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Influence of Design Thinking on Advertising Creativity

Smit

ABSTRACT

Design thinking is a human-centred method which involves understanding people, identifying their needs and problems, coming up with ideas, testing out solutions and then improving them on the basis of feedback. Advertising creativity is important for drawing in the attention of consumers, communicating brand messages efficiently and helping brands to stand out from their competitors.

The present study looks at the relationship between design thinking and advertising creativity. Primary research was carried out with 100 respondents using a structured questionnaire containing 10 statements. The first five of these statements assess advertising creativity while the following five measure design thinking practices. The responses were obtained on a five-point Likert scale. Percentage analysis, average ratings and Pearson correlation was used to help in analysing the data. Positive answers for all ten statements was the result obtained. The highest average rating was received for understanding the target audience at 4.30, whereas the average rating for using consumer feedback was 4.13. The overall mean score for design thinking was 4.108 as compared to 4.056 for advertising creativity.

There was a positive relationship obtained ,with respect to design thinking and advertising creativity ($r = 0.779$, $p < 0.001$) which is the correlation value. The results indicate that understanding consumer needs, generating a number of ideas, testing advertising concepts and taking into account consumer feedback are linked to higher levels of advertising creativity.

KEYWORDS: Design Thinking, Advertising Creativity, Consumer Feedback, Brand Communication, Human-Centred Design

INTRODUCTION

Advertising forms an essential element of marketing since it enables companies to convey several insights about different products and brand messages to customers. In the present competitive environment, consumers come across a great many advertisements on television, social media, websites, mobile applications and other digital channels. As a result, advertisers must create advertisements that are interesting, appropriate and different from those of their competitors.

Creativity is an important aspect of advertising, creative ads can help brands gain attention and communicate their message, making it easy to remember. Yet creativity in advertising doesn't simply involve producing something unusual; an advertisement also has to be relevant

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and meaningful to its intended audience. Research into advertising creativity indicates that originality and also usefulness are the factors which are important when it comes to consumers assessing creative advertisements (Smith et al., 2007; Rosengren et al., 2020). Design thinking offers a systematic and user-focused method of generating ideas. According to Brown (2008), it is an approach that puts people and their needs as a part of the problem-solving process.

It is applicable to advertising because advertisers should know their target audience before coming up with advertising ideas and undertsand what consumers want, what problems they encounter and what kind of communication will appeal to them. Design thinking also promotes the generation of a wide range of ideas, experimentation, testing and improvement. It can serve as a valuable method when it comes to advertising creative process. The present study looks at whether design-thinking practices are positively related to advertising creativity.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Advertising has become highly competitive as people are now exposed to many advertising messages each day. As a result, advertisers have to struggle to produce advertisements that are different, attractive, and relevant all at the same time. A key issue is that an advertisement might appear to be different but may still fail to connect with its target audience. An advertisement might convey its message clearly but could lack the creativity needed to capture attention. It follows that advertising creativity must involve both originality and relevance. While traditional advertising methods tend to concentrate on coming up with the final advertising idea, design thinking offers a more consumer-oriented approach by asking advertisers to first understand the consumers, identify their problems, come up with a variety of ideas, test the concepts and make use of feedback. Finding out whether these design-thinking practices are actually linked to advertising creativity in the eyes of the respondents is important. This study uses the data collected from 100 respondents which is primary to understand the connection between advertising creativity and design thinking.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Creativity plays a vital role in advertising; consumers have a wide range of choices and are subjected to advertisements with respect to a lot of platforms which it makes it a need for this study. Advertisers must therefore produce advertisements which help capture people's attention without losing relevance to them. Design thinking can offer a useful methodology since it is concerned with understanding people and their needs. It prompts advertisers to get to know consumers before coming up with advertising ideas and it also aids in coming up of ideas, testing and obtaining feedback.

Academically, this study is valuable because it links two key areas that is: advertising creativity and design thinking and it is extensively covered in the contexts of innovation and

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problem solving, whereas advertising creativity is widely discussed in the research of advertising and is also useful to advertising agencies and marketing managers since it gives them an insight into how consumer-oriented practices can be connected with creative advertising.

