

Effect of Consumers' Demographic Characteristics on Infomercial Characteristics and Purchase Intention towards Infomercial Advertised Products

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Abstract

Companies target consumers to advertise their products and one such way is through Infomercial advertising. They give awareness about the product and provide sufficient information which will make them to buy the advertised products or services. Companies target the audience by considering their demographic characters, so that they segment the audience and focus their attention effectively. In order to make the effectiveness of the infomercials, companies concentrate on the different characteristics of the infomercials, and identify the purchase intention of consumers towards infomercial advertised products. Six demographic characters have been considered namely, gender, age, occupation, education, income and family type. Infomercial characteristics consists of eight dimensions namely Perception of Advertising Effectiveness, Comments and Demonstration, Payment Information, Recognition, Comparison and Extras, Internal Knowledge, Reputation, Media Richness, and Appeal. How demographic characteristics will have effect on infomercial characteristics and purchase intention is important for the researchers to study. With the above background, the aim of this article is to find out the effect of consumers' demographic characters on infomercial characteristics and their intention to purchase infomercial advertised products. Responses have been collected from 397 customers who have purchased products after seeing infomercials. After careful analysis, the result concludes that occupation alone has effect on infomercial characteristics, whereas, gender, age, education, occupation, family type and income have effect on purchase intention.

Key-words: Infomercial, Demographic Characteristics, Infomercial Characteristics, Purchase Intention.

1. Introduction

An infomercial is a type of advertising aimed at educating the consumer through television in the form of a program about a product or a series of products. Usually, information marketing lasts

longer than a standard commercial and is more extensive. For those items that need thorough clarification of their characteristics, infomercials are nice as they can run as a daily television show. In the print media, as a separate complement, infomercials appear. Infomercials are able to link directly on a real-time basis with their customers. They build the link to make a request about the item or place an order with the potential customer. Different deals or promotions/discounts are usually given to consumers at the time of product promotion.

As part of an infomercial with the product code, a toll-free number is usually aired on the television channel to help consumers order the specific product. Compared to normal commercials that air during peak hours, another significant aspect of an infomercial is that it occurs during off-peak hours. One potential explanation is that advertising prices are usually lower around off-peak hours and it turns out to be economical for them because infomercials take more time.

As part of their strategy to know consumers, there is no specified category of goods that use infomercials. Infomercials are used for goods ranging from clothing, cosmetics, sarees, home renovation, kitchen pieces, shoes, workout equipment, etc. Reach is one of the key characteristics of infomercials and it allows an immediate communication with customers across regions because of the way it is conveyed. The bulk of the demand comes from cities in tier II and tier III. One example is naaptol, which runs infomercials. It is a 24-hour TV channel that broadcasts infomercials only. In addition, there are several more shows on other networks, such as Homeshop 18, Colors or Sony, The economic times 14-12-2020.

The term "infomercial," of course comes from the words "information" and "commercial," and it is a reasonably accurate moniker, although the quality of the information provided in a given infomercial can be questionable. Infomercials appear to include five times as many information signals as typical TV advertisements (Hope). Initially, it applied solely to commercial half-hour programming that broadcast during off-peak viewing hours, but today the word "infomercial" applies to any direct-response TV programming. Infomercials are as old as television itself in reality, infomercials constituted a significant proportion of the primordial television broadcasts of the 1940s and 50s. As more TVs were sold and ratings grew, the number of infomercials declined dramatically, but in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the genre returned to popularity (Hope). Ron Popeil is arguably the most prominent figure in the field of infomercials. Since the 1970s, he has graced television airwaves selling odds and ends, and his contribution to the infomercial rhetoric is undeniable; he is credited with the phrases "operators are standing by and just wait, there's more!"

