

**A STUDY ON THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL CAUSE
ADVERTISEMENT AMONG THE COLLEGE STUDENTS OF WAYANAD DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

Social and cultural diversity is the fundamental identity of our country. As the largeness of the society increases, social indifferences will come up and that affects steadiness of the society. Our country is also not free from such social problems and inconsistencies. Such issues range from our complicated political framework to individual family atmosphere. Obviously, these problems have become a constrain for the smooth development of the country. We need smart solutions to overcome all these socially alarming issues and to make the country a better place to live.

This study examines how a brand can get involved in such problems and thereby achieving respect from the target audience. Many brands have given pivotal amount of importance to social problems and could incorporate the same in branding and advertisement campaigns. Bringing social cause appeal in advertisement content makes a brand more appealing and respectable. It also focusses on the response and approach of young people towards social cause advertisement. The study explains whether social cause advertisements bring changes in behavior and attitude of youngsters towards social problems and also factors that make social cause advertisement preferred and effective.

Key words: Advertisements, social messages in advertisements, effectiveness of advertisements, advertisement influence, social appeal in advertisements etc

Introduction

The approach towards advertisement has been continuously changing into different methods to get recognition from the target audience. Today brands and advertisement agencies are spending time and effort on researching to identify contents that can effectively incorporated in the advertisements. An advertisement content should be capturing the interest and involvement of the target audience. Social appeal in advertisement is an innovative and influential content feature that can be experimented in a country like India.

The theme and appeal of a social cause advertisement is entirely different from that of a conventional advertisement. The primary objective of this kind of an advertisement is to achieve a strong recognition and differentiation for the brand by highlighting on a social issue. Such advertisements are able to enjoy a unique position in the minds of audience since they are all continuously advertisements with usual themes like family, kids, friendship, celebrations etc. Audience may not be able to witness any direct relationship with the brand and social message raised in the advertisement. The advertisement may not address the uniqueness, quality, image or any other functional feature of the brand. Instead, the brand will loudly talk about a social change through their advertisement, and audience may become more respectful and favorable towards it. Moreover, to that, the reach and influence of conventional advertisements are slowly deteriorating across different demographic groups because of the domination of digital brand communication. Newer methods of storytelling are essentially required to regain the loosing shine of advertisements. Having social messages in the limelight, to a certain extent it can still make an attempt. Advertisement clutter can be broken by incorporating such thoughts and also with fine execution.

Need For the Study.

Advertisements have always played a prominent role in the life of individual in terms of choosing the right product or service. In many ways it has shaped the decision making of consumers also. Undoubtedly advertisements are influential in bringing up desirable changes in consumer behavior. The attempt of social cause advertisement is to enhance the awareness of social realities and issues among the audience. When a brand creating social cause advertisement, the objective is to achieve positive response and attitude and there by an extra weightage from the consumers while they go for shopping.

Social cause advertisements are aiming for change in the society by spreading the awareness on social problems among various demographic groups. This study is primarily measuring the

responses of college students. The intention of conducting the study on such a sample is to gauge the intensity of transformation and change on social behavior. Most of the revolutionary social developments are fueled by the youngsters. So, youngsters' approach on social issues plays a vital role in the development of a country. The study will collect response of college students approach on social problems portrayed in the advertisements and the gravity of perceived influence of social cause advertisement. This paper will throw insights on how to create effective social cause advertisements based on the response by the college students which will help advertisement agency to focus on critical elements.

Literature Review

Social advertising is defined as the interference of media-based messages that are intended to impart or stimulate people in the society to absorb themselves in intentional social activity such as health service, environment protection, national harmony, etc. Social advertising is used to alter the perception, attitude and behavior of public at large and intends to bring about a optimistic social transformation. (Minakshi Chauhan Asopa- 2010).

Shaffer (1964) acknowledged that advertisement is a marketing wonder and has its own social results. Advertisement has both positive and negative effects. It depends on a society to differentiate the positive effects from the negative ones and then purposely overlook the negative inferences and adopt the positive ones. He says that advertisements are very influential. Thus, advertising should be used in the most helpful manner putting it to the best conceivable use so that lives of all are improved.

