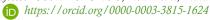# Analysing Efficacy of Indian Anti Smoking Online Advertisements

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Tobacco consumption is hazardous and smoking becomes dangerous even for those who passively inhale from cigarettes or Bidis. Smoking is banned in public places in India. The government is trying to discourage this habit through various measure. Anti smoking advertising campaigns are parts of this effort. These ads usually use the Shock appeal employing tactics of fear or disgust. This study attempts to analyse the efficacy of the online anti smoking ads towards the Indian youth. Whether they are effective in discouraging the smoking behaviour and if they are perceived differently by smokers and non smokers and males and females.

Design/ Methodology/Approach: For this purpose two focus group discussions with smokers and non smokers (eight each) respectively, four males and four females in each group, and an online survey of eighty respondents (20 each- male smokers, female smokers, male non smokers, female non smokers) was administered among youth of Delhi between age 18 and 23, where they were shown/ shared online anti smoking ads and asked to respond on them through twenty questions.

Findings: Most youth, as per research findings, rely on online information and follow online ads, hence the online anti smoking ads were considered for efficacy. No specific gender difference was found in the reception of the messages of these advertisements. However, smokers were found to be less emotionally impacted by watching these ads, where as non smokers found them repulsive enough to not try smoking. Hence, the shock inducing anti smoking online ads have more efficacy in discouraging people to start smoking rather than to lead smokers to quit.

Paper Type: Research Thought

KEYWORDS Smoking | Advertisement | Habit | Efficacy | Hazardous

Introduction

Advertising is a way of persuasive communication that is omnipresent. Advertisements were for long seen as harmless transient pieces of visual, aural and written information which did nothing more than inform people about products and services. It was only later that advertisements were recognised for their symbolic, psychological and social worth. Once this happened, different varieties of advertisements began to be identified and studied. One such variety is that of Public Service Advertisements.

Public service advertisements

PSAs are "communication efforts to improve the lives of individuals and the fabric of our society" (Paisley aand Rice, 2001); commonly used to reach and inform the 'mass' audience about important social issues. They are called 'public' in the sense of excluding no one from their messages (Stappers, 2003) and also in the sense of addressing the audience as citizens, as an 'active public' who have to choose to be persuaded to take action on a (social) problem (Roser and Thompson, 2015).

This kind of advertising is a highly visible communication strategy that is used to promote the public health-related causes like the anti-smoking programs and initiatives. As reported in the Times of India (TNN, 2020), a study done by the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) shows that India is home to 110 million smokers, despite smoking being recognised as the third biggest health risk for Indians and despite all the anti-tobacco and smoke- free laws. India is also home to second highest number of women smokers globally (Sinha, 2018). Smoking is said to be one of the leading causes of preventable death and it can cause severe harm to the body.

Online Advertising

The release of the IAB 2020/21 COVID Impact on Advertising survey found that the digital media spend for the full year (FY) is expected to grow 6%. Of the digital advertising categories, paid search is projected to show the fastest growth with a 26% increase; other digital advertising categories that are expected to surge are Social media (+25%), Connected TV (+19%), Digital video (+18%), Digital display (+15%). (IAB,2020)

According to the survey conducted by Fortis Healthcare, more than 74 per cent of students think that social media is the best platform for information, facts and latest happenings. "Social media has a far-reaching impact on the minds and behaviour of youth today. Their lifestyle choices, likes and dislikes are being fashioned by what they see on online and electronic media," said Dr Samir Parikh, head of the department of mental health & behavioral sciences at Fortis Healthcare. "A key concern is also that most students rely on social media for facts, information and knowledge as compared to books and magazines," Parikh added. (firstpost.com,2020).

