



Public Service Advertisement and its impact on youngsters- Creativity, Innovation and Sustainability in the era of disruption

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ABSTRACT

Public Service Advertisements (PSA's) are the means to motivate public in taking a prolific action for the betterment of the society. Unlike commercial advertisements, PSAs need to be really attractive and appealing to reach the interest level and only then comes their chance to be persuasive and effective to its target audience. To bring in any attitudinal change in youth coined as special-audience, it is imperative (1) to study the impact of PSAs on the youngsters and further (2) to study how youth perceive these PSAs. If the public awareness initiatives are impactful and appealing to the youngsters, it will bring huge impact in the country as a whole. Especially the PSAs featuring “Save Water” and “Drive Safe”, the social issues taken for the study need a viral and snowball effect, to reach out to the mass especially the youth. The sample size of 300 youngsters from Gujarat, have been considered. The results have shown youths preference towards an emotional content and also positivity in the message. Results state that youth believe in self-help over others-help, proving their independence and portraying their ‘begin with them’ type attitude. The study further shows the perceptual favourability. But surprisingly for Drive-Safe campaign, today's youth are over the death statistics, rather are more practical and proactive and are concerned about the dangers associated with rash driving. For “Save Water”, PSAs are means to enhance their know-how to save water, measures to fairly use and preserve. The prevailing ads do make them feel the onus of acting for future.

Keywords: Public Service Advertisement, Youngster's Perception, Drive Safe, Save Water



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1. INTRODUCTION

It is a known fact that Public Service Advertisement (PSA) is a message in the public interest circulated without any charge, with the purpose of raising awareness, changing public attitudes and behaviour towards a social issue. By entities like, advertising agencies, Government, NGO's as well as other business organizations. PSA's are the means to motivate public in taking a prolific action for the betterment of the society. United Nations of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) initiated a campaign under the category of "The world Drug Campaigns" in the year 2010 specially aiming the youth, this 30 second ad, was aired several times in a day, as the association firmly believed 'best protection is not to use drugs in the first place', making this all the more necessary to target the youth and not the adults. Mudra India for Bengaluru traffic police, understood the fact that static and straight to the point message in a PSA, either looks too unattractive or would be unnoticed, thus to overcome this Mudra created, the most creative way of displaying accidents caused due to usage of mobile phones. And instead of targeting the drivers, they took a passive route of touching the opposite person talking on the phone, a very similar creative way to passive smoking campaigns. Mudra tagged the campaign under the name of Talk them dead, Friend, housewife, Girl-friend, with a caption in each of its print ad 'Dont drive when he/she is driving'. Today when it comes selling of a soap or a social cause both needs to creative and effective and social cause seller cannot be in-effective (Krishna Pal, 2017). Entering the millennials, a generation who had grown in this world wide web and app era, who consider time prior to internet age as dark age. For this variety seeking, highly wavering mind owners, the youngsters if one fails to innovate, falls behind (Charlie de, 2017). With information at fingertips, their attention spans are measured in seconds. The fast-paced youngsters demand constant shifting and re-evaluating leading to innovations in the content, thus for social campaigns also the pressure remains the same. Hence the social advertisement by Frontera London went created an innovative way of communicating about one's age, but not the human age but the lung age. Went further creating an app 'LungClock' that calculates individuals lung age under the tag "How old are your lungs".

The current ruling party under the leadership of Namo gave wings to the creative and innovative public advertisements by making it more sustainable. Sustainability amongst the relentlessly forward thinking youth is tough, but few nuance to the method definitely promises sustainability. Foremost by creating a separate body named Jal Shakti Ministry, to give an organized approach to the issue of Drinking Water in India. Further to be more appealing to the youth Save Water campaigns were made viral, talk of the town and very importantly something which is trending. In such a way that the youth started advocating for the cause, and began feeling cool each time they took corrective measures.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Youngster's Perception:

Perception is an entire process by which an individual becomes aware of the environment and interprets it so that it fits into his or her frame of reference ⁽¹⁾. Perception crops up when individuals assign a meaningful picture to the given situation, event, object or a brand. This means mere exposure of a PSA or listening about a brand does not refer to as perception ⁽²⁾. It is in fact viewing things and interpreting the same in terms of person's frame of reference



and these references comprises of self experience, prejudices that one could carry, likes or dislikes or individual feelings. Consumer perception thus is referred to as an individual psychological process, which is not at all a single process but is a multifaceted stage process. For a advertisement to be perceived it passes through the following consumer stages of perception, selection, organizing and interpretation ⁽³⁾. Thus this study takes the base of perceptual process and its sub variables as one of the dependent variables to study impact ⁽⁴⁾.

2.2 Public Service Advertisements

The Public service advertising are to address the issues which are basically important to the public ⁽⁵⁾. Public awareness advertisements are an central part of social marketing ⁽⁶⁾. The purpose of these PSA is to educate and thereby intend to raise awareness on social issues to bring in a change in behaviours and to arouse positive social change ⁽⁷⁾. The first commercial initiative was taken up in early 90's, the ad was about child labour and was run free by the newspapers then ⁽⁸⁾. Out of the major campaigns initiated in the rural India are on women, girls, child welfare, AIDS, children and clean water ⁽⁹⁾. Further it was viewed that campaign targeting the population explosion with a punch line of 'hum do humare do' and later 'hamare ek' was floated ⁽¹⁰⁾. A public service film on handicapped children 'The story of hope' was launched by Alyque Padamsee ⁽¹¹⁾.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used in the study is descriptive, aiming to study the impact of Public Service Advertisement on youngsters and further to introspect how youth perceive these PSAs. The data is collected through structured questionnaire, using Non Probability convenience sampling method. The respondents are from four cities of Gujarat namely Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Surat and Vadodara (Census Report, 2011). A total of 300 respondents were enclosed under the study, consisting of 75 youth from each of the cities as mentioned above. The respondents were youngsters falling the age group of 15-24 years. The Independent variables considered for the study are Message Style and type (PSA with Positive, negative, self-help, altruistic type of content) and demographic variables (Gender, Location, Family Type and Number of earning members). The dependent variables considered for the study are Knowledge effect, Behavioural intensions and Perception.

The analysis has been done using techniques like Factor analysis, test of variance and correlation using SPSS 20. The alpha coefficient for the 20 set items used to test the perception, the dependent variable is 0.703 (Cronbach 1951). And for the 7 items used for knowledge effect and 6 items used for Behavioural Intensions the dependent variable used is 0.8 and 0.822 respectively, suggesting the items having relatively high internal consistency (Perry .R. Hinton, Charlotte,2004).

3.1 Hypothesis

H1: *There is a significant difference between gender and acceptance of message style or message type*

H2: *There is an association between message number of income sources and youngster's perception*

H3: *There is an impact of age, gender and number of earning members on youngster's Perception towards PSA's*

4. RESULTS



When asked about what do the youth notice most in the ad, out of the given option heights rank was given to emotional and creative content is ranked first. Youth go for normal people over a celebrity and ranked it second. Humour, interesting music and the testimony is given the third rank. To comprehend further about the message style, whether would they opt for self help or altruistic (help others), the data revealed 174 out of 300 respondents opted for self-help message style and the rest 126 said they would prefer content style helping others. Youngsters believe in serve yourself and then others. They further choose for positive message over a negative message.

4.1 Knowledge Effect

The data collected from 300 respondents across Gujarat also analysed the impact on knowledge effect through the exposure of Public Service Advertisement. Based on the descriptive statistics the youth is strong in knowledge effect parameter, since the Public Service Ad for save water campaign, increases their overall knowledge, makes them tell about the content further to others and also gives them a awareness about possibilities of positive future. And in case of Drive Safe campaigns the knowledge effect is high on PSAs making the youngster think towards dangers attached and a PSA additionally sets reminder for the youngsters about road safety. Most importantly according to the youngsters such campaigns makes them think about others life too. Which in fact has a greater impact, as here an individual starts about, how his/her harsh driving may put somebody's life in to danger. In both the case, for water campaign and drive safe campaign the youngsters were definitely exposed to stricter norms and measures also ways and means to further prevent the issue.