RESEARCH GAP

Past research only examined design thinking mainly in areas such as innovation, product development, problem solving and organisational change. Studies have discussed about visualisation and diversity as important elements of design thinking (Carlgren, Rauth and Elmquist, 2016; Micheli et al., 2019). Advertising research has separately examined creativity through concepts such as originality, relevance, novelty, meaningfulness and connectedness. There is research done on how advertising creativity affects consumer responses (Ang, Lee and Leong, 2007; Smith, Chen and Yang, 2008). However, fewer studies directly connect specific design-thinking practices with advertising creativity from the consumer's perspective. It is important to understand the target audience, consumer problems, generating multiple ideas, testing ideas and using feedback in relation to creative advertising.

MAIN OBJECTIVES-

* To study the role of design thinking in advertising creativity.
* To understand the connection between advertising creativity and design thinking.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RELATED TO RESEARCH

Research Question 1

Does having an understanding of the target audience help advertisers to produce better advertisements?
Answer: Yes. The average score is 4.30, the highest of all the ten statements. 82% of the respondents give a rating of either 4 or 5. This demonstrates clear agreement that understanding the target audience does help advertisers to create better advertisements.

Research Question 2

Does understanding consumers' needs and problems lead to more creative advertising ideas?
Answer: Yes. The average rating is 4.04. 74% respondents selected either 4 or 5. This shows that most respondents believe that understanding consumer needs and problems does lead to more creative advertising ideas.

Research Question 3

Does generating a number of ideas before deciding on an advertising concept enhance creativity?
Answer: Yes. The average rating is 4.06. 74% of the respondents choose either 4 or 5 which means respondents agreed that looking at a number of ideas can improve creativity.

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Research Question 4

Does testing advertising ideas with consumers help to improve the final advertisement?
Answer: Yes. The average rating is 4.01, with 72% of the respondents selecting either 4 or 5. This shows that the respondents believe that testing advertising ideas with consumers can help to improve advertising concepts.

Research Question 5

Does consumer feedback help advertisers to develop more effective and creative advertisements? Answer: Yes. The average rating is 4.13, with 81% of the respondents selecting either 4 or 5. This shows strong agreement about the importance of consumer feedback.

Research Question 6

Do original and new ideas contribute to advertising creativity?
Answer: Yes. The average rating is 4.06, and 75% of the respondents select either 4 or 5. This indicates that originality is seen as an important element of advertising creativity.

Research Question 7

Can creative advertisements attract consumer attention and communicate brand messages in a memorable way?
Answer: Yes. The average ratings are 3.97 for attracting and holding attention and 4.03 for communicating the brand message in an interesting and memorable way which tells that creative advertising can support both attracting attention and communicating the brand message.

Research Question 8

Are design-thinking approaches positively connected to to creativity of advertisements?
Answer: Yes. The average rating for this statement is 4.10. Furthermore, the Pearson correlation between design thinking and advertising creativity is 0.779, with $p < 0.001$. This indicates a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables.

LITERATURE REVIEW

7.1 Brown (2008)

Brown (2008) discusses the human-centred method about problem solving .This approach puts people and their needs as the important part of the development process. Rather than applying design with the completion of a process, design thinking involves using design principles at every stage of developing ideas and solutions. This is pertinent to advertising since advertisers need to understand consumers before coming up with creative concepts.

7.2 Johansson-Sköldberg, Woodilla and Çetinkaya (2013)

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Johansson-Sköldberg, Woodilla and Çetinkaya (2013) look at the development and different interpretations of design thinking. They state that it is understood in different ways within the fields of management. It is important in management because it links design approaches with creativity and innovation. This reinforces the need of the same in advertising, where solving problems related to creatvity is a key activity.

7.3 Kimbell (2011)

Kimbell (2011) looks at the concept of design thinking and discusses how it is applied in both design and management. The research shows that it should not be seen merely as a fixed, step-by-step process. Instead, it can be understood by learning about the actual practices and activities involved in the process. This is relevant to advertising since creative advertising also requires flexible thinking and also understand consumers which will help in generating ideas.

7.4 Liedtka (2015)

Liedtka (2015) looks at the relationship between innovation outcomes and design thinking The study explains that it will support decision makers to consider a lot of perspectives and reduce certain cognitive biases when solving problems. This is useful for advertising because creative teams need to consider different consumer thoughts , not only consider their own assumptions.