The new media, offer economy and uniformity in mass distribution that make them highly attractive options for communicators wishing to influence widespread behaviour change (Raftopoulou, 2017). On these lines, many argue that when done efficiently, anti-smoking advertisements can be used online to reach and influence the different sections of the society who are vulnerable to smoking, or are already addicted to it. (Katelynn ,2020)

'Shock' Advertisements

Contemporary anti-smoking advertisements in India often use a particular form of advertising, known as 'Shock Advertising', to make people aware of and wary of the ills of smoking.

Different people have different views about 'shock' advertisements. For some it is a saviour and for some it is trouble initiator (Javed & Hareem 2017). A shock advertising appeal is generally regarded as one that deliberately, rather than inadvertently startles and offends its audience (Goldman, & Glantz,2018). Shock advertisement can be defined as "an advertisement that suddenly grabs viewers' attention by creating a buzz, it may be violating moral or social norms, customs or beliefs and traditions or culture (Javed and Hareem 2017).

In shock advertising campaigns, real images of suffering and distress replace images of fantasy and happiness. The originality of this advertising style lies in "placing images normally confined to the news into a sphere of discourse where they are normally excluded" (Goldmand and Glants,2018). The disjuncture between the subject matter and the representational logic of advertising discourse creates a shock delivered to the advertising form itself (Sandikci, 2018).

Anti-Smoking Advertisements

Anti-smoking advertisements have a considerably long history in India. Here, these advertisements have often been part of larger campaigns against tobacco use which have comprised of, but are not limited to, talks, seminars, workshops, billboards, TVCs and print advertisements. The common understanding of the phrase 'smoking' includes the consumption of cigarettes and beedis.

The primary objective of an advertisement is to gain attention of its viewer (White, 2017) and shock advertisements are fulfilling this objective by surprising the viewers. With the help of such advertisements it is easier to reach the customer effectively who is surrounded by data

clutter now a days. This is a major motivation for using these ads to direct people's attention to the cause of anti- smoking advertisements. However, on the other hand, for some people these advertisements create fear, they are disturbing and below the belt. (Javed and Hareem 2017).

'Shock' Appeals Common to Indian Anti-Smoking Advertisements

The shock appeals most popular amongst the advertisers working on anti-smoking advertisements are fear and disgust. Indian anti-smoking advertisements often use images and innuendos of death and disease to attract attention and make a mark on people. However, few times, other appeals like humour and information are also a part of Indian anti-smoking advertisements.

Fear: The Oxford dictionary defines 'fear' as 'an unpleasant emotion caused by the threat of danger, pain, or harm'. A large body of research has tried to provide answers as to whether and in what way, if any, threat or fear appeals can persuade the audience to change their health behaviours (Hastings et al, 2014). Studies recommend against their use, while others suggest that fear arousal is integral to persuasive health messages (Witte, 2017).

Disgust: Disgust has been defined as an emotional response characterized by a specific facial expression, mild physiological manifestation of nausea, feelings of revulsion, and withdrawal from the disgusting object (Cheung et al, 2018). The dominant distinguishing feature of disgust is the perception that a stimulus is repulsive (Devlin et al, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

This research and its hypothesis rest upon the theory of the Cognitive Dissonance and the Selective Processes.

People like consonance among their cognitions. Leon Festinger explained four ways in which a person tries to reduce **Cognitive Dissonance** (Festinger, 1957)**:**

- Change one's behaviour/cognition in order to make it consistent with the new cognition that has caused dissonance.

- Altering the conflicting cognition to justify one's behaviour or cognition.

- Justifying one's behaviour by adding new cognitions that can counter the negative effect of the dissonance-causing cognition.

- Consciously ignore or deny any information that conflicts with one's existing beliefs.

Theorists studying **selective processes** have identified three forms of selectivity: (1) selective exposure; (2) selective retention; and (3) selective perception.

Selective exposure is people's tendency to expose themselves to or attend to media messages they feel are in accord with their already-held attitudes and interests and the parallel tendency to avoid those that might create dissonance (Baran and Davis, 2010). As per this theory, people who smoke will avoid advertisements which condemn smoking.

