

Effectiveness Of Global Advertisements On Indian Culture

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INTRODUCTION

The World is becoming a common market place in which people, no matter where they live, desire the same products and life style was an idea propounded by Levitt in 1983. This led to the thought of transforming the world into a homo cultural market place. It is presumed that customers can be persuaded by the same advertising appeals and value irrespective of the culture they belong to. Brand and brand image could be standardized without any problem across countries. This could lead to significant saving in producing advertisements. According to Dahl (2005), it could also lead to saving of time and money with respect to cost of design. Most multinational companies feel that international brands should create a global image. By purchasing it, they will receive the same benefits whether it be life style, status, convenience or financial. Global consumer culture positioning (GCP) through a recognized set of symbols can enhance meaningful advertisement (Alden et. al, 1999). Standardized advertisement based on multi- cultural segment can be implemented (Gram 2007). Global advertisement in the world is particularly found in Luxury products, cosmetics, perfumes, and watches (Belche and Belche, 1998).

For the last two decades, most multinational companies have been concerned whether international brands should create a global image or tailor the image to relate to local culture (Mai, 2005). Consumers from different cultures may vary in the evaluation of brand (Monga and Deborah, 2007). It is a known fact that East Asian societies are characterized by holistic thinking and Western societies are characterized by analytical thinking (Nisbett et. al, 2001). Holistic thinking involves the context as a whole and analytical thinking involves detachment of the object from its context and focuses on attributes of the object. The researcher suggests that these styles of thinking do influence the way in which a consumer behaves. Hans and Schmitt (1997) suggest that US consumers place more emphasis on brand extension fit than do consumers from Hong Kong who rely on corporate reputation. According to Nisbett et al. (2001), social differences between cultures are viewed as promoting certain cognitive processes. East Asian Societies have higher social relations as compared to their Western counterparts. Eastern people often perceive stronger relationship between objects than westerners as studied by Ji et. al., (2000).

The cultured differences in style of thinking may influence the way advertising is interpreted across cultures. Analytical thinking focuses on attributes and categories to draw inferences and make judgments.

Holistic people rely more on relationships. Today, cultural values are changing, especially among younger people (Zhang and Shavitts, 2003). Advertising still does not fully understand how the first and second generation will respond to targeted versus main stream advertising message (Muller, 2008). In fact, there is a significant relationship between mass media exposure, cultural values and attitude towards advertising (Seung-Jue and Nelson 2008). Cultural influences play a role in shaping consumers' perceptions and response towards the advertisement. (Teng & Laroche, 2006)

All customers, if persuaded by the same advertising, could lead to huge savings in the production of advertisements (Dahl, 2005). *There may be global products but there are no global people. There may be global brands but there is no global motivation for buying these brands (Mooij, 1998).*

Role of cultural values in advertising has long been debated in marketing and advertising literatures. It has been acknowledged that cultural values are at core of an advertising message (Albers-Millers and Gelb1996). In this article, the researcher analyses whether cultural differences in global advertising response can arise due to cultural, gender, educational and religious differences. Consumer response to international advertisement is a major research topic in the international advertising literature reflecting the continued curiosity about different cultures to various types of appeals in the international advertising (Zou, 2005).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Number of factors play an important role in consumer decision. The researcher argues that cultural differences on acceptance of brand acceptance of extension were observed except when there is a high fit extension (Monga and Deborah, 2007). Culture does play a role in perception of an advertisement. This was endorsed by another

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study on mobile advertising. Khanh and Hau (2007) report the consumer preference for Vietnamese culture on acceptance of advertising. It may be due to collectivistic or individualistic culture. Study of Zheng and Gelb (1996) found that Chinese consumers responded more favorably to collectivistic than an individualistic appeal. *Therefore, studying the collectivistic or individualistic effect towards global advertisement in India-an emerging market will be an interesting area of research.*

A consumer perceives some benefits in life style status put, convenience due to an advertisement campaign. However, it may differ due to cultural differences. *According to Payne (2004), the original advertisement campaign will be defunct due to these cultural differences.* It is due to people who are exposed to the same products and marketing communication that such campaigns do not become homogenized (Gram, 2007).