2. Review of Literature

The research compared values expressed with values represented in traditional advertisements in infomercials. In order to analyze the prominence of value structures and specific values, a total of 318 infomercials and 861 commercials broadcast in Israel in the late 1990s were coded. Of the three belief systems studied, functionalism, hedonism and altruism, functionalism in infomercials was more than three times more frequent than in advertisements, and altruism in commercials was more than three times more frequent than in infomercials.

In ads, the frequency of hedonism was 25 percent higher than it was in infomercials. Joy rated just third in infomercials, the most popular value in commercials. Overall, the findings suggest that they offer a more restricted range of principles, despite the fact that the infomercials are longer than the advertisements. Infomercials repeatedly address only the price of the object, its fundamental characteristics and its obvious uses.

Media multitasking competes for customer interest with television ads, but it can also promote an immediate and observable response to certain advertisements. This paper examines whether and how online shopping is influenced by television ads. We are developing a large dataset covering \$3.4 billion in investment for 20 brands, website traffic and transaction measures for brands, and ad content measures for 1,224 advertisements. In two-minute pre/post windows of time, we use a quasi-experimental design to estimate whether and how TV advertisement affects shifts in online shopping.

In a difference-in-differences strategy, we use non-advertising rivals' online shopping to calculate the same results in two-hour periods around the time of the ad. The results show that advertising on television affects online shopping and that advertising material plays a key role. Action-focus material increases traffic and sales of direct websites. Information-focus and emotion-focus ad material actually reduces website traffic while increasing transactions at the same time, with a net sales impact that is favorable for most brands. These findings suggest that brands aiming to gain the interest of multitaskers and dollars must carefully pick their copy of ads.

For a large retailer, Dagger and Danaher (2013) created a single-source, customer-level database of ten advertising media and revenues. They noticed that catalogs had the highest single-medium advertisement elasticity, followed by direct mail, television, email and search, indicating that both direct-response channels and television were productive in increasing short-term sales. In a similar way, some recent studies have shown that television ads and advertising have synergistic effects on revenue.

Godes and Mayzlin (2004) demonstrated in an early attempt that online discussions of new television shows helped to predict the ratings of such programs, indicating that online word-of-mouth indicators represent wider patterns in customer conversations. More recently, a field experiment was designed by Gong et al. (2014) to test the causal influence of tweets and retweets on television show ratings. When they contain information content and are retweeted by prominent users, they find that promotional messages improve viewership, with greater results.

Tellis et al. (2000), which estimated how customer telephone calls responded to a new medical service's television advertising. The results showed that advertisement substantially increased the number of calls over a baseline, among various observations, but that its effect decreased rapidly within the first one or two hours. This study was expanded by Chandy et al. (2001) to understand the effect of particular advertisement appeals on customer response. Informative and emotional appeals were both effective in producing telephone calls, but shortly after market penetration, information content was more effective, while emotion-based content became more productive over time.

Research has been conducted on consumer perceptions of infomercials. It was found that "With infomercials, you don't buy eyeballs, you buy responsiveness." Agee and Martin (2001) found that infomercial purchases involved some degree of planning rather than being purely impulse purchases. Aspects of advertising content also influenced whether the purchase decision was impulsive or planned. Martin, Bhimy and Agee (2002) studied the use of advertising content such as the use of testimonials and consumer characteristics. Based on a survey of 878 people who had bought products after viewing infomercials, they found that infomercials were more effective if they used expert comments, testimonials, product demonstrations, and other approaches. Consumer age and product type also influenced perceived effectiveness.

3. Objective

The objective of this article is to identify the effect of demographic characteristics on infomercial characteristics and purchase intention towards infomercial advertised products.

4. Methodology

Descriptive research study is adopted in this study as the researcher is interested in determining the relationship between different variables. The purpose of the present study is to get

responses regarding the effect of demographic characteristics on infomercial characteristics and their purchase intention of consumers who have gone through the infomercial advertisements on television.