Selective retention, is the process by which people tend to remember best and longest information consistent with their pre-existing attitudes and interests (Baran and Davis, 2010). A smoker is likely to remember the arguments against anti-smoking advertisements (which tend to disturb smokers psychologically) better and for a longer time than the arguments supporting such advertisements.

Selective perception is the mental or psychological recasting of a message so that its meaning is in line with a person's beliefs and attitudes (Baran and Davis, 2010). An advertisement showing a smoker as gullible might be interpreted by non-smokers in such a way that they start assuming that all people who smoke are foolish, unaware and irresponsible.

Review of Literature

In 2013, a study conducted by Dahl, Frankenberger & Manchanda, titled 'Does it Pay to Shock? Reactions to Shocking and Non-Shocking Advertising Content' made use of three different advertising stimuli – fear, shock and information. It measured both the factors related to the use of shock – enhanced retention of advertising message and greater encouragement for the subjects to engage in message-relevant behaviour.

Raftopoulou (2017) carried out a research to gauge the general attitude of young students towards anti-smoking advertisements that are made using fear-based appeals. The researcher drew several conclusions: the audience engages actively with anti- smoking advertising using fear appeals as the basic part of public health communication campaigns and diverse interpretations and readings are produced; most of them are emotional rather than cognitive responses.

Gap Analysis

After reviewing researches related to this study, few gaps were found:

Similar Composition of Research Subject Groups

Commonality of many such studies has been the similar

composition of the groups of subjects of the research. Most of the researchers seem to have concentrated on educated youth living in urban areas. For instance, Dahl et al. (2013) studied the effectiveness of shock advertising for a group of university students in comparison to the other commonly used appeals like fear and information. Krstic (2018) conducted a research on the attitudes of Western-European and Serbian university students towards shock advertising in the context of anti-smoking and anti-HIV/AIDS advertisements. Bushman (2017) conducted a research on effects of violence and sex on undergraduate students' memory of the products in TV commercials.

The content of other mass media and anti-smoking campaigns through different platforms are also to be attributed for the changing trends in the reception of shocking advertisements. Anti-smoking advertising is not broadcast in a vacuum; rather, it is one of a range of strategies that ultimately aim to influence smoking behaviour (Wakefield et al. 2016).

Debates over Effectiveness of Shock Advertisements

There is a question of long-term impact of shock tactics in advertising, and whether all publicity is indeed good publicity (**Kaleta et al**, 2017). Furthermore, it is important to question whether use of positive appeals in advertising is a more effective strategy (Krstic 2018).

Farrelly et al. (2018) concluded that strongly emotional and graphic anti-smoking advertisements are effective in increasing population-level quit attempts among adult smokers. They asserted that exposure to emotional and/or graphic advertisements is positively associated with making quit attempts among smokers overall and by desire to quit, income, and education.

Assessing the Relationship between Advertisements' Characteristics and Audience Responses

Ji et al. (2017) in their research have tried to assess the effectiveness of anti-smoking media campaigns by the means of recall and rating scores. They have highlighted the fact that many of the previous studies emphasize the behavioural changing effect of media campaigns on smoking initiation or cessation. Alternatively, another type of evaluation studies focus on the advertising effectiveness by assessing the relationship between advertisements' characteristics and responses from the target audience (Ji et al. 2007). A research involving 234 undergraduate students to identify awareness, and acceptance, of anti-smoking messages by young people, was done by collecting data about awareness of anti-smoking messages and attitudes towards them. (Mahoney 2016).

This type of studies address research questions such as 'What type of advertisements are more likely to be remembered and are perceived to have more effectiveness?' These information are valuable for anti-smoking advertising agencies who are under the constraint of limited budget. There are relatively fewer studies of the second type in the literature (Ji et al. 2017)

Grouping of Respondents' Reactions to Anti-Smoking Shock Advertisements

A common feature of research based on anti-smoking advertisements is the way in which respondents' reactions are coded and understood. Most often these research group subjects' reactions in terms of simplistic appeals like fear, threat, information, etc. Lewis (2018) points out how such an analysis of advertisements can confound the results of a study.