There are many studies on advertising appeals with respect to cultural perspective. The summary of these studies which was taken up for study is given in Table I.

Table 1: Advertising Appeals From a Cultural Perspective

Author	Year	Advertising Appeals For cultural perspective measurement
Hofsted	1980	Study based on four dimensions: Individualism vs. collectivism, high versus low power distance, high versus low uncertainty avoidance and masculinity vs. femininity.
Wells et. al	1992	Study based on security, esteem, fear, sex and sensory pleasure .
Zandpaur et. al	1994	He added time dimension to Hofsted model.
Albers- Miller and Gelb	1996	Study based on the extension of a list of 42 advertising appeals based on Pollay's recommendation (1983).
Milner and Collin	2000	Established a link between feminine- masculine values of a country and portrayal of gender role in advertising.
Dahl	2005	Study based on three categories -sociological, ethnological and cross cultural psychology inspired research.
Khanh and Hall	2007	Considered Eight factors for the study.

Considering previous studies, a large number of researchers have focused on the appeals used in advertisements across different cultures to study their effect. Advertising appeals can either be rational or emotional. According to Lin (2001), Asian advertisements often contain less information than do their western counterparts due to cultural factors. Asians tend to buy products according to their feeling and moods rather than rationality (Khanh & Hau 2007). *Therefore, will global advertisements have the same appeal across the globe? Impact will differ depending upon the culture, regional variance within the national culture, gender and religion etc. of the customer.* It should study different cultural dimensions which can be *individualism* (Independence, destiny, freedom), *collectivism* (Family, community, affiliation) *Power distance high* (Status, health, sex, ornamental) *Power distance low* (Submissive, moral, nurture, humility), *uncertainty avoidance high* (Safety, neat, risk aversion) *uncertainty avoidance low* (risk prone, casual, adventure, youth) *masculinity* (achievement, effect, durables convenient self-respect), and *feminist* (quality of life, relax, enjoy frail natural). The above dimensions were suggested by Khanh and Hau (2007) for studying cultural factors.

Kim et.al (2002) argues that customer values get influenced by product attributes and consumption behavior and they consider customer values as an output of culture. Advertisement can influence customer perception. *Due to cultural difference, the perception may differ.* Little attention has been focused on the Indian culture and their perception to global advertisement. *Therefore, this study can be helpful to global brands, especially when India is one of the top emerging markets.*

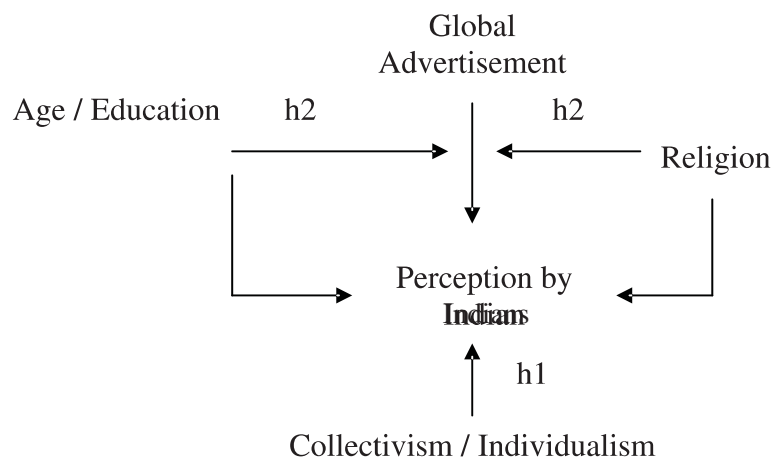
India is a country of diverse culture. Consumers due to different cultures may vary in their response to an advertisement. In this article, we explore whether cultural differences can have a bearing upon a global advertisement response. This difference could be due to education, income, religion, age and collectivistic/individualistic attitude etc. The perception about global advertisement can get affected due to the above mentioned factors. Religion may

affect the acceptance of a global advertisement. A Muslim may have different perception as compared to a Christian or Hindu. Even within Muslims, the perception may vary depending up on their faith and sect. Bohra Muslim behavior may be different from Shia or Sunni faith (Parameshwaran and Srivastava, 2008).