Lazer and Kelly (1973) Stated that advertising is a convincing promotional tool and has substantial characters. Advertising is now being put to many different uses like marketing of political candidates, marketing of actors, conservation of energy and saving fuel etc. These efforts surrounding various aspects of marketing go beyond simple advertising.

Kotler and Levy (1975) suggested a six-field classification of the change sought by integrating two scopes of time (short term and long term) and three dimensions of levels in society (micro, group, and macro). In this way Social Marketing can impact not just individual consumers, but also the surroundings in which they function. At the micro level, short term change in behavior can be seen in cases where people accept a positive habit like attendance a stop-smoking clinic. A long-term change at this level is established when people take the initiative to stop smoking. At the group level, short term change is illustrated through actions like

removing advertisements of cigarettes and alcohol from the locality of educational institutes and long-term change can be seen in cases where organizational change occurs which discourage retailers from selling cigarettes to minors.

Varadarajan and Menon (1988) stated that cause related marketing represents the conjunction of perspectives from several dedicated areas of inquiry. For example, gaining national prominence, enhancing corporate image, pacifying customer groups, making incremental sales, helping repeat purchases, promoting multiple unit purchases, enhancing brand image, expansion customer base, reaching new market segments and geographic marketing. CRMP (Cause Related Marketing Practices) have helped firms realize corporate and marketing objectives, at the same time providing much needed financial support to deserving causes. The growing population of CRM (Cause related Marketing) is symptomatic of an emerging trend - a trend which acknowledges that business success is not only well-matched with the public good but can be achieved in unison.

Objectives

- To analyze the perceived influence of social cause advertisement among the respondents.
- To analyze the factors that make social cause advertisements preferred among college students.
- To understand the most relevant elements of social cause advertisements to enhance the effectiveness.
- To provide suggestions to advertisers and brands on creating social cause advertisements.

Methodology

For the purpose of this study the population identified is the entire arts and science college students of Wayanad Dt. Most of the college students are exposed to various types of advertisements and they have concrete opinions about advertisements which they watch. A sample of 225 students are taken conveniently from five different colleges in Wayanad. An interactive session is arranged with the respondents to collect the respondents with the help of the course coordinator.

Variables are identified through the literature and theoretical framework. The questionnaire consisted of queries related to different factors that make social cause advertisement preferred. Second part of the questionnaire is related to the elements of social cause advertisements which are crucial to make it effective and the third part consists of perceived influence of social cause advertisements. Respondents are requested to answer on a 5-point Likert scale.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

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Age of the respondents

From the following table we can observe that, about 63.1% of the respondents belonged to 19 – 22 years of age group.

Your age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15-18	1	.4	.4	.4
	19-22	142	63.1	63.1	63.6
	23-26	75	33.3	33.3	96.9
	27-30	7	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	225	100.0	100.0	

Sex of the respondents

From the following table we can observe that, about 53.3% of the respondents were male.

Your sex					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	105	46.7	46.7	46.7
	Male	120	53.3	53.3	100.0

	Total	225	100.0	100.0	
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Monthly family income of the respondents.

From the following table we can observe that, about 56.9% of the respondents had monthly family income was between 10,000 – 40,000.

Your Monthly family income					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10,000-40,000	128	56.9	56.9	56.9
	40,000-70,000	49	21.8	21.8	78.7
	70,000-1,00,000	28	12.4	12.4	91.1
	above 1,00,000	20	8.9	8.9	100.0
	Total	225	100.0	100.0	

Nature of the place of the residence.

From the following table we can observe that, about 39.1% of the respondents were from semi urban areas.

Nature of the place of residence					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rural	71	31.6	31.6	31.6
	Semi rural	27	12.0	12.0	43.6
	Semi urban	88	39.1	39.1	82.7

	Urban	39	17.3	17.3	100.0
	Total	225	100.0	100.0	

Analysis of the advertisement message and celebrity related items on the preference towards social cause advertisement.

