

**A STUDY ON INFLUENCE OF ADVERTISEMENT IN
CONSUMER BRAND PREFERENCE (SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO SOFT DRINK MARKET IN MANMUNNAI NORTH D.S
DIVISION BATTICALOA)**

*Miss. Vithya Vivekanathan,
Faculty of Commerce and Management, Eastern University,
Vantharumoolai, Sri Lanka
vcvithya@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

Measuring the influence of Advertisement in Consumer Brand Preference is very essential for every marketer. If advertisement does not create any positive change in consumers' brand preference, all the resources such as money, time and efforts spent on advertisement will go in vain. Most of the marketers use Advertisement as a tool to attract substantially new customers and to retain the existing customers. This research studies about the "Influence of Advertisement in Consumer Brand Preference in the Soft Drink Market", which is one of the most competitive markets in Batticaloa. Every Brand in this market use Advertisement as a major weapon to overcome the fierce Competition.

There are numerous Advertisements of different Soft drink brands exposed in Television. But, the main thing here is, the marketer want to identify that, do all these advertisements positively influencing the consumers' brand preference.

In order to study the influence of Advertisement in Consumer Brand Preference, three main variables are considered with appropriate dimensions. They are; Information, Communication and Comprehension. The structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 200 respondents. The study found that all three variables indicate high influence of Advertisement in consumer brand preference. Even though it has high influence in overall view, the advertiser wants to consider the indicators, which have low and moderate influence in their future developments of the Advertisements to maintain its position in the market in the long-run. Eventually, this study recommends some actions for improving the influence of Advertisement in consumer brand preference.

Introduction

The importance of sales on business survival and the connection between customers and sales, it is expedient for organizations to engage in programmes that can influence consumers' decision to purchase its products. This is where advertising and brand management are relevant. Advertising is a subset of promotion mix which is one of the Four 'P's in the marketing mix i.e. product, price, place and promotion. As a promotional strategy, advertising serve as a major tool in creating product awareness and condition the mind of a potential consumer to take eventual purchase decision.

Marketers' survival depends on consumer satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction depends on their perception and brand preference of the particular brand. In brand preference, advertising plays a major role. Nearly everyone in the modern world influence to some degree by advertising. Organizations in both public and private sectors have learned that the ability to communicate effectively and efficiently with their target audiences is important to their success.

In today's world, there are a myriad of media outlets-print, radio, and television are competing for consumers' attention. There are number of creative and attractive advertisements we can see and hear in television, Radio, newspapers and in magazines. Within these media, television advertisements are more attractive and interestingly watched by mass audience. It has often been said that television is the ideal advertising medium where the consumer spends the most "attentive" time. However, the main thing here is, the marketer want to identify the influence of advertising in consumers brand preference.

Nowadays soft drinks have become essential part in lifestyle of the people in the society. There are number of soft drink brands are available in the market. In those brands, some brands are very famous not only in Sri Lanka but also globally. For the research purpose Coca-cola, Fanta, Elephant, and Ole are selected. These are the most preferred brand of the consumers in Sri Lanka. For these brands, different advertisements are available in Television. Some brands' advertisements are more attractive than others are and some are new creative advertisements. There is no any television advertisement regarding Pepsi during the research period. Therefore, Pepsi was not take into consideration.

It is very hard to find people who never consume any brand of soft drink. Everyone in the society prefers a particular brand. We can see frequent advertisements for Soft drinks in Television. Companies spend much on their advertisements to attract more customers. So it is very important to study its' influence in consumer brand preference.

Problem statement

There are numerous advertisements in Medias; television, radio, newspapers and magazines but, the important question for a marketer is **“do all these advertisements positively influence the consumers' brand preference?”** If advertisement is not create any positive change in consumers' brand preference, all the resources such as money, time and efforts spent on advertisement will go in vain. Therefore, it is essential for a marketer to find out the extent to which the advertisement creates Positive change in preferring the brand of the company.

Objectives of the study

- 1) Examining the influence of Information in the Advertisement in deciding consumer brand preference
- 2) Identifying the influence of Communication in the Advertisement in deciding consumer brand preference
- 3) Understanding the influence of Comprehension of the Advertisement in deciding consumer brand preference

Literature Review

The role of advertisement changes unto what the organization wants them to do. An organization use the advertising to help them survive from the impacts of economic trends. Still, the economists views that the advertising plays a significant effect on the consumer behavior and in a long process, the advertising can lead the organization to competition. Based on the understanding regarding the advertising, the approach rooted in the organization's search for the right answer on the effects of the competition. Consequently, the accepted basic role of the advertising is to provide the consumers with the right amount of information regarding the product or services, which is related to the objective of the competition and that is to deliver the consumer satisfaction. In this view, the level of advertising affects the consumer who is the focus of the organization (Park, 1996).

