IMPACT OF THE VISUAL DESIGN LANGUAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISEMENTS ON CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS

Vishal Kaushik[1]

[1] *Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Bengaluru*

Abstract: There are plenty of ways to promote or sell a product, service, idea or an event, and only recently, there has been a surge in research that proves that visual aesthetics and design play a vital role in making an advertisement appealing or attractive to the consumer to buy or use.

The key purpose of this paper is to establish the principles or a framework that an advertiser keeps in mind while trying to appeal to the consumer's perception of a brand offering. It shows how important visual design and imageries are in impacting the minds of the consumer. The people in the market are smart and they are able to identify the elements and traits in a design that makes it more appealing to them. And therefore, if a product's communication appeals to its consumers, they are bound to purchase the said offering. Hence this study becomes very important for the brands, advertisers and the marketing industry as it tells them what makes their communications more attractive to their customers. Thus, the paper investigates how a customer's opinion impacts their perception about the visual designs presented in the study.

The study allows the people of the sample group to pick their favoured design out of the options given based on a particular principal of design. The sample group is henceforth tested on various other principles of design theory and hence we establish the level of understanding the group possesses towards design and aesthetics of any product.

The findings from empirical analysis indicates that visual designs of various ads tend to play a vital role when it comes to swaying the perception of consumers.

In was particularly observed in research that perceptive "matching" of target segment needs (desiring product being presented in a visually pleasing manner) and visual properties utilized in adverts (verbal or visual predominately) seems to be vital.

The utilization of images/visual design has an impact on the consumer's perception as it is able to uplift recall value, motivate their attitude toward company's promoted objects, and therefore harness their psychological intentions. Visual communication grabs attention as adverts have become so meta and complex in its efforts to use design & aesthetics to persuade customers and seize their focus.

Introduction

These days, there is an immense number of advertisements that consumers in the market come across. That's mostly due to the fact that advertisements are enjoying an exponential growth, giving the brands abundance of ways and channels for reaching out their communications to the customers. These advertisements then act as a communication from the brand to the consumer, informing them about their product, services and other offerings. Organizations use these advertisements to engage, encourage and lead individuals to buy their offerings and also to inform the market about their brand vision and style. Advertisements eventually helps the consumers by informing them about the offers, variety, range and quality of products available in the market and thus helps them in making wiser consumption decisions.

Due to the immense quantity of ads in the market, most advertisements fail to grab consumer's eye and leave an impression on their minds. Thus, the idea of visuals playing a considerable role in attracting consumers has become a key factor. Researchers have been successfully recognizing that the design is certainly a very valuable marketing tool at sparking human conversations. Advertising, including most media sources apart from radio, heavily rely on the visuals along with some kind of a verbal interpretation to showcase a said advertisement. The notion of visual design language talks about a particular layout of elements according to the marketer's aesthetic vision. Visual communications are designed to inspire desires, attract attention of people, and encourage them to respond to these communications by formulating a decisive impact on viewer's perception of the given product.

Advertisements use these visual-design principals to affect consumer's mindset and perception.

Traditionally, the factors that are thought to affect consumer's perception towards an advertisement are: the content of the advert; the emotions an advert tries to hit; the visual design language behind the creation of the advertisement. They lead to engagement, recall, and cognitive response from the masses.

Now regardless of the increased awareness about the effects of design theory on customer's perception, there exists a surprisingly less amount of research done to find how the visual- design theory affects moods, thoughts and opinions of people interacting with the advertisement. The purpose of this paper is to break down the design theory into its various principals or elements and show their importance to the brands, advertisers or marketing officials in capturing consumer's perception towards their offerings. Hence, this research will be identifying the impact & effect of aesthetics and visual-design on consumer's perception towards online advertising.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

This research paper describes a study on consumer and marketer's experience with social media in Punjab, India. A self-developed questionnaire was used to quantify their perception towards motives, rules, beliefs, experiences and actions of marketers on marketing through Social Media. The results of the study suggested some of the measures and strategies that an organization can adopt for effective marketing on social-media platforms. These findings could also be used by media planners and agencies for concrete and functional marketing outcomes. (Sandeep Vij, Jyoti Sharma, 2012)