However, despite evoking a range of emotions, rarely do empirical studies examine the relationship between these additional emotions and persuasion despite the fact that evidence exits that has shown different discrete emotions do have differential persuasive effects: some inhibit whilst some facilitate persuasion. If in a study fear was not successfully evoked, or alternatively, if different emotions other than fear were evoked, then the study is no longer examining the relationship between the emotion of fear and subsequent persuasion (Lewis 2018).

Exploring the Emotional Responses

One particular line of research on anti-smoking advertisements has been focusing on emotional responses to these ads. There are good theoretical reasons why anti-smoking advertisements that evoke fear can be effective in reducing smoking among youth.

Emotional responses, like those towards fear and disgust, can evoke a certain kind of smoking behaviour. "One form of negative graphic images in anti-tobacco ads are those likely to be perceived as gross or nauseating. Fear appeal and disgust-related images could have significant interactions on the dynamics of cognitive/emotional processes engaged when individuals view messages that vary in the presence of both features" (Leshner et al. 2017).

Advertisements high in sensation value (reflecting content that is novel, graphic, stimulating etc) are more likely to increase viewer's attention, motivation to call a hotline, ad recall and intention to perform the target behaviour, than those with lower sensation value. There is evidence that emotional responsiveness to advertising might be a key element of advertising effectiveness (Wakefield et al. 2016)

Objectives

This research aims to find out :

- How different is the reception of online anti-smoking advertisements between smokers and non smokers

- Does the efficacy of online anti-smoking advertisements differ for men and women?

- Do cognitive dissonance and selective processes come into play on how audience received these advertisements?

Hypotheses

Based upon the literature review, following hypotheses were put to test in this study:

- The reception online anti-smoking shock advertisements is influenced by one's habits and pre-existing attitudes towards smoking.

- The reception of online anti-smoking advertisements is different for men and women.

- Cognitive Dissonance and the Selective Processes are major factors that govern the reception of online anti-smoking advertisements.

Research Methodology

Objectives of this research required a thorough study of respondents' psychical processes like reception and reading of advertisements, qualitative research methodology was employed. Additionally, as the results required a certain degree of external validity a quantitative method too was used thus following a 'triangulation' research method.

The research was conducted as a two-part process consisting of:

Two focus group discussions with a group of smokers and another group of non smokers respectively. Each group had eight participants – four males and four females. These two groups were matched on demographic variables with the participants having the similar education levels, belonging to the same age group and living in the same urban area. Thus, the only differentiating factor was the difference in the smoking habits of the two groups. The two focus group interviews were of 26 minutes (smokers' FGD) and 33 minutes (non-smokers' FGD). All the participants belonged to the age group of 18-23 years. They were shown online anti smoking ads during the discussion.

A survey questionnaire filled by respondents of the age group 18 to 23 years. It had 20 questions and was sent out to respondents via Email, social media like Facebook and Twitter and messaging application Whatsapp. The sample size for the survey was eighty respondents (chosen after elimination). Out of this, 20 respondents were female non-smokers, 20 respondents were female smokers, 20 respondents were male non- smokers and 20 respondents were male smokers, chosen by Snowball Sampling. An array of online anti smoking ads was shared along with the questionnaire.

Results and Interpretation

Agreements between Smokers and Non Smokers:

During the course of the research smokers and non-smokers agreed on certain aspects of these ads like:

- media's extremely limited potential to influence smoking habits.

- visually gory advertisements being ineffective in deterring smoking.

- tendency of people to ignore anti-smoking advertisements.

- need for subtle advertisements which have strong messages that can make smokers reflect.

- lack of advertisements that can cater to different audience groups like college students, teenagers, women, upper classes, etc.

- bad production quality and execution of anti-smoking advertisements.

