



EXPLORING CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD LOCAL TV COMMERCIALS IN THE POST-CONFLICT MARKETING ENVIRONMENT: GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH

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Abstract

Consumers in the post conflict marketing environment are confronted with a large number of advertisements for many products and services. In such a cluttered media environment, one of the major challenges for advertising is to attract and retain the attention of consumers. Exploring consumer attitude of TV commercials provides knowledge to both academic and practitioners for modifying advertisement which are suited for the consumer preference. Using Grounded Theory approach, this study explores how marketing academics and the marketers can gain fresh insights into consumer attitude of TV commercials in the post-conflict marketing environment. Data were collected via 50 in-depth interviews undertaken in the four major cities of Northern Province of Sri Lanka. Study found that consumers in the post conflict environment have negative attitude towards local TV commercials. There is an attitude different among the local advertisements and international advertisements. Consumers' evaluate the quality of an advertisement based on the features like advertising likability, social norms, interactivity, cultural aspects, emotional appeals, and the Celebrities. Irritation and repetition were found to be the important determinants of attitude towards local TV commercials. Additionally, there was evidence of influences from cultural resemblance that could motivate the people to enjoy the international TV commercials rather than local TV commercials. TV commercials which lead to greater enjoyment, allow consumers to learn more about brands and improve levels of comprehension. International advertisements, which subordinate interaction, were found to greatly increase the number of respondents liking. Further it was found that the advertisements associate with emotional appeals attract consumers more powerful than the advertisements which lack those appeals. Further, the study can provide practical suggestions on how to design effective commercial advertisement to fully utilize the advantages of the Television media. It is recommended that advertisers should think about entertainment for designing advertisement. They should also decide apposite on what position they are





aiming for, since that helps advertisement agencies to lay better positions on consumers mind, particularly consumers, who are returned to the normal life prefer enjoyable, cultural match, and fun associated advertisements rather than the long message content advertisements, and also they like the celebrities who appear their social patterns and ethnicity.

Key word: Attitude, Grounded theory approach, local TV commercials, Post- conflict Marketing Environment, Qualitative research,

Introduction

Post-conflict marketing environment is idiosyncratic, and furnish opportunities for marketers to sell their product and services to the potential customers who have returned to their habitual life. War is a devastating experience, leaving its mark on society, market structures, consumer, and almost every aspect of a country's social, political, and economic. Marketers are trying to enter into post-conflict marketing environment, via market development strategy. Consumers in the post conflict marketing environment are confronted with a large number of advertisements for many products and services. In such a cluttered media environment, one of the major challenges for advertising is to attract and retain the attention of consumers, who are redeveloping purchasing patterns among the huge number of brands. TV commercials fail to get attention by being lost in attractiveness, and increasing commercial channels proliferate in the post conflict marketing environment. Exploring consumer attitude of TV commercials provides knowledge to both academic and practitioners for modifying advertisement which are suited for the consumer preference. By understanding consumer's attitude towards advertising, designers and marketers can better strategize their advertising designs. Using Grounded Theory approach, this study explores how marketing academics and the marketers can gain fresh insights into consumer attitude towards local TV commercials in the post-conflict marketing environment.

Background of the study

Post-conflict marketing environment is unique in its characteristics. War is a devastating experience, leaving its mark on society, market structures, consumer, and almost every aspect of a country's social, political, and economic. Marketers are trying to enter into the post-conflict marketing environment, as market development strategy. In the post-conflict environment, local firms are facing stiff competition from foreign brands. In order to compete successfully they need to develop new marketing strategies on the post-war perspective. At the same time they also need to focus on all the marketing activities from the consumer's perspectives. At the time of war consumers were more conscious on the product accessibility, and didn't consider the other promotional aspects in the purchase, but in the post-conflict marketing environment they search for information and compare quality aspects in each marketing activities. Local firms are facing stiff competition from foreign brands. In order to compete successfully they need to develop new marketing strategies on the post-war



perspective (Bray, John, 2005). At the same time they also need to focus on all the marketing activities from the consumer's perspectives Gerstle, Tracy and Timothy Nourse, 2007).

