

# An Empirical Approach to Probe the Relationship between Advertisement and Brand Image – A Rural Perspective

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## Abstract

**Background/Objectives:** Brand image is a powerful asset which can be easily reached with the customer through an advertisement medium. A well recognized and trusted brand identity makes the product to reach the customer's heart long lasting. This brand identity conjures up pictures in the psyches of the customer. The Brand image is an amalgamation of the individual's experience based on internal and external sources. even though advertisements play a lead role in creating and re-regulating the brand image, personal experience and the persuasion of the customers may shift the customer's mindset. Thus, it is very much vital to analyze the impact of advertisements and its role in creating a Brand image through the perception of rural customers. **Methods/Statistical Tools:** Based on the first objective, it is observed that the mean score of "Effect/impact of advertising can change as the brand grows older" is high (3.30) among rural customers. Factor analysis is then applied to reduce the factors and how it impacts brand image. **Findings:** The major factors extracted are Ads exposure, Quality Products, Purchase frequency, Product comparison, Brand image. The impact of advertisement on Brand image was found by using regression analysis and a proposed model for the study was constructed. **Application/Improvements:** The current study analyzes the factors regarding the influence of advertisements among rural consumers which paves way to formulate various promotion strategies by the marketers.

**Keywords:** Advertisements, Brand Image, Exposure, Factor Analysis, Multiple Linear Regression, Product Comparison, Purchase Frequency

## 1. Introduction

Advertisement is the most commonly used communication channel to persuade people nowadays. Especially, the rural customer base is grabbing an important share since it is gaining popularity. The percentage of rural population in India was 67.63% in 2014. It would be quite interesting to study the role of advertisement that plays on customer decision making that too in rural markets. Companies can build a positive Brand image by providing high quality brand and fixing in the minds of the consumers through proper brand positioning via advertisements. According to Keller, to create brand positioning, the companies have to develop strategies to capture consumer's

perception and their attitudes which will create a Brand Image<sup>1</sup>. Due to increase in literacy rates and media penetration, the perception of rural customers has been changed.

Advertisement has changed its form from town criers or bell man of medieval time to the modern E-advertisements of 21st century<sup>2</sup>. Advertising is an intricate process because the perception varies from customer-to-customer and the advertisers have to design the advertisement according to the needs and demands of consumers according to their taste preferences. Thus there exist different types of advertisements to address all types of consumers. Advertisements that are more creative, strategically sound, endowing original messages grab

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the customer and will position the brand in the minds of the customer<sup>3</sup>. The advertisement should enable the customer to find new products which are prevailing in the market and it should also pave way to compare the products with the quality among different brands. As of 2001 census, India being a developing country has majority of the people living in rural areas. Rural consumers differ from their urban counterparts since their social attitudes, psychological nature and physiological differences are entirely different<sup>4</sup>. But rural customers imitate urban customers nowadays. The 21st century has blurred the rural urban divide at least in terms of choices and preferences. The present study deals with capturing the perceptions of rural customers about their exposure to advertisements, the way advertisements influence them to purchase and whether advertisements creates brand image.

Precisely, this research deals with finding the association between the advertisement factors and analyzes the cause and impact relationship between advertisement factors and Brand image among customers in rural areas.

## 2. Literature Review

Winning the hearts of India's rural consumers is gaining popularity nowadays because rural consumers are creating a huge demand and the companies have to foresee the untapped market space and utilize it to enhance their competitive advantage<sup>5</sup>. Several MNC's have grabbed these opportunities to target rural consumers through effective television advertisements. A report in Wall Street Journal affirmed that with respect to LG electronics, the rural sector is under the hot topic now and this scenario is not only applicable in India, but also all the developing nations where rural consumers are more<sup>6</sup>. They are huge in number in terms of population and households. Rural consumers nowadays are capable of congregating information about buying products through advertisements, word-of-mouth from friends and relatives and some relevant sources<sup>7</sup>. The authors examined that TV ads greatly impact customers in their purchase decisions. It also made known that customer's satisfaction was increased due to effectiveness of television advertisement. They predicted the cognitive perception of television advertisement on awareness towards advertisement, purchasing intention, purchasing desire, purchasing action and consumer's satisfaction towards the purchased product<sup>8</sup>. A study opined that the rural market is absolutely different

from the urban counterpart in terms of dynamics to marketing mix and also from the view point of the consumer behaviour and mindset<sup>9</sup>.

