



Cultural Attributes In Advertising: An Indian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Culture plays an important role in the everyday life of an individual by influencing different aspects of life. Most importantly, it influences people's consumption decisions thereby impacting the marketing strategies of the brands. The marketing communication strategy is one of many strategies that aims at influencing consumer behaviour. It often uses cultural elements to resonate with the target audiences. The brand frequently uses cultural elements in its advertising practices to establish an emotional connection with the audience. Such integration enhances the brand's acceptability in the market. Indian consumers exhibit strong sensitivity towards their culture leading to widespread use of cultural elements in advertisements. The present study is an attempt to understand the level of integration of various cultural elements in Indian advertising practices. It is observed that language as an element of culture is featured consistently across advertisements irrespective of product categories and group bands. However, a similar result is not observed for the other cultural elements such as cultural values, customs & rituals and cultural symbols. The study further proposes the scope of future research.

Keywords: Indian Advertising, Culture, Cultural Elements, Language, Values, Symbols, Customs & Rituals.

Introduction

Marketing communication plays an important role in a competitive environment. It aims at effectively delivering intended marketing messages to the target audience. Advertising is one of the important tools widely used by marketers. In addition, the availability of different media with reach to consumers has contributed to making advertising a strong device in marketing communications. Consumers' easy access to media like Television, Print or the Internet has compelled media houses to deliver content that is in line with the culture of the audiences. This has created a situation whereby marketers are forced to localise their advertising strategy. They have adopted the languages and integrated other elements of the culture of the target groups of audiences/readers. This strategy has helped advertisers deliver marketing messages resonating with the cultural elements of the target audience.

India is a culturally diverse country with a burgeoning middle-class population, estimated at 30% of the Indian population in 2020-21 and to be 46% in 2030 (PRICE, 2022). The middle-class population earns Rs 5 – 30 lakh annual household income at 2020-21 prices. This reflects the rising buying capacity of a huge population attracting the attention of marketers. Marketers are wooing consumers by incorporating cultural elements in their advertising efforts, to align their cultural beliefs and ethos into the products and services and thereby bringing production and consumption sitting on the same branch of a plant. Indian consumers are highly sensitive towards their culture. Therefore, marketers have to be careful while exhibiting the cultural aspects in advertisements. For example, The advertisement campaign 'Badlav Humse Hain' of AU Bank faced backlash in India. They were forced to withdraw the advertisements from all the platforms for hurting certain sections of society (Sharma, 2022). A similar fate was met by the advertising campaign of Dabur promoting their brand Fem featuring a lesbian couple celebrating the Karva Chauth festival (ANI, 2021). Though India is changing, this change cannot be taken for granted. When a particular line is crossed and the sentiments of the people get hurt, the campaign faces opposition from different corners. FabIndia, Tanishq, Surf Excel, Amul, Manyavar, Zomato, Mankind Pharma, Kent RO, Jawed Habib, Ceat Tyres, and other brands have tested social backlash at different points of time due to reflecting themes in advertising campaigns that are not part of the traditional Indian culture ("From FabIndia to Tanishq", 2021). Even if the message is very novel and relevant,

a certain section of society may not accept it. However, such backlash is very low if we compare it with enormous numbers of advertisements incorporating cultural elements, printed or aired in different media in India.

Review of Literature

Consumption is a natural process for every living being. However, our consumption preferences or choices differ throughout the globe. Culture dictates the consumption pattern by prescribing manners of satisfying our desires (Onkvisit and Shaw, 2007). It influences the lives in many different ways. It is visible in how individuals dress, the music they listen to, their ways of thinking, communication and so on. The existence of such cultural influence on human life reflects the causal rationale behind the incorporation of culture in advertising practices. Consumers usually respond to advertisements positively when it is aligned with their cultural values and norms (Zhang & Neelankavil, 1997). Lee (2019) also concluded culture does play an influential role in advertising practices. The use of culture in advertisements helps in bridging the communication gap more effectively between the brand and the consumer.