7.5 Carlgren, Rauth and Elmquist (2016)

Carlgren, Rauth and Elmquist (2016) identify 5 important themes related to design thinking.Their study shows that design thinking is not only about generation of ideas ; it also requires an understanding of users and experimenting with possible solutions. These approaches are connected to advertising since advertisers need to understand their audience, identify communication problems and test creative concepts.

7.6 Carlgren, Elmquist and Rauth (2016)

Carlgren, Elmquist and Rauth (2016) investigate the difficulties organisations encounter when implementing design thinking. Their research talks about design thinking that can be useful but may be hard to integrate into organisations. Advertising organisations need to apply design thinking properly rather than just using it as a label for creativity.

7.7 Micheli et al. (2019)

Micheli et al. (2019) review the existing research on design thinking and identify its main attributes, tools and outcomes. The study shows that design thinking is linked to user focus, problem solving, experimentation and innovation. This underlines research about its relationship with specific outcomes such as advertising creativity which has to be done.

7.8 Souza and Mendonça (2019)

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Souza and Mendonça (2019) specifically look at design thinking in advertising education. Their study suggests using design thinking for developing advertising projects. The research connects the approach with project development and creative advertising activities. This research is especially relevant because it directly links design thinking with advertising.

7.9 Ang, Lee and Leong (2007)

Ang, Lee and Leong (2007) develop the advertising creativity cube and identify novelty, meaningfulness and connectedness as important dimensions of advertising creativity. Their research shows that creative advertisements should not only be new but also be meaningful and connected to the audience. This reinforces the importance of understanding consumers when creating creative advertisements.

7.10 Smith et al. (2007)

Smith et al. (2007) examine the determinants and effects of advertising creativity. Their research shows that consumers' perceptions of advertising creativity are influenced by the interaction between divergence and relevance. The study also shows that advertising creativity can affect how consumers process and respond to advertisements. This supports the view that creative advertising should be both different and relevant to consumers.

7.11 West, Kover and Caruana (2008)

West, Kover and Caruana (2008) compare the views of advertising practitioners and consumers on what constitutes advertising creativity and differences in how practitioners and consumers understand creativity. This finding is important because advertisers may not always see creativity in the same way as consumers. It therefore follows that by understanding the target audience, advertisers can develop ideas that consumers also consider to be creative.

7.12 Smith, Chen and Yang (2008)

Smith, Chen and Yang (2008) examine the impact of advertising creativity on various stages of consumer response. Their research considers areas such as brand awareness, brand learning, brand liking and brand intentions. The study finds that divergence and relevance work together to influence consumer responses. .

7.13 Chen, Yang and Smith (2016)

Chen, Yang and Smith (2016) examine the effects of advertising creativity and repeated advertising exposure. Their study showed that ads with divergence and relevance can produce strong initial responses and show less evidence of advertising wear-out. This indicates that creative advertisements can remain effective even when consumers see them more than once.

7.14 Rosengren et al. (2020)

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Rosengren et al. (2020) carry out a meta-analysis covering 93 datasets from 67 papers and examine when and how advertising creativity is effective. Their analysis showed that advertising creativity has a positive effect and spoke about the need of both originality and appropriateness.It also showed that consumers judge advertising creativity. This supports the present study's focus on consumers and their perceptions of creative advertising.

7.15 Liedtka and related design-thinking research

Research on design thinking consistently stresses the importance of understanding users, exploring a wide range of ideas and testing possible solutions. These practices are closely connected with the creative advertising process. Design thinking offers a structured way of dealing with problems, while advertising creativity is concerned with producing original and relevant communication. The combination of these ideas provides a solid basis for investigating whether design-thinking practices are positively related to advertising creativity. The existing literature therefore justifies the need for primary research that connects the two concepts.