When asked how effective anti-smoking ads are in terms of discouraging smoking, both, smokers and non-smokers ranked the option of 'effective only for a short while and for few people' the highest.

- Both the groups insisted upon that anti-smoking ads have no effect on chain smokers.

- Both the groups supported the use of "subtle ads with strong messages", however both showed least recall levels for subtle ads.

- The two groups even cited similar or same advertisements as examples to prove their points. Some of the advertisements cited were the the 'Arteries advertisement' by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the National Tobacco Control Program (which shows cancer producing toxins being squeezed out of an human artery), 'Mukesh Harane: Smokeless Campaign' brought out by Union Health Ministry and another advertisement brought out by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the National Tobacco Control Program which demonstrated the amount of tar found in a smoker's lungs by using a sponge. All the three advertisements can be categorized as visually shocking and gory advertisements.

Difference in Advertisement Reception between Smokers and Non Smokers:

- However smokers and non-smokers also differed on certain points.

- While non-smokers and smokers both regarded anti-smoking ads as ineffective, the former felt that these ads can discourage smoking among children, teenagers and new smokers. The latter disagreed with this observation and insisted that only a minor section of the population that is extremely sensitive can be affected by these ads.

- Smokers showed a greater degree of suspicion with respect to the health-related claims of the anti- smoking ads and most of them negated these claims. On the other hand, the non-smokers largely believed the claims of these ads.

- Only a small section of smokers felt that these advertisements are not effective at all and only a small section of non-smokers felt that these ads are very affective.Maximum number of smokers felt that the portrayal of smokers in anti-smoking advertisements is that of 'someone who is unaware, ignorant and stupid'. On the other hand, most of the non-smokers noticed the lack of women smokers in these advertisements most prominently.

- Both the groups agreed that these advertisements portray smokers incorrectly, but while non-smokers felt that a more realistic portrayal will make these ads more believable and might increase effectiveness, smokers expressed doubts over this point. The point about tackling the "cool quotient" attached with smoking was raised only by non-smokers – both, during the FGD as well as during the survey.

Areas of agreement between Malesa dnFemales were:

- Anti-smoking ads are 'effective only for a short while and for few people' and that they are 'effective only for children and teenagers who might try to start smoking'.

- Smoking habits depend on individuals' will and choice and cannot be altered by the means of ads.

- Anti-smoking advertisements cater to very few audience groups.

- Both the groups also pointed out the bad production quality and execution of these advertisements.

- However, more number of women proposed that a variety of advertisements should be made for different audience groups, and more number of men stressed on the need for better production quality advertisements.

Differences in opinion on the basis of the gender:

- Women showed a greater tendency to recall 'disgusting, gory and ghastly images' when they were asked what they remembered about the anti-smoking advertisements that they had seen. Men, on the other hand, recalled "in-your-face" ads which show the "reality" of the ills of smoking in a blunt manner. Subtle ads were least recalled.

- As compared to men, more number of women showed the tendency to change the channel or go out to get popcorn when anti-smoking shock ads are being shown. Men showed a greater propensity to simply ignore such ads.

- The lack of anti-smoking ads catering to women was noticed more prominently by women, though men did acknowledge this shortcoming of advertisements.

- Women had a slightly more positive attitude with respect to the potential of anti-smoking ads. While majority of the men dismissed these ads and felt that they don't really play any major role in convincing people to give up smoking.

- Women were more forthcoming in terms of discussing how these ads could be changed to make them work. Thus, they were slightly more open to the idea of advertisements being successful in affecting people's smoking behaviour.

- Women, especially non-smokers, were more empathetic with respect to the possible fallout of these ads in terms of hurt sentiments or negative psychological impact of gory and eerie advertisements/messages.

- More number of women believed in the claims of these ads as compared to men.

On the whole, the survey sample and the focus groups showed the **following trends:**

- 98.3% of the sample conceded that they remembered seeing anti-smoking advertisements. This points towards the fact that these ads have a very good recall value and also being placed very well on the different media platforms.