Pollay & Gallagher (1990) have identified that various cultural values are incorporated into advertisements. They observed that Pleasure followed by Wisdom, Family and Security were the most dominant cultural values depicted in US advertisements. Moreover, advertisements also show the changing cultural values in the society. This fact was established by Tsao (1994). Tsao found that the use of cultural characteristics in the advertisements was very different between the periods 1981-1985 and 1986-1990. He attributed this phenomenon to the adoption of the Western lifestyle by Taiwanese people after 1985.

All these studies indicate that Marketers are aware of the importance given by the target consumers to their culture. Continuous use of cultural attributes in advertisements also supports this proposition. Thus, culture and advertising practices as a theme of research have always been attracting the attention of different researchers throughout the globe. The popular value framework adopted in many of such studies either is Rokeach's inventory of values (1973) containing 36 values categorised into 18 Terminal Values and 18 Instrument Values; or Kahle's list of values also known as LOV (1983) containing 9 values; or Hofstede's (1980) six Cultural Dimension; or Schwartz's nine cultural values (2006). Amongst the above value framework, more than a thousand research papers have been published based on the Hofstede cultural dimension (Zhou & Kwon, 2020).

Okazaki & Muller (2007) carried out a study concerning cross-cultural advertising research published in selected reputed indexed journals from 1995 to 2006. 'Cultural values' followed by 'Standardisation vs Localisation debate', 'Consumer response to advertising', 'Advertising content', and so on were the most researched topics. They also observed that more than 48% of studies were carried out in Western Europe and North America, 22% in Japan, China, and Korea together, and only 12% of studies were carried out in South and South East Asia which includes India as well. This study also reveals that the research on advertising focusing on cultural aspects in India is less done in comparison to regions or countries stated above. A similar study was conducted by Lee (2019). Lee studied 246 research publications on culture that were published in seven journals related to marketing, consumer psychology, and advertising between 2008 and 2017. These journals were Journal of Advertising, Journal of Advertising Research, International Journal of Advertising, Psychology & Marketing, Journal of Consumer Psychology, Journal of Consumer Research, and Journal of Marketing. She observes that 30.49% of these articles were concerned with cross-national comparisons and 69.51% within the nation's cultural variations. She also observed that only 5.7% of studies have sampled Indians in their studies. Lee's (2019) study identifies a lack of interest among researchers at the global level in exploring Indian culture in advertising research. However, there are a few noteworthy studies that have covered Indian culture in advertising.

Srikandath (1991) conducted a content analysis of 200 Indian advertisements. The study revealed the prevalence of High-tech as the dominant cultural value, followed by Health, Fun, Quality, beauty and others in Indian advertisements. This study also reflects the practice of using dominant cultural values with secondary values. For instance, he observed that in Indian advertisements, with the dominant value 'Quality', the secondary value 'Economy' is mostly used. Another study also attempted to understand the different cultural values depicted in Indian advertising. The study was conducted by Sharma & Bumb (2020). They conducted content analysis on 200 print advertisements. They propose a model for cultural values in India by classifying 32 distinct cultural values into four latent variables, namely, Individual Traits, Fun & Frolic Traits, Religious Traits, and Interpersonal Traits. Banerjee (2008) also endeavoured to identify the cultural values used in Indian advertising. He proposed a verbal model portraying the cultural and value dimensions of Indian consumers. The cultural dimensions include Languages, Symbols & Signs, Rituals & Customs, and Traditions. The value dimensions comprised of Individual & Family, Society through Conformity, Success and Growth, Age and Youthfulness, Happiness & Adaptability, and Religion and Spirituality. In a similar line, Swaminathan (2015) revealed that Indian advertising depicts values like Power dimension, Individualism as well as Collectivism, Clear gender roles, Hierarchy in the society (Respect for elders), and Fear of failure. The use of cultural values in Indian advertisements may be justified as consumers tend to select brands that represent family values, group values, status, self-identity, and personal values (Khare, 2011).

