



CONVERGENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY AND MARKETING IN THE REALM OF ADVERTISING: A FERTILE GROUND FOR RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

The convergence of Psychology and Marketing subjects in the realm of advertising has been a fertile ground for research, offering deep insights into how consumers are influenced and persuaded. One potential theme for empirical research can be an examination of psychological strategies employed in advertising, focusing on the mechanisms of persuasion and their influence on consumer choices. It can study the interplay between the two disciplines of 'Psychology' and 'Marketing' through various theoretical frameworks, including Cialdini's Principles of Influence and the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). Emotional appeals, such as happiness, fear, and empathy, are analyzed for their effectiveness in creating positive brand associations and motivating consumer behavior. Cognitive biases, including anchoring, availability heuristics, and framing effects, are explored to understand how mental shortcuts impact consumer decisions. The role of storytelling in advertising is highlighted, emphasizing narrative transportation and the use of relatable characters and conflict-resolution structures to engage consumers. Subliminal and subconscious influences, such as priming and the impact of music and sound, are discussed for their subtle yet significant effects on consumer attitudes. In this context, one has to also understand the ethical considerations of using these psychological strategies, advocating for responsible and transparent advertising practices. This article makes an attempt to synthesize the existing research to underscore the importance of integrating psychological insights into marketing strategies to enhance the effectiveness of advertising campaigns while maintaining ethical standards.

Keywords: Persuasive Advertising; Emotional Appeals; Cognitive Bias; Storytelling; and Personalization.

Introduction

The interplay of psychology and marketing in advertising is complex and multifaceted. By leveraging psychological principles, emotions, cognitive biases, storytelling, subliminal influences, and personalization, advertisers can create persuasive campaigns that effectively influence consumer choices. Understanding these strategies enables marketers to design ads that not only capture attention but also drive meaningful consumer engagement and decision-making. The literature on psychological strategies in advertising reveals a rich interplay between



psychological principles and marketing tactics. These strategies, ranging from emotional appeals and cognitive biases to storytelling and subliminal influences, play a crucial role in shaping consumer choices. While these techniques can enhance the effectiveness of advertising, ethical considerations must be addressed to ensure responsible use. Future research should continue to explore the balance between persuasive advertising and consumer well-being, ensuring that marketing practices are both effective and ethical.

Survey of Literature

The convergence of psychology and marketing in the realm of advertising has been a fertile ground for research, offering deep insights into how consumers are influenced and persuaded. This survey examines the extensive body of literature that addresses the psychological strategies used in advertising, focusing on the mechanisms of persuasion and their impact on consumer behavior.

Foundational Theories of Persuasion in Advertising

- Cialdini's Principles of Influence: Cialdini's seminal work outlines six principles of influence—reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, authority, liking, and scarcity—which have been extensively applied to advertising strategies (Cialdini, **2001**).
- Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM): Petty and Cacioppo's ELM suggests two routes of persuasion—the central and peripheral routes—that depend on the audience's level of involvement and cognitive processing (Petty & Cacioppo, **1986**).

Emotional Appeals in Advertising

- Positive Emotional Appeals: Research shows that advertisements evoking happiness and joy create positive brand associations and can increase purchase intent (Batra & Ray, **1986**; Aaker, Stayman, & Vezina, **1988**).
- Negative Emotional Appeals: Studies indicate that fear and anxiety can be effective motivators when the message includes a clear solution to the problem presented (Higbee, **1969**; LaTour & Rotfeld, **1997**).
- Empathy and Sadness: Emotional storytelling that evokes empathy can significantly enhance viewer engagement and response, particularly in social and charitable campaigns (Small & Verrochi, **2009**).

Cognitive Biases and Heuristics in Advertising

- *Anchoring Effect*: Research by Tversky and Kahneman (**1974**) highlights how initial information (anchors) influences subsequent judgments and decisions, which is leveraged in price framing strategies (Adaval & Monroe, **2002**).
- *Availability Heuristic*: Schwarz et al. (**1991**) discuss how easily recalled information impacts decision-making, a principle utilized in advertisements that emphasize memorable success stories.



- *Framing Effects*: Kahneman and Tversky (1984) demonstrate how the framing of information (positive or negative) can influence consumer choices, which is applied in marketing messages to highlight benefits over drawbacks.