4.2 Belief or Action set

After analysing the PSAs impact on knowledge, youth's were further analysed on their action and belief set. Both in case of save water campaign and drive safe campaign they were analysed on their action. It was found that the exposure of ads have brought in the following cautious actions. In the issue of water, majority of the youth were in favour of, waste water from bathroom and laundries to be given more treatment before entering the water ways, as a step of avoiding contamination to the natural water bodies. Further added that they would now onwards opt for bucket in lieu of shower, avoid further wastage. Also started to opt for conservative measures, to save water and thereby preserve it for future generations.

For Drive safe campaigns the behavioural intensions more tended towards not using mobile until and unless unavoidable and if so would prefer a head/ear phone than picking up the calls directly. The other set of respondents believed that people driving rough have more friends and the one with zig-zag way of driving are cool and funk. Which in fact is found negative as together they are 138 respondents in number.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

H1: *There is a significant difference between gender and acceptance of message style or message type*

To prepare for the study of ANOVA test, participants were divided two group Male and Female representing the independent variable. One-way Anova was conducted to understand the difference between male and female acceptance of message style and type.

**Table 1: Summary of ANOVA**

<i>N</i>		<i>Mean</i>		<i>Mean Difference (High-Low)</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>			
151	149	49.43	59.1	9.67	5.36	0.25

A p value of less than .05 was required for significance. The ANOVA was significant $F(1, 151) = 5.36, p = 0.25$. This result allowed to rejecting the null hypothesis H_0 . And accept the alternative, stating there is a significant difference between male and female with respect to their acceptance of Advertisement content, message type and message style. Since the overall test was significant, a post hoc test was conducted using Dunnett's C test, to compare the mean of two taken groups. The results indicated male had significantly higher acceptance than the female counterparts.

H2: *There is an association between message number of income sources and youngster's perception*

To analyze the data, 20 statements of perception towards PSA's were framed based on the literature review and a chi-square test of association was run through SPSS 20. The overall descriptive statistics of the perceptual statement irrespective of the pertaining demographic discrimination is tending towards positive side. But at the association test the result fails to accept the alternative in majority of the cases, except in 4 statements out of 20 statements. Thus we accept the null hypothesis, there is no association between the more number of earnings in a youth's family and its effect over perception. Higher income group of youngsters only believe differently towards PSAs being strong enough to sets reminder of their message, with a sig(p) value of .046. Further they also associate strongly with a PSA with a pledge or dial-up number, with the sig(p) value of .033 and further for 17th and 18th variable too, the strong association is viewed and the statements were PSAs frequently aired makes them feel, government cares for them, sig(p) value of .038. More number of income source, might be leading to a far-away attitude, which may be is leading them to be more judgemental about the people, while they view the people in the Public Service Advertisements, they take them to be more in-disciplined and too bad, with with a sig(p) value of .0021.

H3: *There is an impact of age, gender and number of earning members on youngster's Perception towards PSA's*

For the impact assessment factor analysis was used, with which new factors impacting the youngster's perception was done among the youth from state of Gujarat. Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy are both tests that is used to determine the factorability of the matrix as a whole. The value of Bartlett's test of sphericity is with a Sig ($P < 0.001, P = 0.000$). Further the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure is 0.879 which is greater than 0.6.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test



KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.879
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	953.107
	Df	190
	Sig.	.000

If the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure is greater than 0.6 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant, then factorability is assumed. Thus with this it is appropriate to progress with Factor analysis to examine the factors affecting youngsters perception.