Various cross-cultural advertising studies were also conducted keeping Indian culture as one of the focussed cultures. Pashupati & Lee (2003) compared Indian and Korean website advertisements. They identified that

advertisement practices in these two countries are very different. They attribute these differences to the types of products and services being promoted and not to the cultural context. Khairullah & Khairullah (2003) investigated the cultural values shown in advertisements across product categories in India and the United States. They observed that the dominant cultural values depicted in these two countries' advertisements were different. They observed that Convenience is the most dominant cultural value reflected in US advertisements followed by Effectiveness, Leisure, Technology, Adventure, Courtesy and so on. In Indian advertisements, the most dominant cultural values seen were Adventure, followed by Natural, Convenience, Technology, Leisure, Courtesy, Effectiveness, Quality, and So on. In another cross-cultural study, Khairullah & Khairullah (2009) concluded that culture influences advertising practices. They observed that Indian models were mostly depicted in non-working situations, semi-professional, and mid-level business persons than the US models.

Content Analysis to Fill up the Research Gap

The above reviews of literature indicate the existence of significant research work on Indian culture and advertising. However, except for Banerjee's (2008) work, all the studies have concentrated on either cultural values or advertising appeals. Moreover, the said study confines itself to proposing a verbal model without considering empirical research to support it. This limited focus reveals a research gap in the existing body of literature. Thus, the present study attempts to bridge this gap by understanding the use of different elements of Indian culture in advertisements through content analysis and thereby tries to create a new stock of knowledge.

Objectives of the Study

The present research enquiry has been undertaken with the following objectives:

- To undertake an analysis of the integration of cultural elements in Indian advertising practices across the product categories
- To study the integration of cultural elements in Indian advertising practices across the group brands

Content Analysis of Advertising Practices

Content analysis is a technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying defined characteristics of messages (Stone, et al. 1966). Different researchers have used content analysis in significant numbers for analysing advertisements (Whitelock & Chung, 1989; Mueller, 1991; Harris & Attour, 2000; Pashupati & Lee, 2003; Okazaki & Muller, 2007; Seitz & Johar, 1993; Dowling & Kabnoff, 1996; Hetsroni & Tukachinsky, 2005; Fahad & Karande, 2000; Vater, et. Al., 2014; Byrd-Bredbenner & Grasso, 2000; Khairullah & Khairullah, 2003; Khairullah & Khairullah, 2009; Zharekhina & Kubacki, 2015). Most of the studies analysed print advertisements in a cross-cultural context. Very few studies based on content analysis were observed in only Indian advertisement practices (Srikandath, 1991; Khare, 2011; Swaminathan, 2015; Sharma & Bumb, 2020). Most of the studies concerning advertising practices in the context of culture were comparative that is cross-cultural studies focussing on standard cultural dimensions and cultural values. Moreover, the study focusing on advertisements and the reflection of cultural elements has attracted the least attention from researchers.

Elements-based Cultural Framework

The culture has been understood from different perspectives. One of the approaches is to understand what are its elements. Tylor (1871) defined these elements as knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other abilities and habits of an individual in society. Lowie (1937) defined it as beliefs, customs, artistic norms, dietary habits, and crafts. In this perspective, Barnett and Kinkaid (1983) observe that a culture consists of two factors. These are known as extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Extrinsic factors include observable artefacts, whereas intrinsic factors comprise beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and societal values. Thus, culture is what people learn from society. It is manifested through shared language, beliefs and values (Collier et al., 2001).

Every element of culture has a distinct meaning to an individual as well as to a group. These elements are very significant to them as well. As evident above, researchers have identified diverse elements of culture. Therefore, to concise the present research work, a four-element based cultural framework is proposed. The proposed four elements of culture are Language, Cultural Values, Customs & Rituals, and Cultural Symbols. This framework is a modified version of the verbal model suggested by Banerjee (2008). It is simple and relevant considering the Indian advertisements. These four elements are briefly discussed below:

Language

Language is one of the fundamental elements of culture. It conveys cultural meaning and transmits the collective wisdom of a community across different generations (Altarriba & Basnight-Brown, 2022). It acts as a medium of communication through which knowledge is shared, emotions or thoughts are expressed and provides a unique social identity (Davies & Dubinsky, 2018) to people. It also plays a crucial role in shaping and preserving societal norms, values, and traditions (Parajuli, 2021). Thus, the use of language as a cultural element in advertising is not only limited to mere communication of a message but also involves leveraging the emotions connected with it. The hypotheses based on the language element of culture are as follows:

- Ho1.1: There is no significant difference between the Product Categories in the extent to which the language element of culture is reflected in the advertisements.
- Ho1.2: There is no significant difference between the Group Brands in the extent to which the language element of culture is reflected in the advertisements.

Cultural Values

Cultural values are reflected in the actions of people in their daily lives. It is an essential characteristic of a culture. Indian values such as righteous living, ethical behaviour, respect for elders, etc. are ceremoniously displayed in the daily life of an Indian. Similarly, collectivism is one of the fundamental cultural values of Indians. It emphasises strong family bonding and togetherness within communities (Ouellette, 2023). Even with so much diversity, the values especially, the 'tolerance and unity' have continuously kept Indians together since time immemorial. All these values provide a strong foundation for a social structure, interpersonal relationships and individual behaviour. Hence, leveraging these cultural values becomes appealing to advertisers. Moreover, advertisements that align with cultural values establish a deeper connection with consumers thereby influencing their preferences and perceptions. Acknowledging and incorporating cultural values in advertisements increases brand resonance and builds a sense of cultural affinity among the target audience. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are formulated to explore the integration of cultural values in advertisements:

- Ho2.1: There is no significant difference between the Product Categories in the extent to which the cultural values are reflected in the advertisements.
- Ho2.2: There is no significant difference between the Group Brands in the extent to which the cultural values are reflected in the advertisements.

Customs and Rituals

Customs and rituals are integral components of Indian culture. It depicts the rich diversity and heritage of the nation. These cultural elements play a crucial role in shaping social interactions, family dynamics, and religious practices in society. The customs and rituals in India vary across regions, communities, and religions. This diversity showcases the country's multicultural identity. Festivals such as Diwali, Holi, and Eid, are each marked by specific customs. Rituals including weddings, funerals, and religious ceremonies symbolise culture and strengthen social bonds. Integration of customs and rituals into advertising helps establish a meaningful connection between the advertised brand and the target audience. Moreover, the incorporation of these cultural elements in advertisements shows the cultural sensitivity of the brand thereby, enhancing brand authenticity and building a sense of relatability among consumers. To explore the manifestation of customs and rituals in advertising, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- Ho3.1: There is no significant difference between the Product Categories in the extent to which the customs and rituals are reflected in the advertisements.
- Ho3.2: There is no significant difference between the Group Brands in the extent to which the customs and rituals are reflected in the advertisements.

Cultural symbols

Cultural symbols include ancient religious motifs, national emblems, traditional dances, attire, cuisines, heritage buildings, colours, etc. These symbols play a significant role in communicating a nation's diverse culture. For instance, the Lotus holds a profound significance in Hinduism and Buddhism. It symbolizes purity and enlightenment. Similarly, vibrant patterns like Mehendi, Diya, and traditional designs hold cultural significance and are manifested during celebrations and rituals. Collectively, these symbols help visually portray the cultural heritage and serve as a unifying force in a society. It goes beyond linguistic, regional, and religious differences. In advertising, these symbols are strategically used to build a potential connection between a brand and its audience. To examine the use of these cultural symbols in advertisements, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- Ho4.1: There is no significant difference between the Product Categories in the extent to which the cultural symbols are reflected in the advertisements.
- Ho4.2: There is no significant difference between the Group Brands in the extent to which the cultural symbols are reflected in the advertisements.