Infomercial characteristics are measured using nine dimensions with twenty seven statements, and purchase intention is measured using six statements. The dimensions used to measure infomercial characteristics are perception of advertising effectiveness, comments and demonstrations, payment information, internal knowledge, reputation, media richness, appeal, and recognition, comparison and extras. This scale was developed by Speck et al. (1997), and modified by the researcher so that it is suitable for the present research. All the items are measured with 5 point Likert Scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. As far as demographic characteristics are concerned, gender, age, education occupation, family type and monthly income have been considered. Questionnaire is used to collect the data from the respondents. Pilot study was conducted with 50 respondents, to test the questionnaire for its validity. Based on the responses obtained in the pilot study, problems faced by the respondents in filling up the questionnaire were identified and changes have been made to the questionnaire as considered appropriate, and the final questionnaire is framed. Construct validity is performed to test the validity of the questionnaire, and Chronbach alpha coefficient is used to test the reliability of the instrument.

Due to the accessibility, and being one of the major cities in Andhra Pradesh, Vijayawada has been considered as the research area for the present study. The population for this study is the customers who purchased products due to the influence of infomercials in Television Media from January 2019 to December 2019. During that period, top five companies who give infomercials are considered for the study. TechSci Research has rated all the above companies on the basis of number of orders and frequency of ordering. Accordingly, Naaptol Online Shopping Private Limited, SHOP CJ Network Private Limited, TV18 Home Shopping Network Limited, HBN Network Private Limited, and TVC Sky Shop Limited were selected for the study. By the above mentioned companies, the products sold by Infomercial advertisements are Home Furniture & Furnishing, Apparel, Footwear & Accessories, Consumer Electronics & Appliances, Gold Costume Jewelry, Silver Costume Jewelry, Hardware, Diamond Costume Jewelry, etc.

For a defined population, Cochran's formula can be considered especially in the situations with large population. Based on Cochran's (1963) sample size calculations, the sample size for the present study is 419. The data were collected from the customers who purchased infomercial products. Researcher approached top 5 infomercial companies in Vijayawada and explained the purpose of research and sought their cooperation in collecting data from the customers. After collecting the detailed list of customers from the companies, the researcher has selected 84 customers

randomly from each company (83 from TVC Sky Shop Limited) and informed them about the purpose of the research. After getting permission the researcher along with five more moderators approached the respondents and collected the data from them in person. The respondents gave full cooperation to the researcher till the end of the task. After completing the questionnaire, the researcher and moderators thanked the respondents for their support.

Out of 419 completed questionnaires, 7 respondents got bored in the middle of completing the questionnaire. 6 respondents' marked extreme responses for all the questions. After careful scrutiny, 9 questionnaires were also discarded for incomplete responses. Finally the effective sample was settled at 397 representing 94.75 percent response rate. Then the data were fed into the computer for analysis purpose.

5. Analysis

After collecting the data from the respondents, the data were subject to analysis using SPSS package. Majority of the respondents (68 percentage) belongs to female and 32 percent of the respondents participated in this survey are male. Majority of the respondents are in the age group of more than 30 years. It is observed that 45.6 percent of the respondents are homemakers, 19.4 percent of the respondents are working privately, 11.3 percent of the respondents are doing business, and 10.8 percent of the respondents are working for the government. However, 8.6 percent of the respondents are coming under student category.

Table 1 - Effect of Gender on Infomercial Characteristics and Purchase Intention

Infomercial Characteristics	Male	3.4739	.23743	0.371	.711
	Female	3.4833	.23257		
Purchase Intention	Male	3.1446	.60072	3.311	.036
	Female	4.0247	.59254		

Table shows the respondents' opinion about infomercial characteristics and purchase intention with respect to their gender. In order to check whether any significant differences exist between male and female respondents t-test was applied and the results are shown in the above table. Result shows that, purchase intention ($t = 3.311$; $p = 0.036$) has got significant result whereas infomercial characteristics ($t = 0.371$; $p = 0.711$) is insignificant.