Literature Review Summary

The literature indicates that design thinking focuses on people, their needs, problem identification, idea generation, experimentation and feedback. Advertising creativity focuses on originality, relevance, meaningfulness, connectedness and differentiation. Both areas place a strong emphasis on understanding the audience. Previous studies have provided evidence for the importance of design thinking in innovation and for the importance of creativity in advertising. However, fewer studies have directly studied the connection among design-thinking practices and advertising creativity. The present study talks about this by analysing the primary data collected from 100 respondents.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

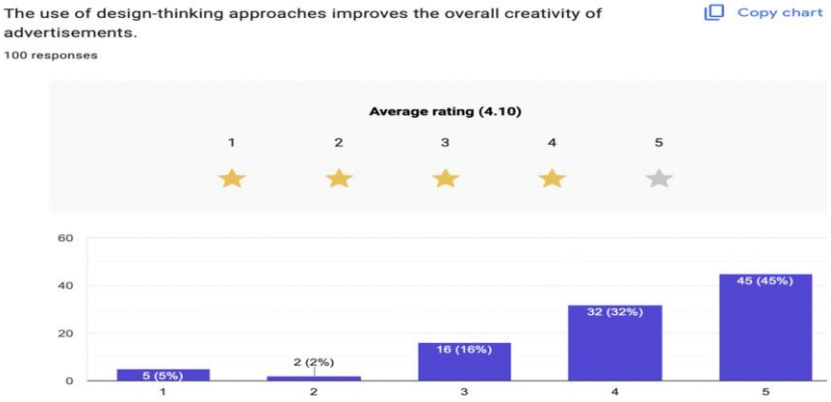
This study employs a primary research approach in order to look at the connection between design thinking and advertising creativity. The data obtained was primary and directly from the respondents by using 10 different questions which are assessed using a Likert scale, 1 meaning Strongly Disagree and 5 meaning Strongly Agree. Questions 1 to 5 assess advertising creativity in terms of originality, attention, memorable communication, differentiation and the general role of design thinking. The data collected is analysed by means of percentage analysis and the average ratings for each statement. Pearson correlation is applied in order to study about the overall Design Thinking score and the overall Advertising Creativity score and their connection. Questions 6 to 10 measure the design thinking practices such as understanding the target audience, understanding consumer needs and problems, generating multiple ideas, testing advertising ideas and using consumer feedback. The study does not make use of Cronbach's Alpha or any other reliability test, since the analysis is focused on descriptive and correlation analysis.

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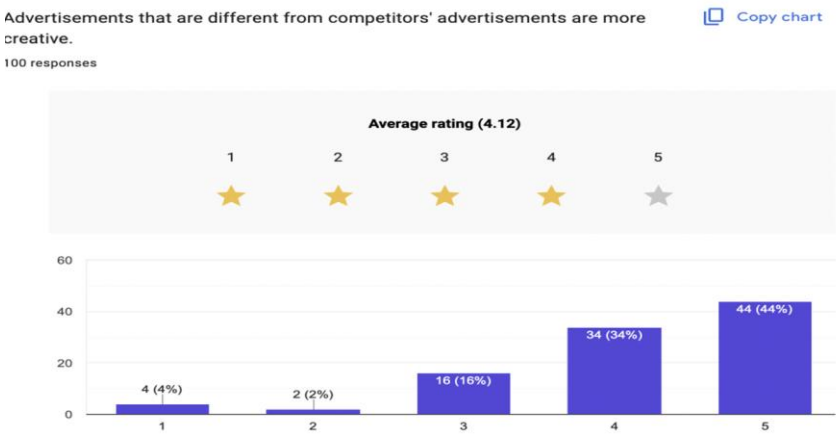
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Q1)



The interpretation shows that the average rating is 4.10 and that 77% of the respondents have given ratings of 4 or 5; this tells that many respondents think that design-thinking approaches are positively linked with the overall creativity of advertisements. This result directly supports the main aim of the study.

Q2)