Today's market is cluttered with various media categories for brand promotion. There are many print media, audio-only media, audio-visual media, influencer marketing and many more. Thus, marketers have a long list of media to pick and use. Therefore, to be concise, the present study is limited to the study of advertisements that are in audio-visual format. The prominent mediums for audio-visual advertising are TV, movie theatres, online platforms, social media, and digital signage. Among these, online platforms and social media are the contemporary platforms for advertisements and are highly used for brand promotion. Despite the growth in internet-enabled platforms, traditional media still attracts significant investment from advertisers (Moorman, Ryan, & Tavassoli, 2022). However, internet-enabled platforms including social media, have revolutionised the advertising industry by providing direct access to large audiences. For instance, as of February 2023, India has 467 million active YouTube users, 314.6 million on Facebook, 229.6 million on Instagram, 172.5 million on

Snapchat, 117.6 million on Facebook Messenger, 99 million on LinkedIn, and 27.25 million on Twitter (Kemp, 2023). The substantial user base on these platforms is appealing to marketers. YouTube remains the preferred social media platform for advertising in the Indian context (Kemp, 2023). Notably, television advertisements are often shared on social media platforms. Therefore, to identify advertisers and their brands for the present study, the researcher uses the data provided by Broadcast Audience Research Council India (BARC India).

Methodology

The total number of advertising brand groups is not defined anywhere and the number is infinite. Out of the infinite brand groups researcher has selected purposively the groups that are listed by BARC India. BARC India releases weekly data on the top 10 advertiser groups and brands based on advertisement volume aired on Indian television. Table no. 1 displays the top 10 TV advertiser groups, ranked based on advertisement volume in seconds.

Table no. 1: Advertiser Groups with highest advertisement volumes in Indian Television

Rank	Advertiser Group	Ad Vol ('000 Secs)
1	Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL)	4655.44
2	Reckitt Benckiser (India) Ltd	4088.99
3	Godrej Consumers Products Ltd	1582.00
4	Brook Bond India Ltd	1035.74
5	Cadburys India Ltd	828.38
6	Coca-Cola India Ltd	610.99
7	Procter & Gamble (P&G)	591.4
8	Britannia Industries Ltd	571.79
9	Procter & Gamble Home Products	566.75
10	Amazon Online India Private Limited.	490.43

Source: Week 37 Data of 2023 by BARC India

Table 1 presents the top ten group brands with the highest advertisement volumes. Among these, Brook Bond India Ltd is a subsidiary of Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL), and both Procter & Gamble and Procter & Gamble Home Products belong to the same brand group. The 10th position in the list exclusively promotes a single brand at different times and is excluded from this study. Consequently, the present research focuses on seven specific group brands: Hindustan Unilever Ltd, Procter & Gamble, Cadburys India Ltd (now Mondelez India Foods Private Limited since 2010), Godrej Consumers Products Ltd, Coca-Cola India Ltd, Britannia Industries Ltd, and Reckitt Benckiser (India) Ltd.

Manner of Selecting the Sample Units from the Infinite Population

A total of 129 different advertisements are analysed representing the aforementioned seven group brands. Only one advertisement per brand is considered. The advertisements are exclusively sourced from official channels on YouTube. Furthermore, the advertisements are categorised into seven product segments: Fabric Care, Personal Care, Groceries, Snacks-Chocolates-Biscuits, Home Care (including Cleaning, Room Freshener, and Mosquito/Insect Repellents), Beverages, and Health Care (comprising medicines, nutritious drinks, or healthy food). The selected advertisements are the most recent and have been uploaded to the various YouTube channels including the channels of the respective group brands.

Engagement of Judges in Identifying the Extent of Integration of Cultural Elements in Advertisements

To ascertain the presence of cultural elements in the identified advertisements, the present researchers have employed two independent judges with sufficient knowledge of Indian culture and who are competent technically to ascertain the extent of integration of cultural elements that is language, cultural values, customs & rituals, and cultural symbols in advertisements. They assess the advertisements independently. The judges rated the utilisation of specific cultural elements in the advertisements on a scale ranging from 1 to 5. 1 denoted not used at all; 2, very mildly used; 3, mildly used; 4, moderately used; and 5, heavily used. To resolve potential disagreements among the judges, a third judge was employed to reconcile any disparities in their observations. If the reconciliation process fails, a provision was in place to exclude the respective advertisements from the study. The selection of two primary judges and a third judge adheres to a standard practice observed in various studies employing content analysis of advertisements, as seen in the works of Pollay and Gallagher (1990), Srikandath (1991), Tsao (1994), Zharekhina and Kubacki (2015), and Srivastava, Maheswarappa, and Sivakumaran (2017).