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF HYPOTHESIS

According to Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996), advertising appeal perception could vary due to individualistic/collectivism dimension. The study found more support for individualism content in USA as compared to the Eastern part of world. Tai (2004) found that use of information strategies was more frequent in the USA than in Hong Kong. *Is it due to education level or income level?* How eastern & western cultures could affect the perception of Advertisement appeals was reported in studies by Ji and McNeal (2001) and Lin (2001). According to the study of Khanh and Hau (2007), older groups of people prefer a rational approach to an emotional approach in Vietnam. *How Indian culture will behave to a global advertisement?* In view of higher GDP, globalization, exposure to global media, massive television coverage, *how is the perception changing among Indians?* Perception of global advertisement could be affected by age, education, religion, income and collectivism or individualism cultural behavior. These could be the dependent variables in determining the global advertisement effectiveness as mentioned in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1: Perception of Global Advertisements By Indians



Education does play a role in buying behavior (Srivastava, 2009). Younger people do tend to get influenced faster as compared to older age group people.

An advertiser can achieve positive consumer response by developing advertisements with culturally congruent appeals. Such advertisements carry messages that endorse and reinforce cultural values in the headline body copy and in illustration.

This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1 : In individualistic culture, the culturally congruent individualistic appeals will generate more favorable perception; the same holds true for collectivistic culture.

H2 : Age, Education, and Religion could affect the perception towards advertisement & brand preference.

Culture and religiosity are an integral part of life in India (Parameshwaran and Srivastava, 2008). India is a country with diverse culture, diverse education levels, income levels and different religions. It is country which stands for unity in diversity. Cultural factors may affect advertising perceptions with respect to choice of advertising theme, media selection, words, symbols, and pictorial interpretation (Razzouk, et. al., 2003). Education and age do play a role in decision making and perception (Srivastava, 2009).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher's approach to study the response to global advertisements with respect to cultural differences is based on the concept of divergence because of the culture differences prevailing in India. In order to test the hypothesis, this study adopted consumer perception approach to global advertisements. The present study incorporates only individualism and collectivism as a cultural factor for study compared to eight factors taken by

Khanh and Hue (2007). Demographic profile was never considered earlier. It was incorporated in the present study. Questionnaire was successfully employed in doing research on culture by Zhanng and Gelb (1996) and Khan and Hua (2007). Therefore, the quantitative approach has been used in which data was collected through a questionnaire survey.

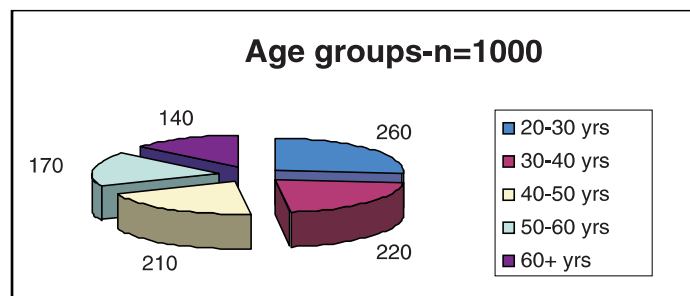
RESEARCH DESIGN

It was both exploratory and descriptive researches. Initial pilot study was done using 50 consumers. This helped to correct the questionnaire and religion was added as another factor. The survey method was based on questionnaire approach as mentioned above. Respondents feel comfortable with this approach. The research involved 25 MBA students selected from 3 divisions and took 4 months to complete. Global advertisement of FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) product like Vicks, Cold spice, Sony, Pentium and Nokia were taken up for the study. They have a strong brand presence in the SARC countries including India and follow the global advertisement policy. A folder of these advertisements was made and shown to the respondents before giving them the questionnaire. This was an aided recall study.

