

# Impact of Advertising Media on lifestyle: Theoretical Framework

Manu Sharma\*

## Abstract

Advertising industry has a major influence on people, their lives, their lifestyle, their happiness and their environment. Everybody is concerned with changes in his/her lifestyle for the better, to live a happy, contented and comfortable life. Following research article has tried to investigate upon the impact of advertising on individual lifestyle through an analysis of few research studies done in the same field.

**Keywords:** Advertising industry, Media, Lifestyle

## 1. Introduction

Media via the means of print and electronic mediums is catering to several needs of its variegated set of target audience and is offering an array of choices. People today have an access to different types of mediums depending on the multiple advantages being offered by each medium. It is prominently present in our lives. A recent comprehensive study of media usage found that about 30% of the waking day was spent with media as a sole activity, and another 39% of media use was coupled with another activity (Potter, J. W. 2008. P 5).

Media is acting as an instrument of transmission of information, values, norms, images, ideas, ideologies, linguistics and paralinguistic symbols of communication, aspirations, fantasies, styles of life, belief systems; which have cognitive, aesthetic, physical, and spiritual dimensions. These dimensions are being transmitted in different forms through different mediums, which has led to a flood of messages in our lives. No wonder that in year 2008 United States alone published 175,000 book titles which were readily available in public libraries and through online bookstores.

Media has always acted as a mediator between the different institutions of society and has helped in the process of sharing good and bad experiences. This two way process of sharing and/or communication has in turn affected individual's actions and preferences so as to attain happiness and keep away from unhappiness. The various sectors of media can provide content that increase feelings of positive affect while simultaneously promoting values and establishing images of the norms which can create feelings of negative affect that contribute to life dissatisfaction (Guerrero, D., Beatty, B., Meyer, L., Marks, C., Gibbs, J. p 1). These contributions have good as well as bad effects on the lifestyle of individuals.

## Concept of Lifestyle

In addition to the above mentioned advantages being offered by media, today audiences are using it to bring changes in their lifestyle. Hence, it becomes important to understand the concept of lifestyle. Lifestyle can be explained as definition of lifestyle keys to a Healthy Lifestyle (<http://www.mypersonalimprovement.com/definitionnnglifestyle.html>) 'a bundle of behaviours that makes sense to both others and oneself in a given time and place, including social relations, consumption, and entertainment'. (<http://www.businessdictcanary.com/definition/lifestyle.html>) 'It is a way of living of individuals, families (households), and societies, which they manifest in coping with their physical, psychological, social, and economic environments on a day-to-day basis. It is expressed in both work and leisure behavior patterns and (on an individual basis) in activities, attitudes, interests, opinions, values, and allocation of income. It also reflects people's self image or self concept; the way they see themselves and believe they are seen by the others. Lifestyle is a composite of motivations, needs, and wants and is influenced by factors such as culture, family, reference groups, and social class. The analysis of consumer life styles (called psychographics) is an important factor in determining how consumers make their purchase decisions'.

## Research on Impact of Advertising on Lifestyle

Media has been influencing the lifestyle of its target audience in several forms of its existence like print, electronic and online media, and the medium which is omnipresent and whose impact on lifestyle cannot be ignored is advertising. With respect to advertising it can be said that it is multidimensional, a powerful marketing tool, a component of the economic system, a mean of financing mass media, a social institution, an art form, an instrument of business management, a field of employment and a profession that helps in making the product's presence felt. The impact of this creative tool communicated through mediums like magazines, TV, internet, etc., on the lives of individuals can be understood by the 'evidence that indicates that media context can affect audience moods and that media-induced moods can affect how consumers process advertising (Shapiro, MacInnis, and Park 2002)'.

As far as the processing of information conveyed through advertising media is concerned, it can be understood through the three competing streams of research that have conceived different processes by which mood influences the evaluation of a message. First is the "mood-as-information" model that suggests that consumers use mood as a cue to guide information

processing and that positive mood reduces detailed processing (Schwarz 2001). Second one is the "risk-as-feelings" model that suggests that risk elicits feelings that determine the active mood state and that these risk-induced feelings influence the decision process (Slovic et al. 2005). The third stream of same research has hypothesized that a positive mood actually increases consumers' ability to process, use, and extrapolate from information in making decisions (Isen 2000).

Based on the following postulates 'a study was done to know the consumer response to drug risk information: the role of positive affect, in which it was concluded that consumers' processing of product risk information is influenced by media induced mood and that the consumers in positive media-induced moods seem to engage in more nuanced evaluation of product risk information, weighing both frequency and severity information and using such information to make inferences about other product attributes. The study also suggested that the positive-mood consumer is more willing to take the presented information and extrapolate it into efficacy implications, while the neutral mood consumer is focused only on the most salient piece of information presented (i.e., severity) and translated this information into an overall assessment of risk. (Cox, Anthony D; Cox, Dena; Mantel, Susan Powell. July 2010. P 31-44).