### 2.1 Advertisements and Consumer Behavior

Consumer buying behavior is a research area which is been given very much importance because of changing consumers needs<sup>10</sup>. There exist enormous studies to find out the impact of advertisements on consumer buying behaviour. A study which confirmed that liking or disliking of advertisements by consumers greatly influence consumer buying behavior<sup>11</sup>. The other study on children buying behavior confirmed that there was a huge impact of television advertisements on them<sup>12</sup>. TV advertisements are playing an eminent role in attracting children to buy the products. The other study has also confirmed that consumer behavior is heavily depending on advertisement irrespective of the quality of the product<sup>13</sup>. There are also controversies about the impact of advertisement on the consumer buying behavior presently<sup>14</sup>. The consumers are also in a view that some advertisements extrapolate the product's benefits such that consumers will be psychologically pressurised and make them to buy the product intentionally<sup>11</sup>.

Some people view that some advertisements may be unethical and deceptive which misleads them<sup>15</sup>. Advertisements have been attacked on psychological, sociological, aesthetic and political grounds. From the viewpoint of the rural customers, TV advertisements unconsciously affect the buying behavior<sup>16</sup>. A study confirmed that rural consumers desire for clear and straight forward messages<sup>17</sup>. The women consumers have belief in messages communicated by government and male consumers will develop a belief based on company's existence and its strong presence.

A study analysed the relationship between brand image, advertisement and purchase behaviour. Among 185 family members from different areas of Allama Iqbal town, Lahore and they found a significant positive relationship between advertisements especially of multinational products and consumer purchasing behavior<sup>18</sup>. A study which analyzed the impact of radio advertisements on the stores choice and their urban commuters buying behavior. The study found out that the three variables namely physical, cognitive and economic variables had very high influence on the urban consumers buying behavior with respect to radio advertisements<sup>19</sup>. Another

study revealed that exposure to advertisements have significant positive impact with the recall, purchase intentions and the behavior of customers<sup>20</sup>.

Based on the review of the literature, some key indicators have been selected for the study to analyse the impact of advertisement based on consumers' buying behavior and its impact on brand image. It includes viz. Exposure to advertisements, Quality products, Purchase frequency, Product comparison and Brand Image.

### 3. Objectives of the Study

- To reduce the factors which are very important according to the rural consumer's perception.
- To analyse the relationship between various advertisement factors.
- To analyse the impact of advertisement factors towards brand image.

## 4. Research Methodology: Sample

In this research, the sample comprising of 206 rural customers selected from Budalur, Pillayarpatti, Vilar and Nanjikottai of Thanjavur district by convenient sampling technique. The sample consisted of both male (n = 111) and female (n = 98) customers. They all were viewers of advertisement broadcasted at TV's. They are personally interviewed and questionnaire was handed over to them to record their opinion. Then the reliability was checked through pilot study and the reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.928 which illustrates that the reliability is extremely good.