The Role of Storytelling in Advertising

- *Narrative Transportation Theory*: Green and Brock (2000) propose that consumers become "transported" into stories, leading to greater emotional engagement and persuasion. This is supported by Escalas (2004), who found that narrative ads enhance consumer attitudes and intentions.
- *Relatable Characters and Conflict*: Literature suggests that ads featuring relatable characters and a clear conflict-resolution structure are more engaging and persuasive (Woodside, Sood, & Miller, 2008).

Subliminal and Subconscious Influences

- *Subliminal Messaging*: Studies on subliminal advertising, such as those by Trappey (1996), indicate mixed results on its effectiveness, though some evidence suggests subtle cues can influence attitudes and behaviors unconsciously.
- *Priming Effects*: Janiszewski and Warlop (1993) explore how priming with certain stimuli can affect subsequent consumer behavior, a technique used in visual and verbal cues in advertising.
- *Impact of Music and Sound*: Research shows that background music and sound effects can significantly affect mood and perceptions, subtly influencing consumer attitudes toward the advertised product (Alpert & Alpert, 1990).

Behavioral Targeting and Personalization

- *Behavioral Targeting*: Studies indicate that ads tailored based on consumer behavior data are more effective in increasing engagement and conversions (Boerman, Kruikemeier, & Zuiderveen Borgesius, 2017).
- *Personalized Advertising*: Research by Tam and Ho (2006) suggests that personalization in ads enhances perceived relevance and effectiveness, leading to higher consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

Ethical Considerations in Psychological Advertising

- *Manipulation and Consumer Autonomy*: There is an ongoing debate about the ethical implications of using psychological strategies in advertising. Critics argue that these techniques can manipulate consumer choices and undermine autonomy (Hastings, Stead, & Webb, 2004).
- *Regulatory Frameworks*: Studies on advertising ethics emphasize the need for regulations to ensure that persuasive strategies do not exploit consumers, particularly vulnerable populations (Brenkert, 2002).

Additional Review of Relevant Literature



- The work by Cialdini, R. B. (2001), "Influence: Science and Practice.. [Allyn & Bacon] is foundational in understanding the principles of influence and persuasion and the same is extensively cited in academic research.
- The article by Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986), "The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, introduces the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), a crucial framework for understanding the processes of persuasion in advertising.
- The research by Batra, R., & Ray, M. L. (1986). "Affective responses mediating acceptance of advertising." *Journal of Consumer Research*, explores how emotional responses influence the effectiveness of advertising.
- The research by Aaker, D. A., Stayman, D. M., & Vezina, R. (1988). "Identifying feelings elicited by advertising." (*Psychology & Marketing*) is a study on how different emotional appeals in advertising affect consumer attitudes and behaviors.
- The classic research Paper by Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1974). "Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases." [*Science*] outlines key cognitive biases that are leveraged in advertising strategies.
- The article by Schwarz, N., Bless, H., Strack, F., Klumpp, G., Rittenauer-Schatka, H., & Simons, A. (1991). "Ease of retrieval as information: Another look at the availability heuristic," in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, contains a detailed examination of the availability heuristic, relevant for understanding how memorable advertising can influence consumer decisions.
- The article by Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). "The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, discusses narrative transportation theory and its implications for advertising.
- The research work by Escalas, J. E. (2004), "Imagine yourself in the product: Mental simulation, narrative transportation, and persuasion." *Journal of Advertising*, examines how narrative ads enhance consumer attitudes and intentions through mental simulation.
- The work of Janiszewski, C., & Warlop, L. (1993). "The influence of classical conditioning procedures on subsequent attention to the conditioned brand." *Journal of Consumer Research*, explores the impact of subliminal and subconscious influences on brand perception and consumer behavior.

The Role of Persuasion and Influence on Consumer Choices: Psychological Strategies in Advertising:

Advertising has evolved into a sophisticated blend of art and science, relying heavily on psychological principles to persuade and influence consumer choices. Understanding these psychological strategies can help marketers create compelling advertisements that resonate with their target audience and drive consumer behavior.