Post conflict marketing environment is exclusive, and furnish opportunities for marketers to sell their product and services to the potential customers who are returned to their habitual life. The customers in the post conflict environment search for information sources, to rebuild, and redevelop their buying patterns (Mills, Rob and Qimiaofan, 2007). Because of the experienced gained in the conflict environment, consumers have become more knowledgeable, less naive, and less easily influenced, in addition they have more choices in the market. Marketers who attempt to penetrate their market in to post conflict marketing environment should select the appropriate mix of promotion (Hooley, Piercy, and Nicoulaud, 2008).

One of the challenges facing marketing managers is how best communication messages in the post conflict marketing environment. this not only requires carefully matching the messages preferences of target market to the audiences and or readership profiles of available media, but also necessitates to identify consumers predispositions (favorable or unfavorable) towards advertising in general has an impact on the effectiveness of any given advertisement. After the end of the civil war people have returned to their normal life and searching for new in every aspects, at the same time enterprises are moving into the post conflict marketing environments for having opportunity of adding potential customers. To match their solution with the consumers' needs and wants organizations wants to advertise correctly via TV commercials. The TV commercials which are preferred by the consumers, should be designed by the marketers otherwise, the attempt to meet the customer needs may fail.

Based on this background the study build to investigate what is the attitude of consumers towards local TV commercials in the post conflict environment? A study addressing these issues is relevant and significant. Results can be of interest to marketers aiming at the post conflict market.

Objectives of the study

- I. To Explore the consumers attitude towards local T.V commercials in the post conflict marketing environment
- II. Identify the factors which influence the attitude towards local T.V commercials in the post conflict marketing environment
- III. To recognize the factors of international advertisements, which attract the consumers in the post conflict marketing environment?
- IV. To explore advertising strategies which can be used to positioned in the post conflict marketing environment





Research Methodology-A Grounded theory approach

The present study focuses on the qualitative methodology, and the grounded theory approach for exploring the pattern of consumer brand choice in the post-war marketing environment. Analysis of marketing research methods shows that qualitative analysis of environment is the most popular. Qualitative analysis is usually being used in the design of business development strategies (Matekoniene *et al.*, 2002).

There are lack of theories related to the consumer attitude toward local TV commercials and the strategies related to position in the post conflict marketing environment. Therefore the study intends to explore the new theory using the grounded theory approach. The development of marketing academic knowledge is built upon the advancements of its research methods. This allows a new inside of consumer behavior to be uncovered, previously hidden from the eyes of researchers. Inspired by the theme of 'Doing more with less', this paper examines the qualitative methodological approach of Grounded Theory (GT) in relation to its benefits for marketing academics and researchers alike.

GT was first adapted as a formal methodology by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Discontented with the belief that all significant theories had been discovered already, Glaser and Strauss set out to address how theories can be discovered directly from data (*ibid*). As a consequence, unlike many other methodologies, a GT approach entails that data collection and analysis occurs simultaneously, allowing the researcher to discover trends as they emerge. This allows the researcher to further explore these trends, observing variations and relationships, identifying where more data is needed (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasized that theories developed under a GT approach should be able to be used in a practical setting that both predicts and explains behavior through establishing empirical generalizations.

In this study researcher used an inductive research method, building theory from data. As little prior research exists in brand choice pattern, and lack of theories related to consumer brand choices in the post-conflict marketing environment, a GT approach was adopted which provides support for developing previously undiscovered theories. Strauss and Corbin (1997) discuss that a GT methodology is very effective in carrying out qualitative research when the research objective is theory building, a pivotal first step in an under researched area.

Theoretical Sampling was used to select the respondent, which involves the sampling of data (and respondents) in an attempt to develop the theory as it emerges (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Goulding 2000). In the present study, the open coding process lead to researchers selectively interviewing respondents based on where the emerging theory stipulated. According to the table1 irregularity in demographics is a tactic used to acquire respondents whom will offer the most insights for the study.





Table1: demographic of respondents.