### 4.1 Instruments

The current study has analyzed the effectiveness of advertisements to purchase the product and its impact on Brand Image. For this purpose demographic data sheet and

**Table 1.** Demographic data of the respondents

Variables	Total		Variables	Total	
	Number	%		Number	%
Gender			Occupation		
Male	111	53.1%	Dependent	21	10.0%
Female	98	46.9%	Govt.empl	61	29.2%
Total	209	100	Private empl	48	23.0%
Age			Business	29	13.9%
Less than 20 years	72	34.4%	Coolie/farmer	50	23.9%
20-30	40	19.1%	Total	209	100
30-40	63	30.1%	Income		
40-50	17	8.1%	Below 5000	47	22.5
Above 50 years	17	8.1%	5000-15000	97	46.4
Total	209	100	15,000 - 25,000	54	25.8
Marital status			25,000 - 40,000	11	5.3
Married	80	38.3%	Total	209	100
Unmarried	129	61.7%	Family size		
Total	209	100	3	2	1.0
Education			4-5	82	39.2
Upto HSC	41	19.6%	6-7	79	37.8
UG	67	32.1%	8-9	46	22
PG	36	17.2%	Total	209	100
Professional	15	7.2%			
Illiterate	50	23.9%			
Total	209	100			

structured self-explanatory questionnaire was adopted from a study by Sivanesan and used as a tool for data collection<sup>21</sup>. For the current study, a questionnaire consisting of 30 statements with 5-point likert scale measuring the level of agreement was used to capture the perception of rural customers.

## 5. Data Analysis and Discussions

The Table1 exhibits socio-economic profile of respondents.

### 5.1 Sample Description

The questionnaire for this study was posted to 400 customers. Out of which, 191 questionnaires were returned. As a result, the response rate is almost 52.25%. The samples from rural areas were surveyed using 20 items to assess demographic variables and the impact of advertising towards consumer buying behavior. The key demographic variables for the study include gender, age, education, income, occupation and family size.

As seen in Table 1, the gender level is almost evenly distributed. The majority of respondents were between 30 and 40 years old (30.01%) with only 8.1% over 40 years. Among the respondents, under graduate degree holders comprised almost 32.1%, while 23.9% were illiterates and 19.6% of the respondents had completed their higher secondary level. The professionally qualified respondents (7.2%) comprised a very small proportion of the total. Almost 29.2% were government employees, while 23% comprised both private employees and coolie/farmers and 13.9% were engaged in doing business and 10% were dependents. Incomes for the sample were moderate to low with 46.4% reporting monthly income of Rs. 5000 to Rs. 15,000. Only a small proportion of the respondents (5.3%) have earned between Rs. 25,000 to 40,000. 39.2% of the respondents have 4-5 family members, 37.8% of the respondents have 6-7 family members and 22% have 8-9 family members.

### 5.2 Research Question #1: What are all the Important Statements regarding Advertisements which Influence Rural Consumers?

Factor analysis has been used to reduce the twenty key variables representing the perception towards adver-

tisement and its impact on Brand image among rural consumers. Before conducting factor analysis for the data, it is very much necessary to decide the appropriateness of the data size. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) is a measure to check whether sampling is adequate or not and Bartlett's test of Sphericity goes along with KMO and it is used to check whether the sample size is adequate or not. Usually KMO should lie between 0 and 1. The KMO value between 0.7 and 0.8 is suggested to be good; values between 0.8 and 0.9 are great and values above 0.9 are superb<sup>22</sup> and the KMO results for the current study is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.775
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2915.252
	Df	190
	Sig.	.000

Table 3 shows the listing of communalities. The communality value for each item tells the variance accounted by each variable which has been accounted for by the extracted factors. From the Table 3, 84.5% of the variance is accounted for "Through ads we can choose the best products", 82.2% of the variance is accounted for "Survival will be very tough without intensive advertisement" while 81.8% of the variance in "Quality of product" is accounted for. Extraction communalities are estimates of the variance in each variable accounted for by the factors in the factor solution. The total variance accounted by factors before rotation and after rotation has been shown in Table 4.

The first five factors have Eigen values more than 1. Only these factors are rotated and cumulative % refers to percent of variance accounted cumulatively by previous factor and this factor. The first five factors which account for 71.843% of the variance, explain the general characteristics of factors before and after rotation. Eigen value, is also called as 'characteristic roots' is the ratio of the explanatory importance of the factors with respect to variables. If the factor has low Eigen value then it is contributing little to the explanation of variances and may be ignored as unnecessary. In other words, the amount of variance in each variable that can be explained by the retained factors is represented by the communalities after extraction<sup>23</sup>.