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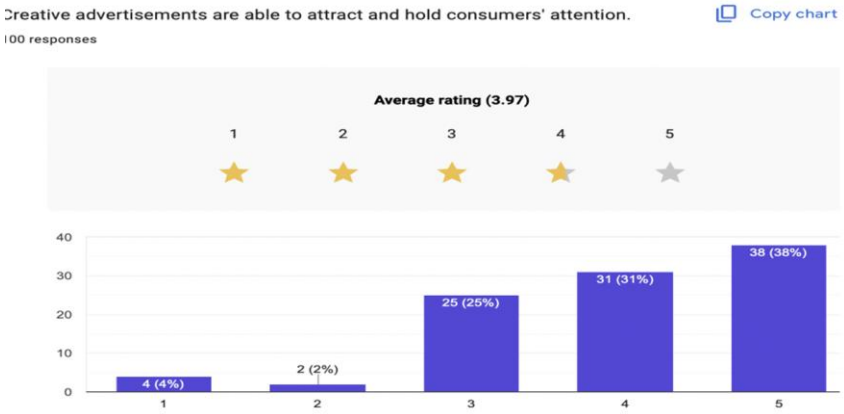
The average rating is 4.12, and 78% respondents gave ratings of 4 or 5. This indicates showed that they strongly believe that advertisements which differ from those of competitors are more creative; differentiation is thus an important element of advertising creativity.

Q3)



The average rating is 4.03, with 74% respondents giving ratings of 4 or 5, which tells that they generally think that creative advertisements communicate brand messages in an interesting and memorable manner.

Q4)



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The average score is 3.97, with 69% of the respondents giving ratings of 4 or 5. Even though this is the lowest average out of the ten statements, it is still near to 4, which shows general agreement that creative advertisements can attract and retain consumers' attention.

Q5)



The average rating is 4.06, and 75 % of respondents give ratings of 4 or 5; this shows that the respondents see originality as an important element of advertising creativity, since advertisements featuring new and different ideas are generally regarded as more creative.

Q6)



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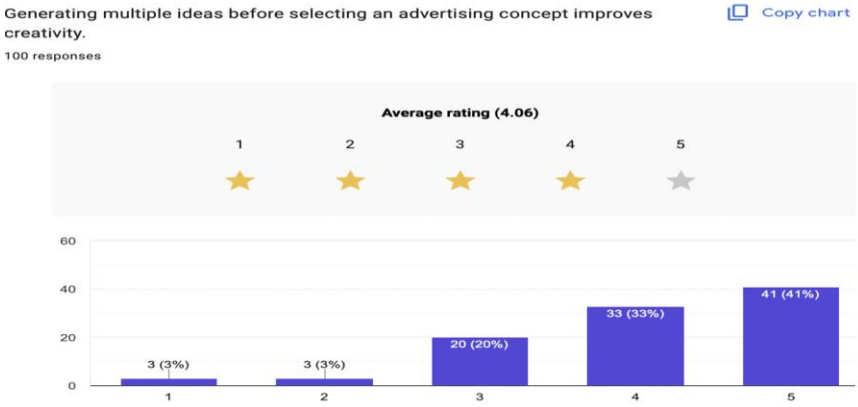
The average rating is 4.13, with 81% of respondents giving ratings of 4 or 5; this is one of the highest scores in the study and indicates that the respondents strongly agree that consumer feedback can help advertisers to produce more effective and creative advertisements.

Q7)



The average rating is 4.01, with 72% of the respondents giving ratings of 4 or 5. This showed that they agree that it is useful to test advertising ideas with consumers before finalising the advertisement. The result confirms the need of testing and experimentation .

Q8)

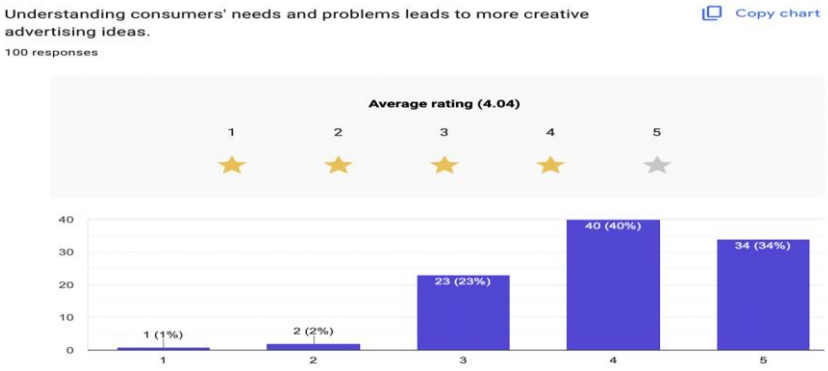


The average rating is 4.06, and 74 per cent of the respondents give ratings of 4 or 5. This indicates that generally people agree that it will help generate a lot of ideas before choosing the final advertising concept. This therefore supports the idea-generation part of design thinking.