Male/female	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	Above 55	Total
Male	5	9	3	2	1	20
female	4	10	8	4	4	30
	9	19	11	6	5	50

Data analysis

The application of Grounded Theory

The first step of GT involves identifying area that the researcher wishes to examine. Ideally, this interest should arrive due to a lack of knowledge in the literature, as the researcher will build their own theory (Goulding, 2000; 2005). However, previous knowledge in the area of interest is not only expected, but it is also encouraged, as previous knowledge gives the researcher focus (Goulding, 2000). In the present study, the researchers identified a gap in consumer attitude towards local TV commercials in the post conflict environment in the literatures, but did not encounter any academic studies that examined consumer attitude towards local TV commercials in the post conflict environment. This gap in the literature leads to the area of interest and theory generation.

Data presentation and analysis

Based on Classical Grounded Theory, in this study, researcher employed the following techniques for concept coding: a) writing memos for every interview summarizing key themes and non-verbal reactions; b) using photographs of brand experience 'maps'; and c) writing a 'researcher diary' that brings together key concepts across all the interviews.

Developing concept

From undertaking a GT approach was found that there is a different in the consumer attitude towards local TV commercials in the post conflict environment. This was particularly evident in the male and female categories. Most respondents are interested with TV commercials because of the factors associates with them as "*advertising likability*", "*social norms*", "*interactivity*", "*cultural aspects*", "*emotional appeals*", and "*Celebrities*" TV commercials are seen by the customers in the post conflict environment are TV commercials telecasted on local Television channels and the commercials telecasted on international Channels including Indian channels. Local TV commercials are included into two sub-categories – '*locally designed commercials are telecasted in between re-telecasting international Television programs*' (usually repetition of advertisement with message content) and '*commercials, which are telecasted on local TV channels*' (with



Sri Lankan celebrities), but these TV commercials were rarely available in Northern province because the technology for telecasting were not available due to the war, but Indian advertisements were available because the reachability due to distance between Chennai and Jaffna. Respondents justified the reason of fondness of international advertisements particularly Indian advertisements (enjoyable). They like much which have, *good likability, social, cultural match, ethnic recognition* compare to other TV commercials. (*Some features less the quality of good TV commercials*)

This study explored some uncovers unique and previously unobserved factors influencing the attitude toward local TV commercials. The use of a GT approach enabled richer and deeper insights into consumer behavior in the post conflict environment than other methodologies provide. Through theoretical sampling, researcher was able to effectively guide the data to the developing theory on the attitude toward local TV commercials.

Findings and conclusion

This approach allowed the development of new knowledge about the consumer attitude toward local TV commercials. The researcher identified unique attitude patterns among the consumers in the post conflict environment. Study found that consumers in the post conflict environment have negative attitude towards local TV commercials. There is an attitude different among the local advertisements and international advertisements. Consumers' evaluate the quality of an advertisement based on the features like advertising likability, social norms, interactivity, cultural aspects, emotional appeals, and the Celebrities. Irritation and repetition were found to be the important determinants of attitude towards local TV commercials. Additionally, there was evidence of influences from cultural resemblance that could motivate the people to enjoy the international TV commercials rather than local TV commercials. TV commercials which lead to greater enjoyment, allow consumers to learn more about brands and improve levels of comprehension. International advertisements, which subordinate interaction, were found to greatly increase the number of respondents liking. Further it was found that the advertisements associate with emotional appeals attract consumers more powerful than the advertisements which lack those appeals. Further, the study can provide practical suggestions on how to design effective commercial advertisement to fully utilize the advantages of the Television media. It is recommended that advertisers should think about entertainment for designing advertisement. They should also decide early on what position they are aiming for, since that helps advertisement agencies to lay better positions on consumers mind, particularly consumers, who are returned to the normal life prefer enjoyable, cultural match, and fun associated advertisements rather than the long message content advertisements, and also they like the celebrities who appear their social patterns and ethnicity. This research has an implication to design a unique strategy to attract consumers in the post conflict environment via developing Designing attractive local TV commercials.