The Foundations of Persuasion in Advertising

Persuasion in advertising is built upon several key psychological principles:

- *Reciprocity*: People tend to return favors. When an advertisement offers something valuable, such as a free sample or valuable information, consumers are more likely to feel compelled to reciprocate by purchasing the product.
- *Commitment and Consistency*: Once a consumer commits to something, they are more likely to follow through. This principle is utilized in marketing through strategies like free trials or small initial commitments that lead to larger purchases.
- *Social Proof*: Consumers often look to others to determine their own actions. Advertisements that showcase testimonials, user reviews, or popularity (e.g., "most popular choice") leverage social proof to influence decisions.
- *Authority*: Consumers tend to trust and follow credible experts. Featuring endorsements from experts, celebrities, or influencers can enhance the persuasiveness of an ad.
- *Liking*: People are more easily persuaded by those they like. Advertisements often use attractive, relatable, or charismatic characters to build a connection with the audience.
- *Scarcity*: Perceived scarcity increases demand. Limited-time offers or exclusive products create a sense of urgency that can spur immediate purchasing decisions.

Emotional Appeal in Advertising

Emotions play a critical role in consumer decision-making. Effective advertisements tap into various emotions to create a strong connection with the audience:

- *Happiness and Joy*: Ads that evoke positive emotions can create an association between those feelings and the product, encouraging consumers to seek out that product to replicate the feeling.
- *Fear and Anxiety*: These emotions can be powerful motivators. Advertisements that highlight potential risks or negative outcomes (e.g., insurance ads) often use fear to persuade consumers to act.
- *Sadness and Empathy*: Emotional stories that evoke empathy can be particularly compelling. This approach is often used in charity ads or campaigns that highlight social issues.
- *Surprise and Curiosity*: Ads that are unexpected or intriguing can capture attention and generate interest, encouraging consumers to learn more about the product.

Cognitive Biases and Heuristics

Understanding cognitive biases and heuristics can help marketers design ads that exploit these mental shortcuts:

- *Anchoring*: The tendency to rely heavily on the first piece of information encountered. Advertisements that highlight a high initial price before revealing a discount can make the final price seem like a better deal.



- *Availability Heuristic:* People judge the probability of events based on how easily examples come to mind. Ads that showcase memorable success stories can make a product seem more effective.
- *Bandwagon Effect:* The tendency to do (or believe) things because many other people do (or believe) the same. Ads that emphasize popularity or widespread use can leverage this effect.
- *Framing:* The way information is presented can influence decisions. Positive framing (e.g., "90% success rate") versus negative framing (e.g., "10% failure rate") can significantly impact consumer perception.

The Role of Storytelling

Storytelling is a powerful psychological tool in advertising. A well-crafted story can engage consumers, evoke emotions, and create a memorable narrative around a product. Elements of effective storytelling in advertising include:

- *Relatable Characters:* Characters that reflect the target audience's aspirations, problems, or lifestyle can create a deeper connection.
- *Conflict and Resolution:* A clear problem and its resolution within the story can highlight the product's benefits.
- *Emotional Arc:* A compelling emotional journey within the ad can leave a lasting impact on viewers.

Subliminal and Subconscious Influences

Subliminal messaging and subconscious influences are subtle but can be effective in shaping consumer behavior:

- *Visual Cues:* Colors, shapes, and imagery can evoke specific emotions and associations. For example, blue can convey trust and reliability, while red can evoke excitement and urgency.
- *Priming:* Exposure to certain stimuli can influence subsequent behavior. Ads that prime consumers with positive words or images can enhance their perception of the product.
- *Music and Sound:* Background music and sound effects can influence mood and emotional responses, subtly shaping consumer attitudes toward the advertisement.

Behavioral Targeting and Personalization

Advancements in technology have enabled more personalized advertising experiences:

- *Behavioral Targeting:* Using data on consumer behavior to deliver more relevant ads. This approach can increase the likelihood of engagement by aligning with the consumer's interests and needs.
- *Personalization:* Tailoring ads to individual consumers based on their preferences and past interactions. Personalized ads can create a sense of relevance and personal connection, making them more persuasive.