Q9)

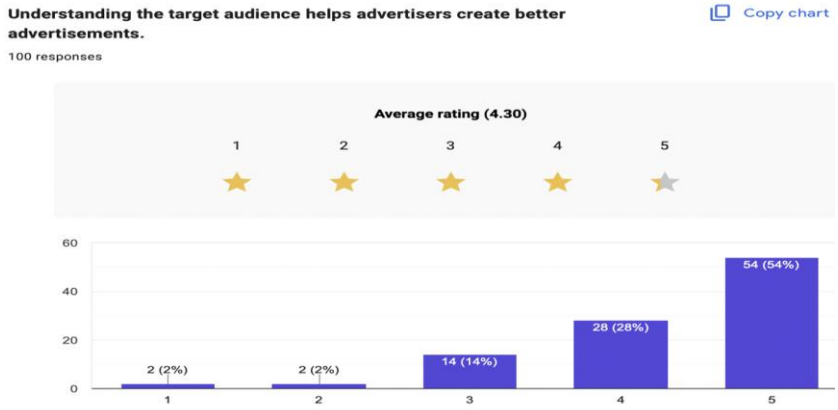
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The average rating is 4.04, and 74 per cent of the respondents give ratings of 4 or 5. This showed that the respondents agree that an understanding of consumer needs and problems can result in more creative advertising ideas. The findings highlight the importance of understanding the consumer problem before coming up with an advertising solution

Q10)



The average rating is 4.30, 82 per cent of the respondents giving ratings of 4 or 5, while 4 per cent give ratings of 1 or 2. This tells us that most of the them strongly agreed and acquiring knowledge about the target audience helps advertisers to produce better advertisements and also shows how important the user-focused element of design thinking is.

OVERALL DATA ANALYSIS

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The findings indicate that all ten statements have positive average ratings, with nine of the ten scoring above 4.00 and statement Q7 obtaining a rating of 3.97. The highest average rating is 4.30, which is for understanding the target audience; the next highest is 4.13 for using consumer feedback and then 4.12 for advertisements being different from those of competitors. The lowest average rating is 3.97, for creative advertisements that attract and hold consumers' attention. Yet this still reflects a general level of agreement. The overall mean score for Design Thinking (Q6 to Q10) is 4.108, and the overall mean score for Advertising Creativity (Q1 to Q5) is 4.056. These figures show that the respondents had positive reactions.

HYPOTHESES

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no link between design thinking and advertising creativity.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a positive relationship amongst design thinking and advertising creativity.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Correlation coefficient obtained was 0.779, showed a positive relationship amongst the two factors design thinking and advertising creativity and it means that higher the scores for design thinking, the higher the scores for advertising creativity. Put simply, those who assign higher ratings to design thinking also tend to give higher ratings to advertising creativity. It's "p "value is less than 0.001, which is below 0.05(significance). Thus, the relationship is statistically significant. Based on this, null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. It must be pointed out that correlation only indicates the relationship of these two variables here but it doesnt show that design thinking directly causes advertising creativity.

KEY FINDINGS

1. The study involves 100 respondents.
2. The respondents generally have a positive view of design thinking in advertising.
3. Understanding the target audience gave the highest average score of 4.30.
4. 82% respondents rated understanding the target audience and it rated it as 4 or 5
5. Understanding consumer needs and problems has an average score of 4.04.
6. Generating a number of ideas has an average score of 4.06.
7. Testing advertising ideas has an average score of 4.01.