From the following table we can observe that, statement “relevance of the advertisement message” had a high mean value of 4.23 with a standard deviation of 0.65 and statement “Influence of the Celebrity/Spoke person in the advertisement” had a low mean value of 3.44 with a standard deviation of 0.94.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Relevance of the message	225	1.00	5.00	4.2311	.65459
Attractive jingle	225	1.00	5.00	3.9956	.81557
Truthfulness of the message	225	1.00	5.00	3.5733	1.01119
Influence of the Celebrity/Spoke person	225	1.00	5.00	3.4400	.94359
Celebrity/Spoke person suitability.	225	1.00	5.00	3.5022	.95956
Celebrity/spoke person suitability with the social message	225	1.00	5.00	3.5111	1.03126
Valid N (listwise)	225				

Analysis of the advertisement copy/content related items on the preference towards social cause advertisement.

From the following table we can observe that, statement “visual presentation/layout” had a high mean value of 4.16 with a standard deviation of 0.82 and statement. “Story line/script” had a low mean value of 3.32 with a standard deviation of 0.98.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
unique story line/script	225	1.00	5.00	3.3244	.98042
headline	225	1.00	5.00	4.0489	.86722
slogan& tagline	225	1.00	5.00	4.0578	.90200
visual presentation/layout	225	1.00	5.00	4.1556	.82255
images/illustrations/video	225	2.00	5.00	4.1333	.82916
emotional appeal	225	1.00	5.00	3.9289	.94222
Valid N (listwise)	225				

Analysis of the Media, Usefulness related items on the preference towards social cause advertisement.

From the following table we can observe that, statement “Involvement of social media” had a high mean value of 3.99 with a standard deviation of 0.92 and statement “It informs values and ethics of people” had a low mean value of 3.71 with a standard deviation of 1.08.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Problems of common man is discussed.	225	1.00	5.00	3.8933	.99875
print and visual media	225	1.00	5.00	3.8222	.90359
Involvement of social media	225	1.00	5.00	3.9867	.92331
It inspires an action for a social change	225	1.00	5.00	3.7778	.98853
It makes a positive vibe	225	1.00	5.00	3.9733	.93503
It provides important changes in the society	225	1.00	5.00	3.5600	1.02085
It informs people values and ethics.	225	1.00	5.00	3.7111	1.08196

Valid N (listwise)	225				
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Analysis of the perceived influence of social cause advertisement on the respondents.

From the following table we can observe that, statement “It influences the person or group of people” had a high mean value of 3.93 with a standard deviation of 0.75 and statement “Social advertisement does not promote business ideas” had a low mean value of 3.35 with a standard deviation of 0.96.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
It influences the person or group of people	225	1.00	5.00	3.9333	.75593
It influences attitudes and behaviour	225	1.00	5.00	3.7778	.83155
A product purchase is encouraged for the purpose of economic gain by the sponsor	225	1.00	5.00	3.6933	.88095
Does not stand for business promotion.	225	1.00	5.00	3.3467	.96585
Induces people for social responsibility.	225	1.00	5.00	3.6489	.89458
brings changes in society	225	1.00	5.00	3.7111	.91178
Reminds people to sacrifice for the common good.	225	1.00	5.00	3.5378	.88117
It does not encourage selfishness.	225	1.00	5.00	3.3733	1.01030
Social needs and issues are the core discussion.	225	1.00	5.00	3.5867	.90771
Stands for social, economic, public development.	225	1.00	5.00	3.7867	.82851

Valid N (listwise)	225				
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Findings

From the analysis, it is realized that the perceived influence of social cause advertisements among the target group is high. We can understand that the college students are optimistic about the contribution of social cause advertisement to the society. But they are expecting social cause advertisements with adequate quality and relevance. There are few factors that are decisive in making social cause advertisement effective, advertisement message and copy related factors have significant role in the preference and effectiveness of social cause advertisements. By utilizing an integrated media approach, the intended social message can be more appealing. Most of the respondents prefer to see more social cause advertisements because it can ensure holistic development of the society through the changes in values, attitudes and behavior.

Conclusion

The insights from this study expressed that college students of wayanadu prefer to watch social cause-oriented advertisements. According to the respondents, choosing the right social issue is the key to the success and the execution through social media ensures more active discussion on social platforms. More brands can experiment with this innovative way of story telling because it is capable of bringing effective behavioral and attitudinal change among people. The study observed response from the college students and the reflections from such youngsters highlights that the future of our country will be entirely free from social inconsistencies and problems. I recommend the study can be further done among the other demographic categories of people so that the brands and advertisers become more confident on creating social cause advertisements.

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