**Table 3.** Communalities and Eigen values

Communalities	Extraction	Initial Eigen values		
		Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1. I like advertisements	.617	8.457	42.283	42.283
2. Want products based on Advertisement	.727	1.985	9.925	52.209
3. Frequency of purchase	.757	1.549	7.746	59.955
4. Involvement in purchasing	.710	1.394	6.970	66.925
5. Purchases based on ads	.657	.984	4.918	71.843
6. Easy purchase	.719	.793	3.965	75.808
7. Experimenting new products	.741	.699	3.495	79.303
8. Engaged in purchase based on advertisement	.768	.673	3.363	82.666
9. Advertisements enhance demand for a product	.808	.575	2.876	85.541
10. Gives me prestige	.627	.489	2.444	87.986
11. Through ads we can choose the best products	.845	.454	2.268	90.254
12. Ads induce to buy the product for enjoyment and persuade me	.641	.395	1.974	92.228
13. Ads induce me to seek my family decision	.721	.324	1.622	93.850
14. Quality of product	.818	.288	1.438	95.288
15. Brand image	.766	.253	1.265	96.553
16. Brand name	.594	.233	1.165	97.718
17. Survival will be very tough without intensive advertisement	.822	.175	.875	98.593
18. Interest of public	.571	.125	.625	99.218
19. Change in impact of ads when brand has reached maturity	.813	.088	.442	99.659
20. Branding /product comparison	.646	.068	.341	100.000

The Table 4 shows the factor loadings of the 18 variables on the five factors extracted. The higher the absolute value of the loading, the more the factor contributes to the variable. All loadings less than 0.550 have been suppressed and five factors namely, 1. Ads exposure; 2. Purchase frequency; 3. Brand Image; 4. Product comparison; 5. Quality products are the major factors extracted out of the factor analysis which helps in explaining consumer buying behaviour through advertisements and brand image. After extracting the above five factors reliability analysis was carried out to measure the reliability of the factor determining consumer buying behaviour. Cronbach's alpha is the most commonly used measure of scale reliability and the alpha should be applied separately to each subscale when several factors exist<sup>24</sup>. The internal consistency reliability estimates (Cronbach's alpha) for

each factor ranged from 0.6 to 0.7 confirmed a satisfactory level of construct reliability<sup>25</sup>.

Table 5 shows the ranking of attributes using friedman mean rank in SPSS.

### 5.3 Hypothesis: There is no Significant Difference between Rankings Achieved by the Factors relating to Advertisement among Rural Samples

On Table 5 the attributes are ranked based on their importance. The least value in this test shows the most important attribute. Since p value is less than 0.01 the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance with regard to overall opinion regarding perception of advertisement among rural consumers. Hence, it is concluded

**Table 4.** Rotated component matrix

Factors	Variables	Component				
		1	2	3	4	5
Ads exposure	Experimenting new products	.846				
	Engaged in purchase based on advertisement	.759				
	Ads induce to buy the product for enjoyment and persuade me	.721				
	Easy purchase	.707				
	Want products based on Advertisement	.684				
Purchase Frequency	Frequency of purchase		.801			
	I like advertisements		.723			
	Gives me prestige		.556			
Brand image	Change in impact of ads when brand has reached maturity			.836		
	Survival will be very tough without intensive advertisement			.740		
	Brand image			.654		
Product comparison	Branding /product comparison				.739	
	Advertisements enhance demand for a product				.670	
	Brand name				.663	
	Interest of public				.579	
Quality Products	Quality of product					.842
	Choosing the best products					.638
	Ads induce me to seek my family decision					.551
	Cronbach alpha	0.790	0.774	0.780	0.769	0.794
	% of variance	42.283	9.925	7.746	6.970	4.918
	Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.					
	a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.					