Limitations of the Study

The present study is limited to the integration of four elements of culture, i.e. language, cultural values, customs & rituals, and cultural symbols. The study does not consider any other types of advertisement except audio-visual advertisements. Moreover, it only focuses on the 129 advertisements of seven group brands and seven product categories. Another limitation of the study is that the observation of the integration of defined cultural elements is made by two independent judges only. Therefore, the inferences drawn out from this study can not be generalised to the population at large and hence further research works on the census population is desirable for ascertaining the true impact of the study.

Analysis

In 129 advertisements, personal care brands comprised 33.3%, followed by snacks-chocolates-biscuits brands at 21.7%, home care at 10.9%, health care at 10.1%, beverages at 9.3%, groceries at 8.5%, and fabric care at 6.2%. Notably, 41.1% of the advertisements belonged to Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), 13.2% to Britannia Industries, 10.1% to Cadbury India, 9.3% to Coca-Cola India, 9.3% to Procter & Gamble (P&G), 9.3% to Reckitt Benckiser, and 7.8% to Godrej Consumers.

A closer look at the data reveals that 82.9% and 55% of the advertisements heavily incorporate language and cultural values. On the contrary, a significant majority, comprising 91.5% and 55.8% of the advertisements, do not incorporate customs & rituals and cultural symbols. The utilization of cultural elements in advertisements varies considerably, as evidenced by the data in Table No. 2.

Furthermore, the study observed that the median and mode for the degree of use of language and cultural values in advertisements were consistently rated at 5 (heavily used). In contrast, for customs & rituals and cultural symbols, the ratings were consistently at 1 (not used at all). This highlights the variability in the choice of these cultural elements in advertising strategies.

Table no. 2: Frequency of use of cultural elements in advertisements

The degree to which cultural elements are used in advertisements	Language	Cultural Values	Customs & Rituals	Cultural Symbols
Not used at all	13	12	118	72
Very mildly used	1	16	1	8
Mildly used	3	10	1	1
Moderately used	5	20	5	4
Heavily Used	107	71	4	44
Total	129	129	129	129

Source: Self computation

To examine the defined hypotheses, the Kruskal-Wallis H test was employed. The obtained results are as follows:

- Hypothesis Ho1.1: At a significance level of 0.05, the observed P value was 0.154, surpassing the significance level. Consequently, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, indicating no significant difference among Product Categories regarding the reflection of the language element of culture in advertisements.
- Hypothesis Ho1.2: At a significance level of 0.05, the observed P value was 0.96, exceeding the significance level. Consequently, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting no significant difference among Group Brands in the extent to which the language element of culture is presented in advertisements.
- Hypothesis Ho2.1: At a significance level of 0.05, the observed P value was 0.00, falling below the significance level. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis, signifying a significant difference among Product Categories in the reflection of cultural values in advertisements. Post hoc testing using the Games-Howell Test revealed specific pairs of groups demonstrating significant differences:
 - Fabric Care and Snacks-Chocolates-Biscuits (P=0.021)
 - Fabric Care and Beverages (P=0.023)
 - Personal Care and Snacks-Chocolates-Biscuits (P=0.009)
 - Personal Care and Beverages (P=0.029)
 - Groceries and Beverages (P=0.037)
 - Snacks-Chocolates-Biscuits and Health Care (P=0.00)
 - Beverages and Health Care (P=0.003)
- Hypothesis Ho2.2: At a significance level of 0.05, the observed P value was 0.00, below the significance level. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis, indicating a significant difference among Group Brands in the extent to which cultural values are reflected in advertisements. Subsequent post hoc testing with the Games-Howell Test identified specific pairs of groups with significant differences:
 - HUL and Coco-Cola India Ltd (P=0.006)
 - HUL and Britannia Industries Ltd (P=0.000)