This paper answers why companies find the need to create their brand identity over social-media, how it is utilised, strategies for deployment, and what outcomes could be expected; and also reveals – from a firm's angle – how creating a brand social-media page benefits the user. (Georgios Tsimonis and Sergios Dimitriadis)

Social-media is a very accessible platform where all users can create, participate, interact and share with any such content like a post, banner, video, message or advertisement. Most companies have started to benefit from these social-media tools in order to promote goods & services and create awareness around their brands. However if you look over to the other side of the spectrum, not all industries succeed to market their goods and hence are unable to create awareness for themselves. This paper's motive was to find a relationship between brand value and social-media marketing tactics of a company. (Riswan Efendi Tarigan and Hansel Bagus Tritama)

There has been a growing trend where the industry has finally started to recognise that the vitality of visual design along with a sharp focus on aesthetics - are the key marketing elements when it comes to promotion and packaging of any product, idea, or event. This paper looks at developing a working framework for how to use visuals and design in advertisements by combining suggestions from the consumers. This paper

investigates consumer's vision and idea on the facets of visual design found in advertisements that impacts a viewer's perception. (Eiman Negm, Passent Tantawi)

The research examined the things that should be taken into consideration when branding is done through social-media. It additionally compared the significance and usage of social-media with the strong influence that traditional medium of media has on branding. The paper explores the following questions: how has social-media affected branding, what factors to consider while branding via social-media, and also what consequence social-media has over brand identity compared to traditional mediums. (Tomi Jokinen)

BASIC PRINCIPALS OF DESIGN THEORY

What would make an advertisement's design great? Even amateurs who do not class themselves as complete competent designers can create effective eyecatching compositions. In doing so, determining what things are important or what the audience would notice, can be a little tough. Visual Design theory is a set principles that influences how effectively the viewer might observe details. These given set of guidelines helps in composing designs that attract attention and are aesthetically pleasing. Utilizing these principles can help brands in creating social media advertisements that are both effective and efficient. The Visual Design Principals can be defined as follows:

- **Size & Scale**
  As they say "Bigger is always better, right?", while this classic line could still be debated, size is inarguably the most prudent method to place emphasis on any visual element. A larger element will always draw more attention compared to small elements. It's one of the main reason why media outlets to put up their headlines in larger fonts, larger headlines garner higher attention to the story at hands. One other important principle related to this concept is scale, which is the relative size of an object in comparision to another.

- **Spacing**
  This is a key vital factor of any visual composition that deals with omission of elements out of any design. As per Rule of Space, any rich design needs its own fair share of clutter free-negative spaces referred as 'white spaces'.

- **Colour & Contrast**
  Contrasting colors are often used to highlight specific elements on the design canvas on a gentle scale. Placing a red element against a black or dark background will definitely draw more attention compared to the same red element put up on a pink or lighter background. The color mix used in a design, and their interaction with

each other, is known to be its color scheme. A designer's use of color scheme can create balance and harmony within any creation, at the same time it can also create emphasis and contrast.

- **Typographic Hierarchy**
  Hierarchies of typeface can be created using texts of various different sizes, spacing, weights and-or a combination of such element. Even if a similar typeface is utilized throughout any design, variation in its size and weight will not only draws attention towards important elements, but will also create an overall canvas that is easy to read and comprehend.

- **Proximity**
  Proximity deals with where elements may appear in relation to one another, this is a very basic essence of any composition. By simply placing related elements close to each other would go on to suggest the readers that they are, in fact, closely related.

- **Negative Space**
  How grouping items close to one another suggests their relationship, including white spaces around an element tends to single them as a separate group of information. Negative spaces not only make information easier for reader's understanding, but it also helps in creating emphasis by zeroing in on stand out items.

- **Alignment**
  Alignment is the key component when it comes to structure of a design. It dictates how that visual components such as text or images, are supposed to be positioned throughout any number of compositions.