**Table 5.** Ranks based on importance

	Mean Rank	Chi-square	Sig.
AdExposure	4.24	269.460	.000
PurchaseFreq	2.22		
Brandimage	2.51		
ProductComp	3.61		
Quality	2.42		

that there is a significant difference between mean ranks towards the perception of advertisement which induces consumers to purchase. Based on friedman - mean rank it is concluded that, purchase frequency (2.22) stand first among various factors which influences consumer buying behaviour. This is followed by quality (2.42), Brand image (2.51), product comparison (3.61) and ad exposure (4.24). The results from Friedman rank test concludes that exposure to advertisements is very important for the customers to get to know about the products which will

make them to buy the products and it also paves way to compare the products with its features which enhance their decision making.

### 5.4 Research Question #2: What is the Relationship between Advertisement Factors and Brand Image?

Correlation analysis was used to determine the correlation of each advertisement factors extracted from the factor analysis with Brand image at the 0.05 level of significance. It has highlighted the fact that there is significant positive correlation between advertisement factors extracted from the factor analysis and Brand Image. The multi-collinearity was not a problem as none of the correlation value between predictor variables in table was above 0.6<sup>26,27</sup>. The correlation between dependent and independent variables are shown in Table.6

**Table 6.** Correlation between the factors chosen for the study (advertisement factors)

Factors	Adexposure	Puchasefreq	Brandimage	ProdComparison	Quality
Adexposure	1	.499**	.386**	.294**	.321**
Puchasefreq	.499**	1	.326**	.377**	.408**
Brandimage	.386**	.326**	1	.465**	.526**
ProdComparison	.294**	.377**	.465**	1	.453**
Quality	.321**	.408**	.526**	.453**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### 5.5 Research Question #3: What is the Impact of Advertisement on Brand Image?

To answer the research question, regression analysis was carried out to find the impact of independent variables on dependent variable. In the regression analysis all the factors of Advertisement (Adexposure, Purchase frequency, Product comparison and Quality) are significantly influencing Brand image.

### 5.6 Multiple Regression Analysis: Advertisement Factors and Brand image (BI) (N = 209)

**Table 7.** Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.701 <sup>a</sup>	.491	.481	.89845

a. Predictors: (Constant), Quality, Ads exposure, Purchase frequency, Product comparison

**Table 8.** ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	158.944	4	39.736	49.226	.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	164.673	204	.807		
Total	323.617	208			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Quality, Adexposure, Puchasefrequency, ProdComparison

b. Dependent Variable: Brandimage

**Table 9.** Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
1	(Constant)	.780	.214		3.649	.000
	Ad exposure	.042	.053	.046	.784	.434
	Purchasefreq	.512	.066	.464	7.757	.000
	Productcomp	-.397	.202	-.324	-1.965	.051
	Quality	.625	.167	.628	3.744	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brandimage

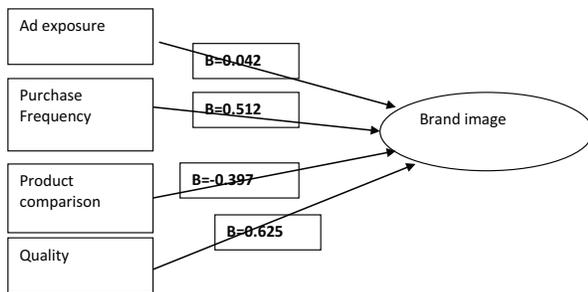
In the Table 7, R value represents simple correlation. The correlation value indicates quite high degree of correlation between advertisement and Brand image ( $r = 0.701$ ). The  $R^2$  column indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable (Brand image) can be explained by the independent variable (advertisement factors) and here it is ( $R^2 = 49.1\%$ ) can be explained by advertisement factors which is quite good influence.

Table 8 shows ANOVA results which confirm that there is significant difference in Brand image due to the independent variables like Adexposure, Puchasefreq, Brandimage, ProdComparison and Quality.