- 61.6% respondents either ignore these ads or avoid them. Hence, we can deduce that these ads are so repetitive and over-used, that even after the high levels of ignorance/avoidance people are able to view and recall these ads.

- The advertisements with 'disgusting, gory and ghastly images' were recalled by maximum number of respondents, followed by advertisements with 'realistic and in-your-face images' that deter smoking. The recall value of subtle advertisements was the least. Almost all the participants of this study have insisted upon the fact that gory advertisements do not work and it is the

- subtle advertisements with strong messages that can be expected to deter smokers.

- 53% of the non-smokers claim that they ignore anti-smoking advertisements.

- 60% of the smokers claimed that they escape seeing these advertisements by either ignoring them or changing the channel when they are on.

- 62% of the survey sample reiterated the fact that anti-smoking advertisements are ineffective in terms of affecting people's smoking behaviour.

- 58.3% admit that anti-smoking advertisements can have a momentary impact, but that too on few people.

- 23.3% feel that ads can affect children and teenagers who are at the risk of becoming smokers.

- Most of the people raised the point that the impact of anti-smoking ads varies according to people's age, class, area of residence, etc. There is no one unanimous impact that these ads have.

- 38.3% of the survey respondents felt that anti-smoking ads can be really disturbing for some people.

- 63.3% gave an affirmative reply when asked if they believed in the claims of these ads. Both, in the focus groups and in the survey, a considerable number of smokers expressed doubts over the veracity of these ads.

- 70% of the survey sample and a large section of the focus groups felt that a variety of advertisements catering to different groups need to be made for anti-smoking campaigns.

- 38.3% insisted on bringing in ads with better production quality, scripts and mainstream actors/models.

- Only a minority of 11.6% of the participants said that gory images that can scare a smoker should be used.

- When asked 'How do you think anti-smoking advertisements portray smokers?' the most selected options were 'Women are never shown as active smokers' (50%), 'They are shown to be too unaware, ignorant and stupid' (46.6%) and 'Only uneducated and poor people are shown as smokers' (45%).

Though no major differences were found between the reception of advertisements by smokers and non-smokers, and by men and women, subtle differences could be seen. It is important for advertisers to acknowledge these differences and make advertisements that suit the different audience groups. Unless the minute differences in the reception of these advertisements by different groups of people are not acknowledged, the ads cannot be fine-tuned enough to strike an effective chord with the people.

Additionally, for these advertisements to have any real impact it is important for them to cater to the specific needs of different groups like children, teenagers, women, elderly, business class, etc. Advertisers also need to concentrate on improving the production quality and execution of these ads in order to make them more popular and appreciated. As far as the tussle between ghastly advertisements and subtle advertisements is concerned – it is important to see the merits and demerits of the two kinds of advertisements. The former has a great recall value but is likely to be ignored/avoided and received negatively by the audience; and the latter can strike a cord with specific audience groups, but might be poor in terms of recall value. Thus, it is also important to provide the audience with a blend of both the kind of advertisements. The golden rule to remember is that different audience groups require different advertisements.

Conclusion

Through the results of this research, we can see that the reception of anti-smoking advertisements by smokers and non-smokers and by men and women are largely on similar lines, with certain subtle but important differences. The smokers and non- smokers/men and women largely hold similar opinions about these ads – however occasionally, in terms of numbers, certain people are found to be inclined towards a particular reading of the advertisements and some others are inclined towards another slightly varied reading.

Furthermore, the results of this research show that the theory of Cognitive Dissonance and the Selective Processes are important aspects of reception that influence the way people receive anti- smoking shock advertisements.

Thus, the two hypotheses based on smoking habits and gender stand rejected. We can say:

The reception and reading of anti-smoking advertisements is not profoundly influenced by one's habits and pre-existing attitudes towards smoking. There are, however, certain minute differences that stand out and should be noted.