- **Rule of Odds**
  This rule allows a visualizer to put emphasis on particular images by placing them in the center of a group. By placing equal number of objects on either side of the main center point, thus creating an odd numbered set. The result clearly points to the most important visual element, located in the center.

- **Repetition**
  Just as contrast puts an emphasis and grabs attention on a design element, repetition creates a sense of unity, which boosts interpretation & recognition. For a good design, repetition of some elements, either typeface, contrast, colour, shape or size throughout the canvas composition is key. Consistency in styles helps clearly articulate the visual language of any design.

- **Leading Lines**
  Leading lines are implied by using repeated elements like rows of dots, proximity of different shapes and also the relationship between positive & negative spaces. For example, slanting an element up or down can be used to depict descent or flight.

- **Rule of 3rds**
  Some of the most interesting designs are made by using some sought of grids. The most typical variation of grid used is the classic composition of crossing horizontal & vertical lines. Photographers, artists, & designers have always utilised the rule of 3rds to improve overall balance of visual compositions. The rule usually involves mentally dividing a visual composition into grids of two horizontal and vertical lines, or 9 separate sections.

- **Perspective**
  By using perspective, designers are enabled to create illusion of depth ranging from an inches to miles. This is because we generally perceive larger objects as being closer compared to similar smaller objects and, thus, they usually command attention before any other object on a page.

OBJECTIVES

Analyze the perception of consumers towards design while making a purchase decision and also consumer's understanding of principles of visual design theory in making a design better.

HYPOTHESIS

There is a significant relationship between customer's buying decision and their perception towards an advertisement's design. However, design language of an advertisement depends on 12 design principles. Therefore, we will check customer's understanding of these visual design principles. Visual design theory consists of the following factors:

- Size & Scale
- Spacing
- Colour & Contrast
- Repetition
- Proximity
- Typographic Hierarchy
- Rule of Odds
- Negative space
- Rule of 3rds
- Perspective
- Leading lines
- Alignment

Null Hypothesis:

Ho= Null Hypothesis= Consumer's affinity to buy a product after looking at an advertisement is independent of the design language of the advertisement. i.e. size, spacing, alignment, colour   of   the

adver

tisement has no effect on the consumption psychology of a consumer.

Ha= Alternate Hypothesis= Effectiveness of an advertisement on consumer's buying behaviour directly depends on the independent variables of the design theory principles.

The above mentioned hypothesis will help us to understand whether any of the visual marketing factors affect the consumers purchase decision and rather will help us triangulate those key factors. Marketers have a fine grip at grabbing consumer's attention through advertisements. Especially now after the advent of social media, the space for social media marketing has grown even further. Use of catchy phrases and good imagery put together in a well-established aesthetic sense does wonders in collecting a click from the consumer.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary method of data collection was used in this research study where questionnaire responses of 202 social media consumers was recorded. The questionnaire tested customer's understanding of the 12 Design Principles. The survey participants were asked to choose between two options of images provided for each design principle, where one image corresponded directly to the design principle in question, and the other one did not.

Without giving away the name of the principle being tested, the survey takers were just asked to pick the images which appealed to them.

The second part of the questionnaire asked about the importance of design in advertisements and their affinity to buy a product after coming across such adverts on social media.

Therefore, first part of survey tested if consumers could pick up on the design principles used by marketers. However, the second part of the survey, targets on analysing the impact of the design used in online advertisements by marketers in influencing the consumer's perception.