Emotional Appeals in Advertising and their Emotional Responses

Emotional appeals in advertising aim to evoke an emotional response from the audience, fostering a connection with the brand and influencing consumer behavior. These appeals often tap into fundamental human emotions like happiness, sadness, fear, love, and nostalgia. By creating an emotional bond, brands can enhance their memorability, encourage loyalty, and drive sales. Emotional appeals can be powerful tools in advertising, creating lasting connections and driving consumer behavior. Appeals must be crafted with sensitivity and authenticity to avoid backlash. Successful campaigns like Cadbury Dairy Milk's "Kuch Meetha Ho Jaaye" and Tata Tea's "Jaago Re" highlight the positive impact of well-executed emotional appeals, while failures like Pepsi's "Live for Now" and Tanishq's interfaith marriage ad underscore the importance of cultural sensitivity and genuine representation as detailed below:

Successful Indian Case Studies

1. Cadbury Dairy Milk - "Kuch Meetha Ho Jaaye"

- *Campaign Overview:* This iconic campaign tapped into the Indian tradition of celebrating special moments with something sweet. The ad showcased everyday scenarios where Cadbury Dairy Milk became a part of celebrations.
- *Emotional Appeal:* Happiness, joy, and togetherness. The campaign created a sense of warmth and celebration, making the brand synonymous with happy moments.
- *Impact:* Significant increase in sales and brand recall. It reinforced Cadbury Dairy Milk as the go-to chocolate for celebrations.

2. Tata Tea - "Jaago Re"

- *Campaign Overview:* Tata Tea's "Jaago Re" campaign focused on awakening the Indian youth to social issues, using tea as a metaphor for awakening.
- *Emotional Appeal:* Responsibility, empowerment, and social consciousness. It connected with the audience by aligning the brand with social change and proactive citizenship.
- *Impact:* Enhanced brand image and loyalty. The campaign was widely appreciated and led to increased consumer engagement.

3. Surf Excel - "Daag Acche Hain"

- *Campaign Overview:* This campaign revolved around the idea that stains are good because they signify that kids are learning and experiencing life.
- *Emotional Appeal:* Love, care, and acceptance. It resonated with parents by portraying messes as part of positive growth and learning experiences for children.
- *Impact:* Strengthened brand positioning as a product that understands and supports parenting. It increased market share and customer loyalty.

Case Studies of Corporate Failures

1. Pepsi - "Live for Now" (Kendall Jenner Ad)



- *Campaign Overview:* This global campaign featuring Kendall Jenner was intended to promote unity and peace but was heavily criticized for trivializing social justice movements.
- *Emotional Appeal Attempted:* Unity and peace. The ad tried to capitalize on the emotions surrounding social movements.
- *Reason for Failure:* Insensitivity and lack of authenticity. The campaign was seen as exploiting serious issues for commercial gain.
- *Impact:* Significant backlash, damage to brand reputation, and eventual withdrawal of the ad.

2. Tanishq - Interfaith Marriage Ad

- *Campaign Overview:* Tanishq released an ad depicting a Hindu woman married into a Muslim family, celebrating her baby shower in a harmonious interfaith setting.
- *Emotional Appeal:* Love, unity, and cultural harmony. The ad aimed to celebrate interfaith love and family acceptance.
- *Reason for Failure:* Backlash from a section of the public who perceived it as promoting interfaith marriages, which led to controversy.
- *Impact:* The ad was pulled down due to social media outrage and threats, although it also received support from various quarters for its progressive message.

Future Directions for Research

The field of psychological strategies in advertising is dynamic and continuously evolving. Future research should address several emerging areas and unresolved questions to further advance our understanding and application of these strategies. Here are key directions for future research:

Impact of Digital and Social Media Advertising

- With the rise of digital and social media platforms, there is a need to explore how psychological strategies can be adapted for these new contexts. Research should investigate:
- How digital and social media influence consumer engagement and persuasion compared to traditional media.
- The role of influencers and micro-influencers in leveraging psychological principles such as social proof and authority.
- The effectiveness of personalized and targeted ads on social media platforms, considering privacy concerns and user perceptions.

Role of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning are transforming advertising. Future research should examine:
- How AI can enhance the personalization of ads through real-time data analysis and behavioral insights.