Regarding purchase intention, respondents significantly differ in their opinion with respect to their gender. Comparing the mean values, female respondents (mean = 4.0247; SD = 0.59254) are

having high mean value compared to male respondents (mean = 3.1446; SD = 0.60072), which means that female respondents are having positive purchase intention compared to male respondents. Hence, it is concluded that female respondents' intention to purchase infomercial advertised product is more compared to male respondents.

Table 2 - Effect of Age on Infomercial Characteristics and Purchase Intention

Infomercial Characteristics	Below 21 years	3.3781	.23058	.290	.833
	21 to 30 years	3.5654	.24322		
	31 to 40 years	3.5912	.22790		
	Above 40 years	3.3703	.24488		
Purchase Intention	Below 21 years	3.4073	.57048	5.443	.023
	21 to 30 years	4.0301	.57685		
	31 to 40 years	3.6223	.60088		
	Above 40 years	3.0902	.62486		

Table shows the respondents' opinion about infomercial characteristics and purchase intention with respect to their age. In order to check whether any significant differences exist among the different age groups of the respondents, ANOVA was performed and the results show that, purchase intention ($t = 5.443$; $p = 0.023$) has got significant result while infomercial characteristics ($t = 0.290$; $p = 0.833$) does not have significant outcome.

As far as purchase intention is concerned, significant difference exists among the respondents with respect to their age. Post hoc Bonferroni test result shows that the respondents who are in the age group of 21 to 30 years (mean = 4.0301; SD = 0.57685) significantly differ from the respondents who are in the age group of above 40 years (mean = 3.0902; SD = 0.62486). That is, the respondents who are in the age group of 21 to 30 years are having purchase intention towards infomercials compared to the respondents who are in the age group of above 40 years. Hence, it is concluded from the above table that the respondents who are in the middle age show purchase intention towards infomercials compared to elders.

Table 3 - Effect of Education on Infomercial Characteristics and Purchase Intention

Infomercial Characteristics	School Level	3.3929	.22782	1.161	.223
	Graduate	3.6729	.23524		
	Post Graduate	3.5917	.25080		
	Others	3.3824	.22556		
Purchase Intention	School Level	3.0426	.62309	3.121	.039
	Graduate	4.2276	.57875		
	Post Graduate	3.4972	.62624		
	Others	3.3549	.60095		

Respondents' Opinion about Infomercial Characteristics and Purchase intention with respect to their Education was analyzed by computing the ANOVA. The result shows that, there is a significant difference exists towards purchase intention but not towards infomercial characteristics.

As far as purchase intention is concerned, significant difference exists among the respondents with respect to their educational level. Post hoc Bonferroni test result shows that the respondents who are graduate (mean = 4.2276; SD = 0. 57875) significantly differ from the respondents who are in school level education (mean = 3.0426; SD = 0. 62309). That is, the graduate respondents are having purchase intention towards infomercials compared to the respondents who possess school level education. Hence, it is concluded from the above table that the respondents who are graduate show purchase intention towards infomercials compared to school level education.

Table 4 - Effect of Occupation on Infomercial Characteristics and Purchase Intention

Infomercial Characteristics	Student	3.4110	.22562	3.045	.045
	Business	3.4361	.19955		
	Government Employee	3.3850	.23541		
	Private Employee	3.3581	.23651		
	Homemaker	3.9664	.24051		
	Others	3.4074	.24738		
Purchase Intention	Student	3.1608	.45516	2.903	.048
	Business	3.4000	.60135		
	Government Employee	3.5853	.55322		
	Private Employee	3.5519	.65909		
	Homemaker	4.0267	.58060		
	Others	3.3039	.75974		

ANOVA was performed to identify whether the respondents' Opinion about Infomercial Characteristics with respect to their occupation. The result is explained in above table. The result shows that, there is a significant difference exists among the respondents towards infomercial characteristics ($F = 3.045$; $p = 0.045$) and purchase intention ($F = 2.903$, $p = 0.048$).