On performing the Varimax Rotation Method with Kaiser Normalization, Factor 1 comprises of nine items with factor loading ranging from 0.53 to 0.806. Table 3 indicates the items in Factor 1, the items are Creativity motivates, Statistics helps, Multiple Testimony, Government or Ministry symbol, Similarity, fear factor leads to ease of interpretation, affected ones are noted, sets reminder, dial-up number completes. Thus construct 1 Factor 1 can be named as **Youngsters who are authentication seekers.**

Factor 2 comprises of six items with factor loading ranging from 0.596 to 0.780. In Factor 2 the items are Switch channel, Celebrity holds, Precautionary measures in issue more noticed, changes involvement, government PSA's more convincing, Frequently aired thus feels government is concerned about the public. Thus construct 2 Factor 2 can be named as **Youngsters who are hard to please- Rational.**

Factor 3 comprises of four items with factor loading ranging from 0.66 to 0.83. In Factor 3 the items are noticeable, intense, simplify, realistic. The last variable falling below the accepted range of 0.05 is hence removed from the construct list. Thus construct 3 Factor 3 can be named as **Youngsters who are easy to please- Non- Rational.**

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix



Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component		
	1	2	3
PSA_BeingCreative_Motivates_toView	.806		
PSA_WithStatistics_help_learn_more	.789		.430
Multiple_Testimony	.756		
PSA_WithMinistrySymbol_Better_Interpretation	.708		
PSA_LinksSimilarity	.704		
FearFactor_Makes_InterpretationFaster	.686		
IN_PSA_MostNoted_is_affected ones	.683		
PSA_GivesReminder_Exposure	.572		.407
PSA_WithDialNumber_Feels_Complete	.530		.448
I_Switch_Channel_Avoid_PSA		.780	
PSA_With_Celeb_Increase_acceptance		.712	
IN_PSA_PrecautionaryStep_MostNoted		.676	
PSA_Changes_My_Involvement		.631	
PSA_Govt._More_Convincing		.625	.447
PSA_FrequentlyAired_ShowsPublicConcern		.596	
PSA_Always_noticebale			.803
PSA_intense			.768
PSA_Simplifies_the_Content	.418		.681
PSA_Realistic			.660
PSA_MakesMeJudgePeopleAreBad_Indisciplined	.479		.480

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

5. CONCLUSION



To study the impact of PSAs on the youngsters and how do they perceive the a Public Service Advertisement, it was hypothesized that youngster's demographical variables like age, gender and number of earning members in their family does have an affect over how they perceive the PSA's. The factor loading formed three components based on the impact. And these youngsters were divided further in three groups namely, authentication seekers, hard to please- rational and easy to please- Non- Rational. Thus it can be concluded that the formation of the groups itself depicts the differential impact of Public Service Advertisements on youngsters of Gujarat. The ad-agencies or government bodies making the social advertisements need to target these three cluster group by being considerate about the difference in their needs and requirements that they keep seeking in a PSA. If done so there are likely chances of being more effective, irrespective of their differences. Further to study the association between the number of income source and youth's perception a test of association was conducted where in the results of 20 statement conducted on 300 respondents showed a negative result, indicating no association between the income and the way they perceive. But with age and gender the results do show a positive association i.e. the perception does differ when there is a change of gender or age within the youngsters.

Further the study was conducted to analyse the content preference in the Public Service advertisement, youngsters prefer normal people over a celebrity star cast as far as PSAs are concerned. More emphasis was laid over humour, music and creativity by these variety seekers over the monotonous factual or statistical content. The study also hypothesized difference between gender and the acceptance of message style or type. The test of variances was conducted to statistically prove the observation and it was found that there is a significant difference between male and female in their liking towards content of the ad. Male are more significantly differing, in the group. Thus can suggested to the ad-developers that in spite of being a social issue, if the target audience is the youngster then the positive side, meaning the solution and positive approach and hopeful content should be aired. Rather than being too negative and leaving a scar, as the data in the study clearly indicates they wont accept it. Also the youth of today believes in self help over helping others, since they firmly believe if they are safe and secured at first, they can advocate or help the nation or others. To have an effective PSA, it is utmost important to focus on creative content, constant innovation and as mentioned early proper organized PSAs coming under catchy punch lines will take it to sustainability especially when Public Service Advertisements have youngsters who are highly disruptive in nature, due to their overexposure of content.

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