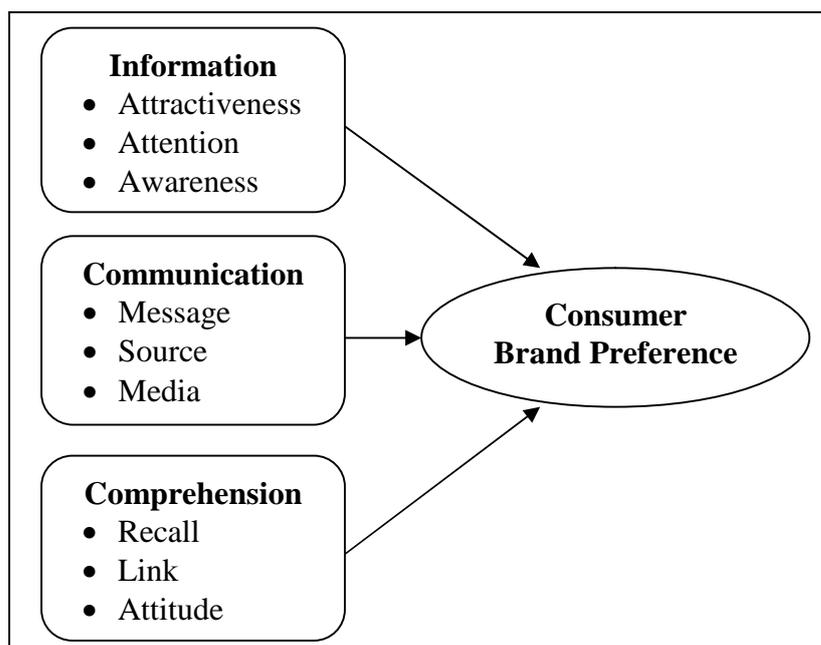
Advertisements tend to be highly informative & present the customer with a number of important product attributes or features that will lead to favourable attitudes and can be used as the basis for a rational brand preference. People get information from the advertisement through the attractiveness it holds, the attention it creates and the awareness it gives. (Arens, 1996)

Advertising is also a type of communication. It is actually a very structured form of applied communication, employing both verbal and non-verbal elements that are composed to fill specific space and time determined by sponsor. Effective communication through advertisement leads the consumers toward the purchasing of brand. (Belch & Belch, 1998)

One key concern for the advertiser is whether the advertisement or commercial conveys the meaning intended. The receiver is viewed as very active, involved participant in the communication process whose ability and motivation to attend, comprehend and evaluate messages are high. If the consumer or the audience gets the message and understand it as the advertiser has it in mind, it is a great success for the advertiser. That understanding leads the person to prefer and purchase the brand. (Clow & Back, 2002)

Definitely, the marketing activity such as advertising affects both internal and external behavior of the consumer. Most especially, the consumers' perceptions are influence through the exposure such as seeing an advertisement; attention which means that the consumer recognizes the advertisement; awareness which is common if the advertisement involves some humor; and the retention that keeps or stays in the mind of the consumer (Chen and Lee 2005). Advertisements also affect the knowledge by giving information, attitude, personality, lifestyles of the consumers, and the culture of the consumer. The concept of advertising makes it possible to involve the consumers which greatly affect the buying decisions of the consumers (Tsai, Liang, and Liu, 2007). Based on the above literature background the following conceptual framework developed for the research purpose.

Conceptual Framework



(Developed for this study purpose)

Methodology and Data Collection

Sampling Distribution.

The sample has been taken from 48 Grama Niladhari divisions based on total number of population. The population of each Grama Niladhari Division divided by the total population of Manmunai North Divisional Secretariat Division, and multiplied by the sample of 200. By summing up the sampling units of all the Grama Niladhari divisions total number of sample size 200 obtained. Sampling procedure is as follows:

No.	G.N.Division	Population	Sample
01	Manchanthoduwai North	754	2
02	Manchanthoduwai South	2594	6
03	Navatkudah	1198	3
04	Navatkudah East	2570	6
05	Navatkudah south	896	2
06	Kallady	2158	5
07	Nochchimunai	2910	7
08	Kallady Uppodai	2095	5
09	Kallady Velloor	2996	7
10	Navalady	1327	3
11	Kallady Muhathuwaram	1320	3