Regarding attitude towards infomercial characteristics, respondents differ significantly with respect to their occupation. That is, homemakers (mean = 3.9664; SD = 0.2405) significantly differ from private employees (mean = 3.3581; SD = 0.2365). Therefore, the result concludes that the homemakers have positive attitude towards infomercial characteristics compared to private employees. With regard to purchase intention, significant difference exists among the respondents with respect to their occupation. The respondents who are homemakers (mean = 4.0267; SD = 0.

5806) significantly differ from students (mean = 3.1608; SD = 0.4551). That is, the home makers' respondents are having purchase intention towards infomercials compared to the students' respondents. Hence, it is concluded from the above table that the respondents who are homemakers show positive purchase intention towards infomercials compared to students.

Table 5 - Effect of Family Type on Infomercial Characteristics and Purchase Intention

Infomercial Characteristics	Joint Family	3.5947	.24806	0.652	.515
	Nuclear Family	3.3762	.22999		
Purchase Intention	Joint Family	3.0943	.61550	4.653	0.014
	Nuclear Family	3.9414	.58906		

Table shows the respondents' opinion about infomercial characteristics and purchase intention with respect to their family type. In order to check whether any significant differences exist between joint family and nuclear family, t-test was applied and the results are shown in the above table. Result shows that, purchase intention ($t = 4.653$; $p = 0.014$) has got significant result whereas infomercial characteristics ($t = 0.652$; $p = 0.515$) are insignificant.

Regarding purchase intention, respondents significantly differ in their opinion with respect to their family type. Comparing the mean values, nuclear family respondents (mean = 3.9414; SD = 0.58906) are having high mean value compared to joint family respondents (mean = 3.0943; SD = 0.61550), which means that nuclear family respondents are having positive purchase intention compared to joint family respondents. Hence, it is concluded that nuclear family respondents' intention to purchase infomercial advertised product is more compared to joint family respondents.

Table 6 - Effect of Monthly Income on Infomercial Characteristics and Purchase Intention

Infomercial Characteristics	Less than Rs.25000	3.3740	.25930	.810	.519
	Rs.25001 to Rs.50000	3.3947	.22882		
	Rs.50001 to Rs.75000	3.5904	.23273		
	Rs.75001 to Rs.100000	3.5781	.22939		
	More than Rs.100000	3.4077	.23112		
Purchase Intention	Less than Rs.25000	2.9542	.57610	5.796	0.028
	Rs.25001 to Rs.50000	3.2851	.50585		
	Rs.50001 to Rs.75000	4.1083	.61289		
	Rs.75001 to Rs.100000	4.0343	.60768		
	More than Rs.100000	3.3845	.59549		

Table shows the respondents' opinion about infomercial characteristics and purchase intention with respect to their income level. In order to check whether any significant differences exist among

the different income level of the respondents, ANOVA was performed and the results show that, purchase intention ($t = 5.796$; $p = 0.028$) has got significant result while infomercial characteristics ($t = 0.810$; $p = 0.519$) do not have significant result.

As far as purchase intention is concerned, significant difference exists among the respondents with respect to their age. Post hoc Bonferroni test result shows that the respondents who are earning Rs. 50001 to Rs.75000 (mean = 4.1083; SD = 0.61289) significantly differ from the respondents who are earning less than Rs.25000 (mean = 2.9542; SD = 0.57610). That is, the respondents who are earning Rs.50001 to Rs.75000 are having purchase intention towards infomercials compared to the respondents who are in earning less than Rs.25000. Hence, it is concluded from the above table that the respondents who are earning Rs. 50001 to Rs.75000 show purchase intention towards infomercials compared to respondents who are earning less than Rs.25000.