The research focuses on consumers located in India. Direct questionnaire method is used as a data collection method. Convenience sampling is used where the questionnaire was circulated through different channels. The data collected included a total of 202 responses from the respondents of different parts in India. The purpose of the study is to analyse the impact of various visual design principles used in social media advertisements to impact consumer perception towards products and brands.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

After collecting the data through convenience sampling, the following is the frequency distribution of the whole dataset. The demographic distribution of the data is analyzed on the basis of age, gender and zonal location in India.
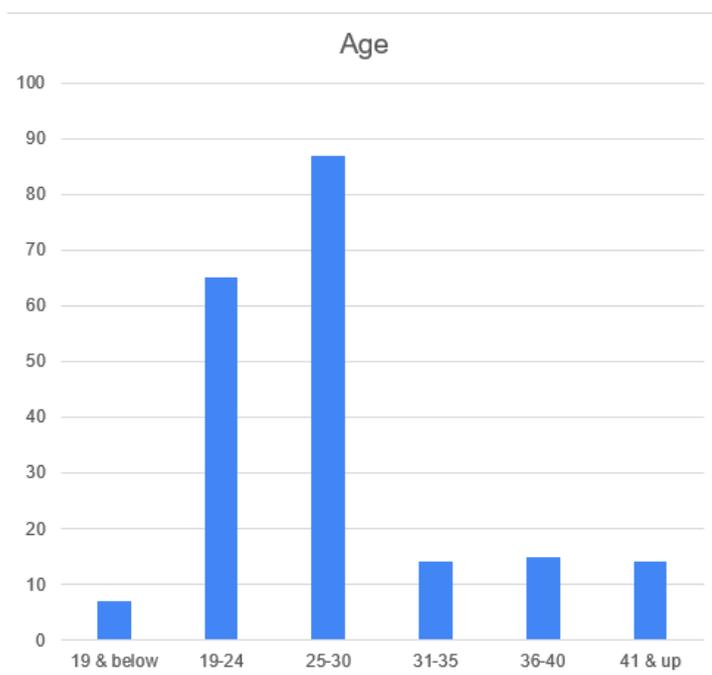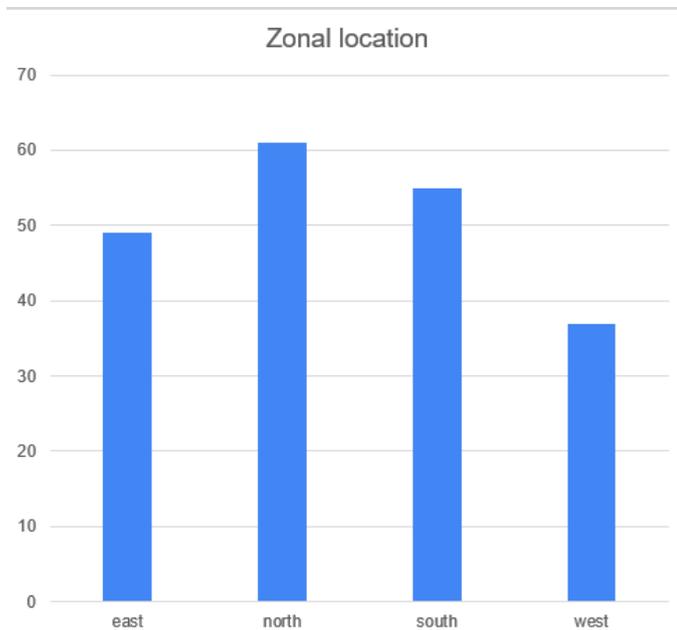