- The ethical implications of using AI in advertising, particularly regarding transparency and consumer privacy.
- The impact of AI-driven advertisements on consumer trust and long-term brand loyalty.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives

- Psychological responses to advertising can vary significantly across cultures. Research should explore:
- How cultural differences influence the effectiveness of various psychological strategies, such as emotional appeals and social proof.
- The development of culturally adaptive advertising strategies that respect local norms and values.
- Comparative studies examining the interplay of psychology and advertising across different cultural contexts.

Sustainability and Ethical Advertising

- As consumers become more conscious of sustainability and ethical practices, research should focus on:
- The effectiveness of advertising strategies that promote sustainable and ethical consumption.
- How psychological principles can be used to encourage environmentally friendly behaviors without resorting to manipulation.
- Consumer responses to transparency and authenticity in advertising, particularly regarding sustainability claims.

Longitudinal Studies on Consumer Behavior

- Understanding long-term effects of advertising strategies on consumer behavior is crucial. Future research should include:
- Longitudinal studies to track how psychological strategies influence consumer loyalty, brand perception, and purchasing behavior over time.
- The impact of repeated exposure to psychological tactics on consumer fatigue and ad avoidance.
- Long-term effects of subliminal and subconscious influences on consumer decision-making.

Neuroscience and Neuromarketing

- Advancements in neuroscience provide new opportunities to understand the brain's response to advertising. Research should investigate:
- How neuroimaging techniques (e.g., fMRI, EEG) can be used to study consumer responses to different advertising strategies.
- The role of emotional and cognitive processes in shaping consumer reactions to advertisements at a neurological level.

- Ethical considerations of neuromarketing, particularly regarding consumer autonomy and informed consent.
- ***Impact of Virtual and Augmented Reality***
- Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) offer immersive advertising experiences. Research should explore:
 - The psychological impact of VR and AR advertisements on consumer engagement and decision-making.
 - How immersive technologies can enhance storytelling and emotional connections in advertising.
 - The potential of VR and AR to create memorable brand experiences and their effectiveness compared to traditional media.

Consumer Resistance and Skepticism

- As consumers become more aware of persuasive tactics, resistance and skepticism may increase. Future research should focus on:
 - Identifying factors that contribute to consumer resistance to advertising and how to mitigate them.
 - Strategies to build and maintain consumer trust in an era of increased skepticism.
 - The effectiveness of transparency and authenticity in reducing consumer resistance to persuasive strategies.

Therefore, future research in psychological strategies in advertising should embrace technological advancements, cross-cultural insights, and ethical considerations to create more effective and responsible advertising practices. By addressing these emerging areas, researchers can contribute to a deeper understanding of consumer behavior and enhance the ability of marketers to connect with their audiences in meaningful and ethical ways. This ongoing exploration will ensure that advertising strategies continue to evolve in line with consumer expectations and societal values.

Concluding Comments

The integration of psychological strategies into advertising has transformed how marketers influence consumer behavior. Through a nuanced understanding of principles such as Cialdini's influence tactics and the Elaboration Likelihood Model, advertisers can craft messages that effectively engage and persuade their target audiences. Emotional appeals, leveraging happiness, fear, and empathy, play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and driving purchasing decisions. Cognitive biases, such as anchoring and the availability heuristic, highlight how mental shortcuts can be strategically employed to enhance the persuasiveness of advertisements. Storytelling emerges as a powerful tool, with well-crafted narratives and relatable characters fostering deeper emotional connections and memorable brand experiences. Subliminal and subconscious influences, including priming and the strategic use of music and sound, further



underscore the complexity of consumer decision-making processes. However, the ethical implications of these strategies cannot be overlooked. The potential for manipulation and the impact on consumer autonomy necessitate a balanced approach, ensuring that advertising practices remain transparent and respectful of consumer well-being. As technology advances and personalization becomes increasingly sophisticated, the responsibility to use psychological insights ethically grows even more paramount. The fusion of psychology and marketing in advertising offers profound insights into consumer behavior, enabling the creation of more effective and resonant campaigns. By adhering to ethical standards and prioritizing consumer welfare, marketers can harness the power of psychological strategies to not only drive business success but also build trust and long-lasting relationships with their audiences. Future research should continue to explore this dynamic field, fostering innovations that respect the fine line between persuasion and manipulation.

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