SAMPLE SIZE

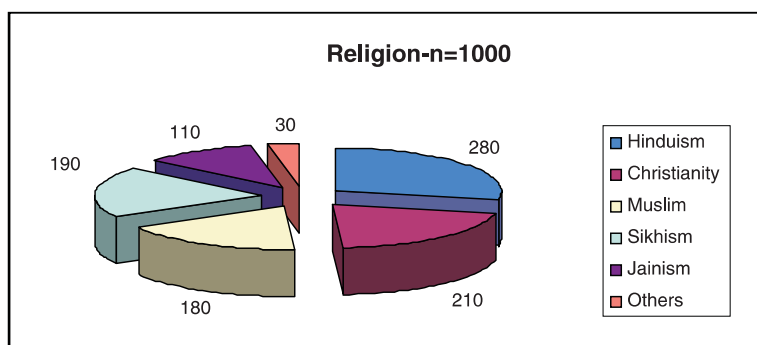
The sample size comprises of 1000 respondents. The filled up questionnaires of 131 respondent were rejected due to incomplete information. The distribution of the sample size is given in Figure IIa.

Figure II-a: Age Profile



48% of the respondents were in the age group upto 40 years. 28% were in the age group up to 30 years. 69% were in the age group of upto 50 years. This is (more or less) in conformity with Indian population (<http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profile/India>). The study was conducted in Mumbai –the financial capital of India. Mumbai was selected as the place of study due to its representative nature. Mumbai is a melting pot for diverse cultures. People having different religious faiths, languages and cultures stay in Mumbai. It was also convenient to control the research process. Mumbai also contributes 60% of the financial transaction globally for India. The respondents' religion is given in Figure IIb.

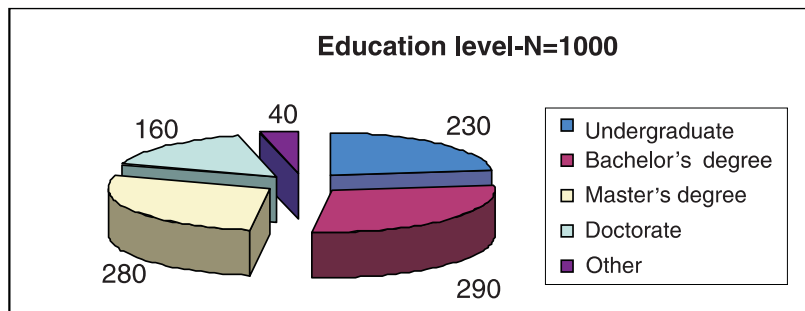
Figure II-b: Religious Profile



Religion does play an important role in the perception of the consumer. The thinking process may be different and their perception may be different. Infact, earlier studies do mention that religiosity can play a role in consumer perception (Parameshwaran and Srivastava, 2008). Majority of the respondents (68%) were Hindu or practiced related religions like Jainism, Sikhism. 11% were Christians and 18% were Muslims. As per the Indian population,

Muslims are around 15% and Christians are 3%. The sample for the study does not conform exactly to the Indian population distribution pattern but in terms of numbers, majority of the respondents who participated in the study were Hindu followed by Muslim and Christians as per the national distribution pattern. The education level could play an important role in perception towards an advertisement. The distribution based on education profile is given in Figure IIc.