12	Thiruchenthur	3170	7
13	Dutch Bar	863	2
14	Amirthakali	2875	7
15	Mamangam	2091	5
16	Iruthayapuram East	1412	3
17	Palameenmadu	1431	3
18	Punnaicholai	2035	5
19	Thiraimadu	1469	3
20	Koolavady	1078	2
21	Gnanasooriyam square	1706	4
22	Barathipuram	1928	4
23	Koolavady East	1218	3
24	Thisaveerasingham	1315	3
25	Vettukkadu	720	2
26	Kokuvil	1398	3
27	Sathurukkondan	1274	3
28	Karuvappenkerny	2828	7
29	Periya Urani	1365	3
30	Panichayady	296	1
31	Iruthayapuram West	2759	6
32	Sinna Urany	3621	8
33	Jeyanthipuram	1111	3
34	Iruthayapuram central	1075	2
35	Thaandavanweli	3091	7
36	Arasady	1612	4
37	Thamaraikerny	2092	5
38	Koddamunai	1361	3
39	Periya Uppodai	4370	10
40	Puliyanthivu East	1687	4
41	Puliyanthivu West	1396	3
42	Puliyanthivu Central	1232	3
43	Puliyanthivu South	3063	7
44	Thimilaithivu	1288	3
45	Thirupperunthurai	1396	3
46	Veechukalmunai	884	2
47	Puthunagar	2151	5
48	Sethukudah	1142	3
Total		82,621	200

(Developed for this study purpose)

The Questionnaire contains two parts. The first part intended to find out the research information based on three variables: Information, communication and comprehension. The second part inquires about the personal information.

Data Analysis and Evaluation

Simplest way to measure the variable considered in this research study was the use of questionnaires with five point Likert scale. Univariate measures such as Mean, and standard deviation used to analyse the data. The obtained data presented through SPSS Package. Based on the value indicated in the Questionnaire, mean value may lie in the range between 1-5, that is, strongly disagree to strongly agree. X_i indicates the variables that considered in the statement with five point likert scale measure. The obtained mean value categorized in the following manner:

Range	Decision Attributes
$1 \leq X_i \leq 2.5$	Low influence of Advertisement in Consumer Brand Preference
$2.5 < X_i \leq 3.5$	Moderate influence of Advertisement in Consumer Brand Preference
$3.5 < X_i \leq 5$	High influence of Advertisement in Consumer Brand Preference

(Developed for this study purpose)

Discussion and Recommendation

Personal Information

This part mainly discusses some data related to the personal information of the respondents such as, Brand preference distribution, gender, age distribution, family income distribution, and educational qualification.

Brand Preference Distribution

Brand Preference	Fq.	Percent %
Coca-Cola	79	40
Elephant	33	16
Fanta	46	23
Ole	42	21
Total	200	100

(Source: Survey Data)

There are several soft drink brands available in the market. Within these brands Coca-Cola, Fanta, Elephant and Ole are the products selected for the research purpose. From the 200 respondents 40% of consumers prefer Coca-Cola, 16% prefer Elephant, 23% respondents prefer Fanta and 21% of the respondents prefer Ole. According to the analysed data, Coca-Cola has the highest influence in all three variables when compare it with others. Fanta has high influence of Advertisement in Communication and Comprehension but that is lower than the mean values of other soft drinks.

In the sample about, 52% represents male and remaining 48% represents female respondents who resides in Manmunai North Divisional Secretariat Division. Both gender shows high influence of Advertisement in consumer brand preference. However, in overall view, females have the highest mean value than males.

In the age distribution, about 17% respondents are below 18 years, 34% represents the age group 18– 28, 25% represents the age group 29- 40 and remaining 24% respondents are above 40 years. All three variables indicate their high influence of Advertisement in consumer brand preference. In this, high influence the age group below 18 has the highest mean value in all three variables than other age groups. Next to that, age group between 18 and 28 has the higher influence in all three variables. Other two age groups 29 - 40 and above 40 show their high influence on all three variables but, their mean value is less than the teens and youths.

In the income range, about 13% of the respondents are receiving below Rs.7000 as income per month, and 25% are having the income Rs.7000 to 15000 per month, and 41% of the respondents are receiving income above Rs.15000 to 30000, and remaining 21% people receiving above Rs.30000 as monthly family income. All income groups are highly influenced by Advertisement in their brand Preference. When considering the variable Information, according to data, people who earn below Rs. 7000 and people who earn above Rs.30000 have higher mean value than other income groups. Respondents who earns below Rs.7000, give more importance to Information provided in the Advertisement even though they earn low income. In Communication, income group, which earn more than Rs. 30000 have the highest mean value than others. In the case of Comprehension, earners of above Rs.30000 have the highest mean value.