From the Table 9 it can be understood that the three factors of advertisement namely Purchase frequency, Product comparison and quality towards Brand image have been explained in the model with much more statistical significance.

Ad exposure ( $B = .042$ ,  $sig. = .434$ ) is not statistically significant since ( $sig. > 0.05$ ). This revealed that ad exposure is not contributing very much to the Brand image

creation. It is concluded that the regression model is statistically, significantly accepted that advertisements play a lead role in Brand image creation which also concludes a good fit for the data too.



**Figure 1. Proposed research model.**

Regression model using unstandardised regression weights (B).

Beta coefficients for the regression model provide necessary information to predict the impact of advertisements in creating a Brand image. In the regression model in Table 9, Quality (B = 0.625, Sig. < .000), Purchase freq (B = 0.512, Sig. <.000) and product comparison (B = -0.397, Sig. <.051) are contributing maximum for the creation of Brand image.

The regression model fit is,

- Brand image (Y) = 0.780+ Ad exposure (0.042)+Purchase Frequency (0.512) –Product Comparison (0.397) +Quality (0.625)

### 5.7 Proposed Research Model

Figure 1 represents the proposed research model which explains cause and effect relationship between dependent and independent variables.

## 6. Conclusion

Initially the study has twenty statements and through factor analysis, these 20 statements have been reduced to 18 statements and grouped into five factors namely Purchase frequency, Product comparison, Quality products, Ads exposure and Brand image. These factors have been used to carry out Friedman mean rank test to find out whether there is significant difference between the perception among rural customers regarding various factors of advertisement. The results concluded that the perceptions of customers on various advertisement factors do not have same level of importance. After finding out the level of importance, it is necessary to find out the relationship between the factors of advertisement and also

any multi-collinearity exists among factors. The results indicated that no such relationship exceeds above 0.6 and hence the relationship is free from multi-collinearity problem.

From regression analysis it was found that advertisements are very much helpful in finding the quality products (B = 0.625, p<0.01) and it also increased the purchase frequency among rural customer base (B = 0.512, p<0.01). It was also observed that rural customers do not have the tendency to compare the products with the price or its features with other products seen in advertisements hence the results are significantly negative (B = -.397, p<.05). From the results it was also concluded that most part of rural customers are not exposed to advertisements and hence the result was in-significant (B = 0.042, p = 0.434).

- Majority of the consumers who were in the age group of 30–40 has the perception that advertisements have a greater level of penetration among rural consumers since the mean value for “Through ads we can choose the best products” is high.
- 32.1% of the rural consumers were UG degree holders and hence they can be able to appreciate the effectiveness of advertisements in finding out the products.
- The findings from correlation revealed that the consumers who are exposed more to advertisements and the products with high quality had the intention to purchase buy more products (r = .499).
- The product quality and product comparison had very high correlation relationship which means that are having the tendency to compare the quality of various products shown in advertisements.
- The factors chosen for the study had very high contribution in creating the Brand image and it is confirmed by the R-square value, which means that 49.1% variance has been explained by the independent variables (advertisement factors).
- The more contributing factors in creating Brand image were quality (Beta = .625) and the purchase frequency (Beta = .512)

## 7. Managerial Implications

Advertisements is an ideal media where wide group of people are targeted and reached. Especially television advertisements are having a power to reach the wide mass

of people which persuade and stimulate them. The results of the current study also confirms that the impact of television advertisements towards rural people has a greater level of influence. The manufacturers of various products can be benefitted through proper advertisements for penetrating into rural markets. The study also confirmed that advertising plays a key role in promoting a product to create brand image. Quality and purchase frequency are the major contributors in creating the brand image. Through providing best quality brand, Brand image will be created for the product through proper and adequate brand positioning through advertisements. Purchase frequency can be enhanced through proper advertisements in regular time intervals to create brand recall which inturn creates a Brand image.

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