The reception and reading of anti-smoking advertisements is not different for men and women. Both receive these advertisements in similar ways, but show greater levels of receptiveness and sensitivity to different kinds of anti-smoking shock appeals.

However, the hypotheses related to Cognitive Dissonance and Selective Reception are accepted.

In their reception of anti-smoking shock advertisements, people behave in a manner which is likely to cause Cognitive Consonance (and eliminate, as much as possible, any kind of dissonance), and while consuming such advertisements the Selective Processes clearly set in.

Hence, we can say that the theory of Cognitive Dissonance and the Selective Processes have proved to be major factors that govern the reception of anti-smoking advertisements.

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Annexure 1

Submission Date	Submission Id	Word Count	Character Count
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URKUND

Urkund Analysis Result

Analysed Document: Paper Anti smoking ads.docx (D98232931)
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Submitted By: padminijain@ignou.ac.in
Significance: 6 %

Sources included in the report:

https://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/assets/documents/research/msc-dissertations/2007/Raftopoulou-final.pdf
https://www.tobaccoinaustralia.org.au/chapter-14-social-marketing/14-4-examining-effectiveness-of-public-education-c
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https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232319682_Promotion_of_Smoking_Cessation_with_Emotional_andor_Graphic_Anti smoking_Advertising
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https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266583247_Strategic_communication_and_anti-smoking_campaigns
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/11324977_Exploring_Antismoking_Ads_Appeals_Themes_and_Consequences

Instances where selected sources appear: 15

Reviewers Memorandum

Internal Assessor Statement: The study focuses strongly on the theory Of Cognitive Dissonance and Selective Processes. The author has carefully conducted a focus group discussion with no gender biases. The findings of the study reveal that shock inducing advertisements have more efficacy. The study is well structured and non biased portraying both the genders. The impact of these advertisements have been studied on both the genders.

External Critic (National): The article highlights the potency of the online anti smoking advertisements. The use of only online platform advertisements have been used as most of the respondents are highly involved on the online platform. The author has considered Focus group discussion as a tool for data collection which rightly suits the study. The use of advanced statistical tools to analyse the data would have brought further accurate results.

Outer Reviewer's (Global) Observation: The paper throws light on the online anti smoking advertisements and its effectiveness on smokers and non smokers of both the genders. The study is focused on only the 18-23 years old respondents who are actively available on different online platforms. However the inclusion of population between 25 to 35 would make the study stronger and more inclusive. The paper provides scope for further study to investigate the role of advertising appeal on the smokers and non smokers.

Editorial Excerpt

The article has 06% of plagiarism which is the accepted percentage as per the norms and standards of the journal for the publication. As per the editorial board's observations and blind reviewers' remarks the paper had some minor revisions which were communicated on a timely basis to the author (Padmini) and accordingly all the corrections had been incorporated as and when directed and required to do so. The comments related to this manuscript are noticeably related to the theme "**Analysing Efficacy of Indian Anti Smoking Online Advertisements**" both subject-wise and research-wise.The paper is an empirical study analysing the efficacy of the online anti smoking ads towards the Indian youth.The study focuses on whether the online anti smoking advertisements are effective in discouraging the smoking behaviour.The study continues to study if these advertisements are perceived differently by both the genders and smokers and non smokers. This study is based on the theory of the Cognitive Dissonance and the Selective Processes.The results of this research reveal that the reception of anti-smoking advertisements by smokers and non-smokers and by men and women are largely on similar lines, with certain differences. Furthermore, the results of this research show that the theory of Cognitive Dissonance and the Selective Processes are important aspects of reception that influence the way people receive anti- smoking shock advertisements. The shock-inducing anti smoking online ads have more efficacy in discouraging people to start smoking rather than to lead smokers to quit.Overall, the paper promises to provide a base for the further studies in the area.After comprehensive reviews and editorial board's remarks the manuscript has been categorised and decided to publish under "**Research Thought**" category.

Acknowledgement

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