6. Findings

It is concluded that female respondents' intention to purchase infomercial advertised product is more compared to male respondents. With regard to infomercial characteristics, respondents do not differ significantly with respect to their gender. That is, male and female respondents have similar attitude towards infomercial characteristics. As far as purchase intention is concerned, significant difference exists among the respondents with respect to their age. It is concluded from the above table that the respondents who are in the middle age show purchase intention towards infomercials compared to elders. With regard to infomercial characteristics, there is no significant difference exists among the different age group of respondents. Their opinion towards infomercial characteristics is one and the same with respect to their age.

The respondents do not differ based on the Infomercial characteristics with respect to their education level. Their opinions towards infomercials are same. As far as purchase intention is concerned, significant difference exists among the respondents with respect to their educational level. It is concluded from the study that the respondents who have graduation degree show positive intention to purchase the infomercial advertised products compared to school level education. Regarding purchase intention, it is identified that the respondents differ significantly with respect to their occupation. Result concludes that the homemakers show positive purchase intention towards infomercials compared to the students. Result shows that, among the study variables, purchase intention has got significant result with respect to family type, whereas infomercial characteristics are insignificant.

It is concluded from the study that nuclear family respondents' intention to purchase infomercial advertised product is high compared to joint family respondents. As far as purchase intention is concerned, significant difference exists among the respondents with respect to their age. It is concluded that the respondents who are earning Rs.50001 to Rs.75000 show positive intention to purchase towards infomercial products compared to respondents who are earning less than Rs.25000.

7. Suggestions

Since, female respondents have an edge over male respondents as far as their attitude towards infomercial advertisements is concerned, it is suggested that the companies can use infomercial advertisements to promote the products that are used by female consumers, like kitchen appliances, cosmetics, dresses, ornaments, etc. As the result also concludes that the female respondents' intention to purchase infomercial advertised product is more compared to male respondents, spotlighting female consumers will yield better result compared to targeting male consumers. Seeing that, the respondents who are in the middle age show positive attitude towards infomercials compared to youngsters and elders, companies should give infomercial advertisements for the products that are used by the middle aged people. However, the advertisements for youngsters, children and elders can also be given, but the infomercial concept, theme, script, offers, etc. should focus on the middle aged people as they watch infomercial more and also they have purchasing power.

Given that, the graduates show positive attitude towards infomercials compared to the consumers who have educated up to school level, companies may provide adequate and required information for the advertised products in the infomercial. Information may be given in the form of sound bullets, colorful adjectives, photo caption, headings and subheadings and even graphics. Educated people read, understand and go for the next level of action. However, school level educated consumers do not show positive attitude towards infomercials. Hence, companies need to create infomercials with symbols, pictures, important captions, visuals, photos and music. This will make the consumers to grasp the content and important information quickly without any hassle. Use of celebrities, testimonials and spokesperson will add additional support to the infomercial as far as less educated consumers are concerned. As homemakers show positive attitude towards infomercials, it is recommended that the companies should influence homemakers to sell its line of products. Of course, the end user may be different, but housewives will communicate the message to others. Further, business people do not have positive attitude towards infomercials, it is put forward that the companies need to use some strategies to bring the businessmen, government employees and private

employees to watch infomercials. Prime time infomercials may be a useful technique to reach above mentioned categories of the consumers.

8. Conclusion

Infomercial advertisements are nowadays gaining momentum as they give innovative and novel products. However, the awareness, reachability and to some extent believability is less among the public towards infomercial advertisements and advertised products. Hence, many consumers show moderate intention to purchase the advertised products. The present study is aimed at identifying the influence of infomercial on purchase intention for select products. female consumers tend to watch infomercial advertisements, and among them homemakers play a significant role in bringing the infomercial advertised products to their family and tend to purchase the products. Educated people watch infomercials and purchase the products while others need attention by the corporate to convert them from non-users to users of infomercial products. Focus need to be given on joint family members and low income group customers. If consumers have more positive attitude towards infomercials and the infomercial characteristics are positively perceived by the consumers, then the intention to purchase the advertised products is assured for any product category, especially kitchen items and garments.

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