Nearly 44% are with G.C.E O/L and 21 % are up to G.C.E.A/L. Next 22% respondents are graduates and the remaining 13 % have Postgraduate educational level. Variables; Information, Communication and Comprehension are indicated high influence of Advertisement in different Educational Qualification. Variable of Information indicates that Post Graduates have the highest mean value (3.78). In the case of Communication, Post Graduates have the highest mean value (3.85) than others. However, in the Comprehension, Post Graduates and Ordinary level People have high mean value (3.76) than others. In overall view, Post Graduates have the highest mean value in all three variables than other groups. Even though the frequency of postgraduates is lower than other groups, their mean values are high.

Research Information

Overall Variables View

Dimensions & Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Scale					
			$1 \leq X_i \leq 2.5$		$2.5 < X_i \leq 3.5$		$3.5 < X_i \leq 5.0$	
			Low Influence		Moderate influence		High Influence	
			Fq.	%	Fq.	%	Fq.	%
Information	3.62	0.39	30	5	234	39	336	56
Communication	3.73	0.52	34	6	171	28	395	66
Comprehension	3.67	0.52	27	4	195	33	378	63

(Source: Survey Data)

Information

Information is the first variable in the study of influence of Advertisement in consumer brand preference. It indicates the high influence of Advertisement in consumer brand preference, which has the mean value of 3.62. The standard deviation is 0.39. A 56% of the respondents indicate high influence of information in Advertisement, 39% of the respondents indicate moderate influence of information in Advertisement and remaining 5% indicates low influence of information in Advertisement in the brand preference.

Information measured through three dimensions. They are Attractiveness, Attention, and Awareness. A 56% of the respondents are highly influenced by information in the Advertisement. It is measured by the above three dimensions. A 69% respondent say Attractiveness has the High influence in the Information of Advertisement. A 56% respondent is highly influenced by Attention. Awareness moderately influences the 48% respondents.

Following are some *recommendations* to attract and retain the people through information:

- ❖ Soft drink brands especially Ole, Fanta and Elephant have to create their Jingles in most attractive way according to the current expectation of the market.

- ❖ Use new technological instruments in the composition of background music of the Advertisements are essential.
- ❖ Develop interesting stories and documentaries in Advertisement.
- ❖ Expose the Advertisements in time, which is convenient to all people in the market.
- ❖ Include more information about the products' benefits in the Advertisement.
- ❖ Explain about the different situations in which, the brand can be consumed.

Communication

The next variable is the Communication. The influence of Communication in the Advertisement indicates the high influence in consumer brand preference (mean value 3.73) with the standard Deviation of 0.52. From 200 respondents 66% express their high influence, 28% express their moderate influence and 6% express their low influence in consumer brand preference.

Message, Source and Media considered as main dimensions to measure the influence of Advertisement in consumer brand preference of Soft drink brands regarding Communication. A 66% of the respondents are highly influenced by the Communication of the Advertisement. It is measured by the above three dimensions. A 79% respondent say Message has High influence in the Information of Advertisement. A 45% respondent is moderately influenced by Source. Media highly influences 77% respondents.

These are some ***recommendations*** to attract and retain the people through Communication:

- ❖ Conclusion of the message presented in the Advertisement must design in a way, which is acceptable by all people.
- ❖ Developing the message in a proper sequential order is a must
- ❖ Selecting reliable sources when presenting the message is very much important
- ❖ The story or documentary must be true and attractive.

- ❖ A clear similarity must exist in the Advertisement between the source and the audience in their needs, goals or interests.
- ❖ Frequent Advertisement is essential to attract more customers.
- ❖ To reach the mass-market exposure of Advertisement must be enough.

Comprehension

Final variable is Comprehension. The Comprehension in the Advertisement indicates the high influence of Advertisement in consumer brand preference (mean value 3.67) with the standard Deviation of 0.52. From 200 respondents 63% express their high influence, 33% express their moderate influence and 4% express their low influence in consumer brand preference.

It measured through the dimensions recall, link and attitude. Recall has 71% of the High influence in Comprehension with the mean of 3.83. Link indicates 49% Moderate influence and Attitude shows 73% of High influence.

Following are some ***recommendations*** to attract and retain the people through Comprehension:

- ❖ Give true information about the brand in the Advertisement and maintain the good will of the brand in the market.
- ❖ Develop attractive and interesting Advertisements, which make the consumers to remember the brand and Advertisement.
- ❖ Maintain the integration with Advertisement and brand is important.
- ❖ The Advertisement must expose the day-to-day life of the audience.
- ❖ Advertisement should be believable and it has to make the brand believable.
- ❖ Advertisement must well organized and present the right message to the audience, which creates a positive feeling toward the Advertisement.

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