 (Error term for perception of ads interferences)
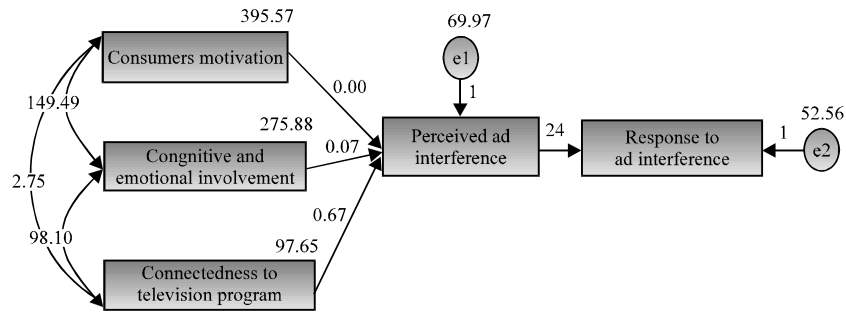- e2 (error term for response to ads interferences)

Fig. 3: Sem path analysis

Variable counts (Group number 1):
- Number of variables in model: 7
- Number of observed variables: 5
- Number of unobserved variables: 2
- Number of exogenous variables: 5
- Number of endogenous variables: 2

SEM analysis:
- $H_{01.1}$: consumer motive has impact on perception of ads interferences

Analysis: It can be seen from Table 1 that the coefficient of consumer motive being 0.004 represents the impact on perception of ads interferences, holding other variables as constant. The p-value is significant at 0.1% level and therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted (Fig. 3).

Discussion: The positive coefficient implies that for every 0.004 unit-increase in consumer motive, there will be 1 unit-increase in perception of ads interferences. Therefore, consumer motive has impact on perception of ads interferences:

- $H_{01.2}$: cognitive and emotional involvement has impact on perception of ads interferences

Analysis: It can be seen from Table 1, that the coefficient of cognitive and emotional involvement being 0.068 represent the impact on perception of ads interferences, holding other variables as constant. The p-value is significant at 0.1% level and therefore the null hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion: The positive coefficient implies that for every 0.068 unit-increase in cognitive and emotional Involvement, there will be 1 unit-increase in perception of ads interferences. Therefore, cognitive and emotional involvement has no impact on perception of ads interferences:

Table 1: Sem path analysis

Path	UC	SC	p-values
Perception of ads interferences<---			
Consumers motive	0.004	0.024	0.856
Perception of ads interferences <---			
Cognitive and emotional involvement	0.068	0.037	0.063
Perception of ads interferences<---			
Connectedness to television program	0.169	0.056	***
Response to ads interferences<---			
Perception of ads interferences	0.239	0.031	***

***p-values are low and insginficant

- $H_{01.3}$: connectedness to television program has no impact on perception of ads interferences

Analysis: It can be seen from Table 1, that the coefficient of connectedness to television program being 0.169 represents the impact on perception of ads interferences, holding other variables as constant. The p value is insignificant at 0.1% level and therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion: The positive coefficient implies that for every 0.169 unit-increase in connectedness to television program, there will be 1 unit-increase in perception of ads interferences. Therefore, connectedness to television program has impact on perception of ads interferences:

- $H_{02.1}$: perception of ads interferences has no impact on response to ads interferences

Analysis: It can be seen from Table 1, that the coefficient of perception of ads interference 0.239 represents the impact on response to ads interferences, holding other variables as constant. The p-value is insignificant at 0.1% level and therefore the null hypothesis is rejecte.

Discussion: The positive coefficient implies that for every 0.239 unit-increase in perception of ads interferences, there will be 1 unit-increase in response to ads interferences. Therefore, perception of ads interferences has impact on response to ads interferences.

Table 2: Major model fit indices summary

Parameters	Acceptable values for good fit	Research model values
GFI	>0.90	0.950
AGFI	>0.90	0.972
CFI	>0.90	0.919
RMSEA	<0.06	0.020
RMR	<0.10	0.083

Primary Data, SPSS AMOS output (Haier *et al.*, 2009; Hooper *et al.*, 2008; Steiger, 2007; Hu and Bentler, 1999)

Model fit indices summary: The important fit indices are presented in Table 2. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) value was 0.950, Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) value was 0.972 and Comparative Fit index (CFI) value was 0.919. All these values were (>0.9) indicating a very good fit. It was found that Root Mean Score Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value was 0.02 (<0.06) and Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) value was 0.083 (<0.1).

Discussion: Good fit exists for research model.

CONCLUSION

Since, the perception of ad interference has got major influence on the response to interferences of advertisement the advertisers, marketers, media planners and experts in television broadcasting has to rethink on the ways to develop positive perception of advertisement interference to achieve maximum impact from the advertisements aired. The significant influence of a viewer's involvement and connectedness while watching a television program has to be considered in designing a commercial break. A pre-understanding of these variables helps to design a program effective in converting viewers to consumers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research helps us to understand the influence of viewer-program variables influence on response of consumers towards the advertisements interferences while watching television program. The study examines the degree at which the viewer environment variables influence the perception towards commercial breaks or advertisement interferences. The agencies and the marketers should conduct advertising research by incorporating the new advertisement in between a popular program and accordingly measure the responses before airing. A real viewer environmental research in advertising

has to be carried to understand the effectiveness of advertisements amongst the clutter of advertisements. Television ratings alone cannot be judged as the criteria to reach in consumer you intend to reach. There is huge wastage of exposure happening due to improper understanding or lack of consideration of the viewer-program variables. The future research is to understand at what critical point a commercial break translates as noise in the marketing communications.

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