Figure II-c: Educational Profile



28% of the respondents were post graduate followed by 29% graduates. 16% of the respondents had a doctorate degree. As the study was undertaken to understand the perception of the global advertisement among the Indian consumers of different cultures; it was more focused on the working population. Therefore, the education proportion does not conform to the average Indian educational profile.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A wealth of literature has appeared on cross cultural differences in advertising content (Davis, 2003, Alolayan and Karande 2000). Infact, the understanding of cultural differences is often considered a prerequisite for successful advertising (Keegan 2008). Studies have shown that a consumer is more inclined to respond to advertisements that are congruent with their culture (Boddewyn, Robin and Picard (1986), Alolayan and Karande 2000). Therefore, the understanding of cultural differences is often considered to be a pre-requisite for successful international advertising because consumers grow-up in a particular culture and become aligned with that culture's value system and beliefs. According to Morris et al., (2008), this factor should be of prime importance in global advertising. *Therefore, culture could affect the perception.*

With exposure to aided recall of global advertisements, the idea was to find out the likes and dislikes of the consumer (for domestic and foreign goods) in the first part of the study. It helps to find out when the consumer is inclined to buy the foreign products. A national identity may influence the acceptance of global products. However, this may vary depending upon age, religion and education. Perception of national identity is closely associated with culture of a nation (Kubacki and Skinner, 2006). *Younger age groups may accept foreign products better as compared to older group of people as per the present study.* This could also be affected by education and religion. It also creates preference for foreign goods. This is reflected in Table 2.

Table 2: Effect of Religion, Culture and Education On The Buying Behavior Towards Origin of Manufacturing

	Under Grad	Grad	Post Grad	Doctors	Hindu	Christian	Muslim	Total
Domestic Goods	104 (45%)	151 (52%)	176 (63%)	107 (67%)	389 (58%)	53 (48%)	99 (55%)	541 (56%)
Foreign Products	126 (55%)	139 (48%)	104 (37%)	53 (33%)	281 (42%)	57 (52%)	81 (45%)	419 (44%)
Total	230 (100%)	290 (100%)	280 (100%)	160 (100%)	670 (100%)	110 (100%)	180 (100%)	960 (100%)
				Pr=0.79			Pr=.99	
pr = 0.79884—					pr=0.997646			

40 respondents were excluded from the above analysis as they were in miscellaneous category. Foreign products are defined as products that are imported from a foreign country. Lux is a global brand but it is perceived to be a domestic product (Parameshwaran, Srivastava 2008). Lux is manufactured in India. Pentium, Sony, Nokia are imported products. *This was the reason for taking their advertisements for study.*

Education and Religion do influence the purchase of foreign & domestic products (Pearson $r=0.79884$ and $r=0.997646$). **Thus, education and religion could affect perception (h2). This proves the h2 hypothesis.** It is so because consumer behavior is affected by consumer's religion and intensity of religions affiliation (Parameshwaran and Srivastava, 2008). According to Engel (1976), religious groups differ in their perception of product and services which then affects their purchasing behavior. In yet another study, by Essoo and Dibb (2004), significant differences in shopping behavior of religious groups was observed. **Thus, the present study report is conforming the earlier findings on purchase behavior of foreign products.**

Recent study of Yee et. al. 2008 says that age and education too play a role in acceptance of global advertisements. They found that GM as a brand was well accepted by educated and young people. Young age group is more responsive to global advertisements as compared to the older age group. This could be a reason for their purchase behavior.

The second variable factors like individualism & collectivism were taken into consideration for the survey. The following Table 3 is the outcome of the impact of advertisements in general and their response level towards buying behavior.