In another research study done on the concept as well as the impact of personification created through visual images in print advertising, it was found that personification can act as a persuasive tool and can encourage consumers to anthropomorphize- that is the tendency to attribute human qualities to things. In the study it was found that personification has a measurable impact on consumer response to brands, such that personification was defined as a figure of speech in which inanimate objects are characterized in terms of human attributes, thus representing the object as a living and feeling person (Ricoeur 1977). These human attributes can include any aspect or element of "intelligent, animated beings, like beliefs, desires, intentions, goals, plans, psychological states, powers, and will" (Turner 1987, p. 175). Anthropomorphism was defined as "seeing the human in non-human forms" (Aggarwal and McGill 2007, p. 468), such that one of the most explicit attempts to incite anthropomorphism in advertising has been through the usage of spokes character- an animated being or animated object that is used to promote a product like Mr. Peanut, the Pillsbury Doughboy, the M&M chocolate candy characters, and the Michelin Man. (Phillips 1996). In terms of a model of communication, personification is a message characteristic-an option that can be added to a message, while anthropomorphism is an inherent audience characteristic-one that allows this particular message option to be effective. The study suggested that once the consumers get engaged, this anthropomorphism makes an emotional response more probable, and increases attributions of brand personality such that with brand emotions and personality being elicited, liking for the brand shifts upward. Moreover it stated that as consumers grow more resistant to spokescharacters and similar explicit attempts, personification offers a more subtle way to achieve the benefits of anthropomorphism (Delbaere, Marjorie; McQuarrie, Edward F.; Phillips, Barbara J. Spring 2011. P121- 130).

Influence of advertising communication on its consumer also depends upon the nature of medium being used for the

placement of the same. In a study, Kennedy (1971) found that viewers of suspense programs had poorer recall of a brand name in an embedded commercial than viewers of a comedy. However the attitude towards the advertised brand was more positive among viewers of the suspense program than among viewers of a comedy. Goldberg & Gorn (1987) found that compared to commercials viewed in the context of a sad program, commercials viewed in the context of a happy television program resulted in happier moods during viewing of both the program and commercials, more positive cognitive responses about the commercials, and higher evaluations of commercial effectiveness. Yuspeh (1997) concluded through a major field experiment that the programming context is a determinant of the response to the television advertising (Bryant, J. Zillmann, D. 2002. p366-367).

## Conclusion

The theoretical analysis of these different research investigations done in the field of advertising communication support the idea that advertisements projected through print and electronic media have an influence on our moods, feelings, the product/ services/ brand choices, and habits which in some way reflect our perspectives, our way of living and behaviour; such that all these parameters come under the umbrella of lifestyle concept. Certainly advertisements have the power to influence knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations, and social identities of individuals. It can be said that when we are not consciously paying attention and carefully evaluating our exposures but the advertisements through the mass media are continuously reinforcing certain behavioral patterns of exposure until they become our automatic habits.

Media is a reflector of dominant values and works as an active agency, by reinforcing and strengthening the value structure around us. It, via means of advertisements, can influence our thought process directly as well as through some adopters such that it can lead to the origin of influence or can reinforce the already existing influence. Media influence can also occur in the form of "sleeper effect" (Gruder, Cook, Hennigan, Flay, Alessis & Halamaj, 1978; Hovland, Lumsdaine & Sheffield, 1949; Peterson & Thurston, 1933), where although the discounting cue (e.g., you learn that some information was reported in the national enquirer after exposure) suppresses attitude change

initially, over time the message can increase in effectiveness such that the effect is more likely to occur under conditions in which the initial message is very strong, processed carefully, and then discounted. (Bryant, J. Zillmann, D. 2002, P169). It's a power resource, in terms of influence in the society and a platform where various interests can be brought together. Definitely the concept of sleeper effect can be applied to the impact of advertisements on its consumers' lifestyle.

Advertisements can be and should be recognized as an important element in the contemporary processes of social and cultural change, though their influence on individuals depend on many other factors too, like individuals psychological differences, membership in social categories and patterns of social relationships that serve as an alternative channels of communication. The different modes of human influence are too diverse in nature to have a fixed path of influence or strengths. Most of the behavior is a product of multiple determinants operating in concert. Depending on the quality and coexistence of other determinants, media influences in the form of advertisements may subordinate to, equal to, or outweigh non media influences (Bryant, J. Zillmann, D. 2002. p140). Hence, exposure to the advertisements in variety of forms through the media content and its interpretation play an important role in its influence on the reformulation, refining, and updating of our knowledge structures and thus our lifestyle.

## References

1. Potter, J. W. (2008). *Media literacy .California, United States: Sage publications.*
2. Cox, Anthony D; Cox, Dena; Mantel, Susan Powell. (Jul2010). *Consumer Response to Drug Risk Information: The Role of Positive Affect. Journal of Marketing. Vol. 74 Issue 4, p31-44, 14p, 1 Diagram, 2 Charts, 2 Graphs; DOI: 10.1509/jmkg.74.4.31*
3. Delbaere, Marjorie; McQuarrie, Edward F.; Phillips, Barbara J. (Spring2011). *Personification in advertising using a Visual Metaphor to Trigger Anthropomorphism. Journal of Advertising, , Vol. 40 Issue 1, p121-130, 10p*
4. Bryant, J. Zillmann, D. (2002). *Media effects: Advances in theory and research. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.*
5. Guerrero, D., Beatty, B., Meyer, L., Marks, C., Gibbs, J. *Is the Media a Positive or Negative Influence on Happiness?*