- Cadbury's India Ltd and Britannia Industries Ltd (0.00)
- Godrej Consumers Products Ltd and Coca-Cola India Ltd (P=0.004)
- Godrej Consumers Products Ltd and Britannia Industries Ltd (P=0.00)
- Hypothesis Ho3.1: At a significance level of 0.05, the observed P value was 0.333, surpassing the significance level. Consequently, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting no difference among Product Categories in the reflection of customs and rituals in advertisements.
- Hypothesis Ho3.2: At a significance level of 0.05, the observed P value was 0.036, below the significance level. Although the Games-Howell Test did not confirm specific pairwise differences, the Bonferroni Correction method revealed significant differences in the following pairs:
 - Reckitt Benckiser and HUL (P=0.017)
 - Reckitt Benckiser and Cadburys India Ltd (P=0.024)
 - Reckitt Benckiser and Godrej Consumers Ltd (P=0.048)
- Hypothesis Ho4.1: At a significance level of 0.05, the observed P value was 0.005, below the significance level. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis, indicating a significant difference among Product Categories in the extent to which cultural symbols are reflected in advertisements. Post hoc testing using the Games-Howell Test identified a significant difference between Groceries and Snacks-Chocolates-Biscuits (P=0.004).
- Hypothesis Ho4.2: At a significance level of 0.05, the observed P value was 0.077, surpassing the significance level. Consequently, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting no significant difference among Group Brands in the extent to which cultural symbols are reflected in advertisements.

Discussion

The present research focused on understanding the integration of cultural elements in Indian advertising practices across product categories and group brands. The language element of culture is consistently used in all advertisements, regardless of product categories or group brands. However, differences are seen between product categories and group brands in how they portray specific cultural values. When it comes to depicting customs & rituals in advertisements, no significant differences were observed among product categories. However, variations were observed in the advertisements for the group brand with the product category 'Snacks-Chocolates-Biscuits'.

Concerning the use of cultural symbols, a significant difference was found among product categories - Groceries and Snacks-Chocolates-Biscuits advertisements. Among group brands, varying degrees of use of cultural symbols were identified. Significant variation was observed in the advertisements of HUL, Britannia Industries Ltd, and Godrej Consumers Ltd. The outcome of the present study indicates that language elements of culture are used in all the advertisements heavily followed by the portrayal of cultural values. However, Customs & Rituals and Cultural Symbols, are less frequently used in advertisements.

Conclusion

This study emphasises the significant impact of culture on human behaviour and consumer choices, as reflected in the advertising strategies of diverse brands. This research, though preliminary, establishes the foundation for deeper inquiries into the complex relationship between cultural attributes and advertising strategies. For a long period, marketers have been using various cultural elements in their advertisements strategically to attract consumer attention. However, the findings of the present study revealed that advertisers are not giving equal preference to the different elements of culture in advertisements. They are using a selective approach in choosing specific cultural elements. This observed advertisers' bias requires the need for further investigation focusing on identifying factors influencing these selective preferences. The present research aimed to analyse the integration of cultural elements in Indian advertising practices across product categories and group brands. The study reveals a significant presence of language and cultural values in Indian advertising across various product categories. However, it also highlights a notable absence of customs & rituals and cultural symbols. Additionally, significant differences are observed among group brands regarding the portrayal of cultural values in advertisements. However, the absence of significant differences in the reflection of cultural symbols across group brands suggests a degree of consistency in this aspect of advertising. Thus, the stated objectives of the research have been accomplished. Furthermore, the present study provides valuable insights into the diversity of advertising strategies employed within the Indian market and suggests potential areas for improvement in cultural integration in advertising practices. Future research could be undertaken to examine the impact of such choices of advertisers on consumer decision-making. Such an academic exercise will help in expanding the existing knowledge base concerning culture and advertising. Thus, contributing to a more holistic understanding of the select theme of the research.

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