Table 3: Impact of Individualism / Collectivism Culture and Age Towards Buying Behavior (N=1000)

Age Group	Need & Utility of the product	Trends	Peer group	Advt	Others	Total (N)
20-30 yrs	20	85	90	60	5	260
31-40 yrs	60	40	50	60	10	220
41-50 yrs	70	30	60	50	-	210
51-60 yrs	70	30	40	20	10	170
> 60 yrs	110	20	-	10	-	140
Total						1000
Nuclear Family (Individualism)	140	160	160	150(25%)	-	610
Joint Family (Collectivism)	190	50	80	90(23%)	-	390

Test Age & Advt –Pearson $r=-0.930661496$, Individualism Vs collectivism-Pearson $r=-1$

The age and advertisement impact is correlated strongly ($r=0.93$). *Young age group is more responsive to global advertisements as compared to the older age group.* This is in confirmation to an earlier study conducted by Wang (2000). Similarly, individualism and collectivism has negative correlation with $r=-1$. Individualism culture is more inclined to global advertisement as compared to collectivism. *More educated Indians like to have Indian products as compared to under graduates.* **This proves that culturally congruent global advertisements may appeal to individualistic and collectivistic culture (H1).** This is contrary to *Batra et al (2000)* findings that positive bias towards products imported from foreign countries is greater for consumers in developing countries. This could be due to progress made in India by manufacturing companies who are crossing boundaries to make their presence felt. Wang (2000) found that 58% Chinese consumers hold a positive view of foreign advertising and this is higher with higher income group and education. Thus, culturally, individualistic culture is more inclined to global advertisement. However, this factor is not statistically significant when compared to collectivism as per the present study.

Western values are in opposition to traditional Asian values of Collectivism. A study by Gram (2007) mentions that global advertisements do not represent global culture but are just a continuation of what is going on in the west. According to Morris et.al (2008), American values are based on Christian beliefs. The same author (2008) also mentions that as per collectivism concept, the Arab world has been strongly impacted by the teachings of Islam. Indian culture always has been in collectivism. However, during the last decade, there has been a shift in urban population of India like in Korea (Zhang and Shavit S. 2003). Indian culture is changing from collectivism to individualism. *However, this confirms that rarely is a culture completely individualist or completely collectivist (Fiske 2002).* Recent studies have shown that Japanese culture is more individualist than western cultures (Fiske 2002). The present study is also in conformity to this finding and mentions that culture is the rainbow of color.

CONCLUSION

Recent trends in global economy have transformed the cultural content and advertising campaign. Therefore, multiculturalism could be a good approach to global advertising. Understanding of cultural differences could lead to successful advertising (Keegan, 2008). However, an advertiser must choose the extent to which he can globalize or localize his message. Balancing standardization and cultural adaptation could be the key factors for success of global advertising. India is a country with a diverse culture. Understanding each ethnic variation can help to have better advertisement effectiveness. The present study indicates that there is strong bias for foreign products among undergraduates as compared to graduates and post graduates. *Higher education can lead to better acceptance of domestic products as per the present study.* Education makes a person a more rationale buyer which may lead to less impulse buying. Thus, education affects the perception of people.

Religion does play a role towards acceptance of global advertisement. Christians (52%) are more inclined towards global advertisement as compared to Hindus (42%) and Muslims (45%).

Age did influence the perception too. Older age groups do not have a high degree of perception towards global advertisements with respect to buying intension. This is as per the present study. Culturally, individualist and collectivistic culture do have the same response towards global advertisements and there is no significant difference. Thus, this is confirmation to hypothesis (h1 and h2).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Indian economy has undergone dramatic economic growth as well as cultural changes in the recent year. Finding of this study should be interpreted keeping in mind that this study was carried out in Mumbai city which is not a complete representation of Indian culture. Non-educated personnel were not included in this study due to specific target audience.

Future research can replicate this study in other Asian cultures especially in SARC or South East Asian countries where people (to some extent) share a common culture.

PRACTICAL RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This research finding could be of importance in order to minimize wastage. India, Thailand, Brazil, China, and Russia are important emerging markets. Understanding of *culture, education, age and religion could improve the global advertisement effectiveness.* The above results should be considered to make advertisements more effective especially when the target audience is young or middle aged. Knowledge of *Dominant religions of an emerging market could be a critical factor for better advertisement effectiveness.*

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