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8. Using consumer feedback has an average score of 4.13.
9. Originality in advertising has an average score of 4.06.
10. Creative advertisements which attract and hold attention have an average score of 3.97.
11. Creative advertisements which communicate the brand message have an average score of 4.03.
12. Differentiation from competitors has an average score of 4.12.
13. The claim that design-thinking approaches lead to improved overall advertising creativity has an average score of 4.10.
14. The overall mean score for Design Thinking is 4.108.
15. The overall mean score for Advertising Creativity is 4.056.
16. The Pearson correlation between Design Thinking and Advertising Creativity is 0.779.
17. This relationship proved to be significant {$p < 0.001$ level}.
18. The research here tells and concludes that a positive relationship exists between advertising creativity and design thinking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Get to know the target audience first Advertising teams must start off the creative process by getting to know their target audience. This aspect has the highest average score of 4.30 . Before finalising the advertising concept, it must be noted that understanding consumer needs, preferences and problems is very important.
2. Finding out consumer needs and problems requires time and advertisers should take time to find it. This will enable them to come up with advertising ideas which are both relevant and creative.
3. Produce a number of ideas The advertising teams should come up with a number of ideas before deciding on the final one. By comparing the various ideas, the teams can spot stronger creative solutions.
4. Check the advertising concepts. Advertising concepts should be tested with consumers before the final campaign is launched.
5. Take consumer feedback into account Consumer feedback should be incorporated into the creative process. The average rating of 4.13 indicates a high level of agreement regarding the value of consumer feedback.
6. Strike a balance between originality and relevance Advertisements should be original yet also remain relevant to consumers. Research demonstrates that both originality and appropriateness are important for advertising creativity (Rosengren et al., 2020).
7. Ensure that the advertisements differ from those of the competitors Advertisers should look for ways to make their campaigns different from those of competing advertisements. It is important, however, that this differentiation still supports the brand message and meets consumer needs.
8. Apply design thinking at all stages of the advertising process Design thinking should not be confined to the stage of generating ideas; it can be applied at all stages of the process, including audience research, problem identification and idea generation.

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CONCLUSION

The study focuses on the relationship of design thinking and advertising creativity from primary data with the help of 100 respondents. The findings shows that people have a positive view of both design thinking and advertising creativity. Understanding the target audience receives the highest average score of 4.30, which shows that awareness of the consumer is considered to be very important. Similarly, the use of consumer feedback also receives a high average score of 4.13, suggesting that feedback is seen as useful for creating effective and creative advertisements. The overall mean score for Design Thinking is 4.108 and that for Advertising Creativity is 4.056, positive reaction to both variables is seen. The value obtained for Pearson correlation is 0.779 and hence a positive relationship was seen between both these variables, design thinking and advertising creativity, and this relationship is statistically significant with p value being less than 0.001 and henceforth, the null hypothesis was complelety rejected and the alternative hypothesis was supported. The study concludes that design-thinking practices are strongly and positively related to advertising creativity. Understanding consumers, coming up with various ideas, testing advertising concepts and making use of feedback can all help in the development of creative advertising. It should be noted, however, that the correlation result does not prove direct causation and only shows that design thinking and advertising creativity are strongly associated in the sample under study.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The results showed some of the major implications for advertising agencies and marketing managers. Managers should prompt creative teams to understand the target audience prior to developing advertising campaigns. Consumer research can assist teams in identifying consumer needs, preferences and problems. . In an environment where different ideas are encouraged, creative thinking can be supported. Testing can be incorporated into the advertising development process. Advertising concepts should be shown to consumers before the final campaign is launched. The feedback then obtained can be used to improve the advertising message and concept. Managers should likewise ask teams to bring about a balance between originality and relevance. An advertisement can be different from those of the competitors, but it must still clearly communicate the brand message and make contact with the target audience. Finally, organisations can apply design thinking as a structured method for advertising development. It can help teams progress from understanding consumers to generating, testing and improving creative advertising ideas.

LIMITATIONS

1. The study relies on a sample of 100 people, meaning that the results might not be typical of the whole population.

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2. The study majorly focused on assessing views and opinions of the respondents.
3. It concentrates solely on design thinking and advertising creativity.
4. The study does not concentrate on any one particular advertising agency or advertising campaign.
5. The data was gathered at a single point in time.
6. The study employs correlation analysis, which shows a relationship, but it doesn't necessarily imply direct causation.
7. Since the questionnaire includes ten statements, further research could use a greater number of measures and variables.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

• A larger sample size in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between design thinking and advertising creativity can be undertaken
• Different groups such as advertising professionals, marketing students and ordinary consumers can be compared .
• Researchers could also look at design thinking across various advertising platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, television, print and outdoor advertising.
•Whether design thinking is related to other outcomes like brand recall, consumer engagement, purchase intention and advertising effectiveness must be studied upon.
• How artificial intelligence and digital tools can be combined with design thinking to develop advertising concepts can also be researched.

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