It was observed that 3.5% of the population lies in "19 &

belo w", 32.1% of the population lies in "19 -24 years", 43.1% lies in "25 - 30 years", 6.9% lies in "31 – 35 years", 7.4% lies in "36 – 40 years" and 6.9% lies in "41 & up."
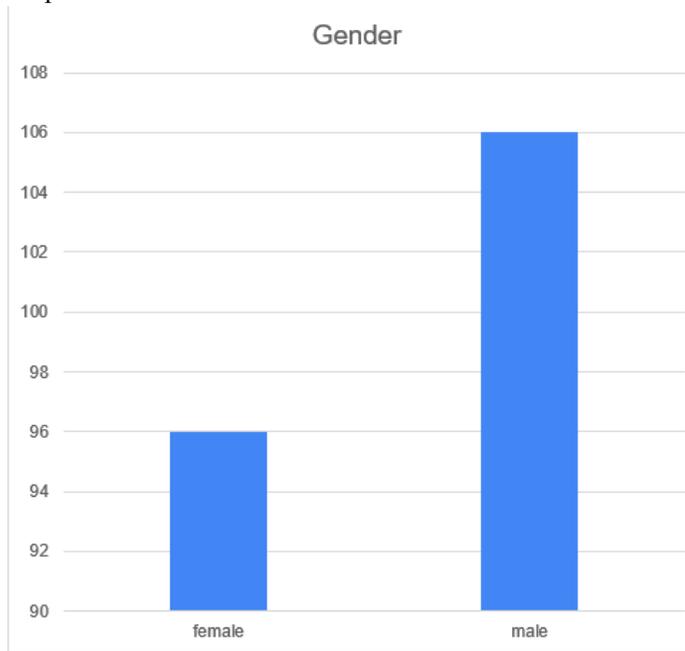
The gender distribution of the data collected in this survey of 203 respondents is such that 47.6% would like to be identified as "Female" and 52.4% would fall under the category of "Male".

24.2% of the participants currently reside in "east" of India, 30.2% of them are reside in "north" part of India, 27.2% of the participants are living in "south", and 18.3% of them are living in "west" part of India.

MULTIPLE REGRSSION ANALYSIS

It is a statistical technique that is used to find out the dependence of one dependent variable over other independent variable(s). In this research study, we aim to establish a relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. The dependent variable in our research is the influence of Visual design in advertisements on buying decisions and the independent variables are the 12 Design-Principles: Size & Scale, Negative space, Spacing, Colour & Contrast, Proximity, Rule of Odds, Repetition, Leading lines, Typographic Hierarchy, Alignment, Rule of 3rds, Perspective of an online

tisement. The regression equation is given as follows:

$$Y = A + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + \ldots\ldots$$

For our purpose of research we used logistic regression form of multiple regression for our Model 1:

```
Call:
glm(formula = DesignImportance ~ .,family=binomial(link='logit'), data =
training)

Deviance Residuals:
     Min        1Q    Median        3Q       Max
 -0.42194   0.00548   0.00548   0.00548   0.20009

Coefficients:
               Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|)
(Intercept)   -7.937e-02  2.551e-02  -3.112 0.002233 **
SizeScale      9.089e-02  2.482e-02   3.662 0.000347 ***
Spacing        9.225e-02  3.025e-02   3.049 0.002718 **
ColorContrast  1.380e-01  2.562e-02   5.385 2.78e-07 ***
Typography     7.741e-05  4.032e-02   0.002 0.998471
Proximity      1.114e-01  3.808e-02   2.924 0.003995 **
NegativeSpace  8.958e-02  2.712e-02   3.303 0.001198 **
Alignment      5.171e-02  2.469e-02   2.094 0.037930 *
RuleOfOdds     9.732e-02  2.590e-02   3.758 0.000246 ***
Repetition     1.119e-01  2.927e-02   3.821 0.000195 ***
LeadingLines   1.196e-01  3.006e-02   3.978 0.000108 ***
RuleOf3rds     7.258e-02  3.125e-02   2.323 0.021562 *
Perspective    9.870e-02  3.189e-02   3.095 0.002354 **
---
Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1
```

Running logistics regression in R language, divides the data into two sets i.e., Training data-set and Test data-set. 80% of the whole data is taken for training the data and the rest 20% is used for testing data. Then, actuals and predicteds are calculated.

The most important aspect of running this logistic regression is p-value which tells about whether the independent variable is significant for the dependent variable or not. If the p-value is smaller, we can strongly reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. From our Model 1, we can conclude that most of our independent variables are significant factors to an enticing online advertisement.

ANOVA was used in Model 2, ANOVA test is used to check if the experiment results are significant or not.

```
Analysis of Variance Table

Response: DesignImportance
              Df  Sum Sq  Mean Sq    F value      Pr(>F)
SizeScale      1  8.1795   8.1795  1190.0266  < 2.2e-16  **
Spacing        1  4.7051   4.7051   684.5427  < 2.2e-16  **
ColorContrast  1  2.2694   2.2694   330.1771  < 2.2e-16  **
Typography     1  0.8724   0.8724   126.9208  < 2.2e-16  **
Proximity      1  0.1634   0.1634    23.7755  2.762e-06  **
NegativeSpace  1  0.4253   0.4253    61.8699  7.074e-13  **
Alignment      1  0.0774   0.0774    11.2650   0.001004  **
RuleOfOdds     1  0.2651   0.2651    38.5635  5.083e-09  **
Repetition     1  0.2011   0.2011    29.2617  2.486e-07  **
LeadingLines   1  0.0764   0.0764    11.1157   0.001082  **
RuleOf3rds     1  0.0389   0.0389     5.6642   0.018589  *
Perspective    1  0.0658   0.0658     9.5794   0.002354  **
Residuals    148  1.0173   0.0069
---
Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.
```

Here we can see that all independent variables are in significance with our dependent variable, also the significance shown is strong as the confidence level taken is 95% and up.

Thus, we can conclude that consumer's buying affinity from an advertisement is directly dependent upon the 12 design principles of the online advertisement.

FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

The advertising space has always been a very tough and competitive place for brands. Online advertising has on one hand brought in a lot of demographic to the doorstop of these said brands, however enticing them and tuning them into potential customers through their adverts has become even more tough. With brands trying to one up each other in every department, the looks and aesthetics of an advertisement have become a very important differentiating factor among brands. Brands want the users to click on those mesmerising social media adverts and buy their products. The better an advertisement, the marketer has a better chance of closing the deal with the customer.

The concept of design marketing commences with the idea of consumers perception.

This study tried to explain the impact of design language of an online advertisement on the consumers' decisions to shop or buy. It focuses on the 12 design principles that construct any good design.

Therefore, through our research we were able to prove a direct correlation between visual-design of a social media advert and its impact on potential customers to click/buy the product.

SCOPE OF FUTURE WORK & LIMITATIONS

Personality, lifestyle, relationships, values and cultural norms associated with any product are usually illustrated through advertisements. Hence, a vast number of imaginaries exists in this world of ads. An ad visual is constructed to attain recognition, stimulate thinking, and feature product's attributes, and hence institute the identity of the product. Visual imagery expresses different personality and a different psychology of the promoted subject, allowing it to be differentiable in its competitive segment. Especially for this reason, an illustration that's vividly comprehensive in colour and design can transcend a connection with the viewers. Ads that make use of visual elements to underline the featured product usually have a solid impact over a consumer's cognizance. The goal for any advertiser is to seek maximum eyes and highest recall for their message. Design spurs in such ads tend to have a high focus on aesthetics. Once it hooks the viewer's attention, the advertisers typically apply cognitive methodology to convey their vision.

The expected limitations are:

- Design carries a very individualistic interpretation. Hence, quantifying it into a set of guidelines could be a challenge.
- Some creative designs can be very difficult to generalize.
- Design perception can be very region based.
- A limited sample size.
- Lack of sufficient literature to support the findings of this study.

REFERENCES

[1]. Sandeep Vij, Jyoti Sharma (2012). Empirical Study on Social Media Behaviour of Consumers and Social Media Marketing Practices of Marketers. (https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2194864)

[2]. Sergios Dimitriadis and Georgios Tsimonis. Brand strategies in social media. (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262575006_Brand_Strategies_in_Social_Media)

[3]. Hansel Bagus Tritama , Riswan Efendi Tarigan (2016). The effect of social media on brand awareness of products of a company. (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307556250_The_Effect_of_Social_Media_to_the_Brand_Awareness_of_A_Product_of_A_Company)

[4]. Eiman Negm, Passent Tantawi. Investigating the Impact of Visual Design on Consumer's Perceptions of Advertising. (http://www.ijsrp.org/research-paper-0415/ijsrp-p4044.pdf)

[5]. Tomi Jokinen. Branding in Social Media and its impact on Brand Image. (https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/105658/Jokinen_Tomi.pdf?sequence=1)