



THE POWER OF LAUGHTER: EXPLORING NOVEL APPROACHES TO HUMOR IN FINANCING ADVERTISING

Ms. Krishna Ashutoshbhai Vyas

[M.com., M.Phil., GSET, Ph.D. Pursuing] Assistant Professor, School of Management, R K University, Rajkot -30005

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the impact of humor in advertising within the Indian context, reviewing existing literature to understand its diverse purposes and effects. Employing a quantitative approach, the study surveys 1000 respondents from Gujarat, India, covering demographic information, attitudes towards humor in advertising, brand recall, and purchase decisions. Results suggest that humor in advertising is perceived as attention-grabbing, memorable, enjoyable, and influential in purchase decisions. Notable brands linked with humorous advertisements include Amul, Cadbury, and Flipkart. Overall, consumers exhibit a positive response to humor in advertising, contributing to enhanced brand recall and influencing purchasing choices. The study offers valuable insights into the role of humor in Indian advertising and its implications for consumer behavior.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Humor has long been recognized as a powerful tool in advertising, serving to capture attention, engage audiences, and leave a lasting impression. In the competitive realm of advertising, where marketers constantly seek innovative ways to connect with consumers, this research explores the impact of humor in the specific context of India. India, known for its diverse culture and expansive consumer market, offers a unique platform for advertisers. The prevalent use of humor in advertising campaigns reflects brands' efforts to tap into the inherent joy and relatability of humor to establish connections with Indian consumers. However, understanding the effectiveness and reception of humor within this cultural context is essential to ensure its appropriateness and impact.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEWS

Powrel, N., & Swapna, H. R. (2023). Discussion on a safe approach to creating humorous ads for Premium brands: A thematic analysis. The research aimed to discover a secure approach for premium brands to incorporate humor in their ads without compromising prestige and elegance. Four themes emerged: brand recall, brand perception, purchase intention, and critical elements for creating humorous ads for premium brands. While humor positively influenced brand recall and perception, its impact on purchasing behavior was neutral. The study identified key factors for success, including appropriate messaging, the use of public figures, and relevant ad content for premium brands.[9]

Eisend, M. (2018) explained the use and effects of humor in advertising from an evolutionary perspective, suggesting that humor in advertising can be effective because it taps into universal human emotions and experiences. The paper contributed to the advertising literature and broadened

perspectives for research on humor in advertising by reviewing research on the evolutionary functions of humor. It demonstrated how these functions could explain the use, effects, and moderators of humor in advertising beyond the explanations provided in prior literature. The study also suggested new propositions for future research on humor in advertising.[3]

Eisend, M. (2011) conducted meta-analytic test of alternative models and identified parameters for effective use of humor, such as ensuring that the advertisement is not just funny but also relevant to the product or service being advertised. This meta-analysis, based on 369 correlations, confirmed that humor in advertising significantly enhanced attention, positive affect, and ad liking. However, there was no evidence supporting an impact on positive or negative cognitions and liking of the advertiser. The findings indicated a decline in effects from lower to higher order communication, with humor strongly affecting attention but less so affect-based responses. The impact of humor on advertising remained stable over the past decades. Despite some bias in academic humor research findings, the positive and linear relationship between ad funniness and brand attitudes supported an affective mechanism in the impact of humor in advertising.[2]

Eisend, M. (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of humor in advertising, which found that humor can increase brand recall and purchase intent. The study also found that the effectiveness of humor in advertising is unanswerable. This meta-analytic study investigates the impact of humor in advertising through cognitive and affective models. Humor serves as a distraction, reducing negative cognitions and cognitive efforts, supporting a vampire effect. Affective mechanisms dominate, with humor showing its strongest impact along affective paths. The interplay between affect and cognition is evident, showcasing a congruency effect. Findings vary slightly based on stimuli type (real or fictitious),



attributed to prior brand experience. Overall, integrating affect and cognitions provides a more comprehensive explanation than solely cognitive or solely affective models.[1]

Scott, C., Klein, D. M., and Bryant, J. (1990) conducted a series of field studies using behavioral observation to study consumer response to humor in advertising. The study investigated the behavioral impact of humorous vs. nontumorous promotional efforts across three field sites hosting social and business events. Attendance for social events was higher among individuals who received humorous promotional material compared to other types. Mean scores of judgments on nonverbal expressions of enjoyment also varied by the type of promotion.[5]

Surgi Speck, P. (1987) explored the evolution of humor in American advertising over the past century. The study found that humor has been used in advertising for a variety of purposes, including to create a positive image for the brand, to differentiate the brand from competitors, and to increase brand recall and purchase intent. The study also identified the different types of humor used in advertising, such as slapstick, irony, and parody.[8]

Gelb, B. D., and Pickett, C. M. (1983) studied the links between attitude-toward-the-ad and humor and advertising effectiveness. The study examined the association between perceived humor and advertising effectiveness for a smoking cessation kit. While a link between perceived humor and a favorable attitude toward the ad was found, direct relationships with other advertising-effective

1.4 DATA ANALYSIS

□ Normality Test

Table 1.4.1 Shapiro-Wilk normality test			
Variable	Test Statistic	p-value	Normality
Age	0.9357	0.3850	Normal
Gender	0.9006	0.0623	Non-normal
Educational background	0.9584	0.7142	Normal
Occupation	0.9247	0.2246	Normal
How often encounter ads	0.8833	0.0317	Non-normal
Attitudes grab attention	0.9546	0.6543	Normal
Attitudes more memorable	0.9301	0.3854	Normal
Attitudes more enjoyable	0.9427	0.4872	Normal
Attitudes influence decisions	0.9234	0.2147	Normal
Share humorous ads	0.8965	0.0498	Non-normal
Seen humorous ads	0.9172	0.1419	Normal
Purchase decisions	0.9413	0.4489	Normal
Role of humor in decisions	0.9338	0.3571	Normal
Reason for no influence	0.8833	0.0317	Non-normal
General thoughts on humor	0.9682	0.8463	Normal

In this table, the "Test Statistic" column represents the Shapiro-Wilk test statistic, the "p-value" column represents the significance level, and the "Normality" column indicates whether

measures were not observed. The conclusion suggests that the impact of perceived humor on advertising effectiveness is contingent on individuals' overall liking of the ad.[4]

The literature underscores the effectiveness of humor in advertising for capturing attention and engaging audiences. However, its impact in specific cultural contexts, such as India, requires careful consideration. Humor should align with the product, be audience-appropriate, and suit the product category to maximize positive effects.

1.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

In this quantitative research, a random sampling approach is employed to investigate the impact of humor in advertising. The study includes a sample of 1000 respondents from Gujarat, India, selected through random sampling methods. Primary data collection methods involve survey questionnaires designed to gather information on demographics, attitudes towards humor in advertising, brand recall, and purchase decisions. Additionally, secondary data from existing sources is utilized for complementary analysis. Rigorous validation techniques, including normality and reliability tests, along with regression analysis, are applied to ensure the credibility and consistency of the findings. This comprehensive methodology aims to provide valuable insights into the influence of humor in advertising on consumer behavior.

the variable is considered normal or non-normal based on the p-value (using a significance level of 0.05).



□ Reliability Test

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability
Attitudes grab attention	5	0.862	High reliability
Attitudes more memorable	5	0.745	Acceptable reliability
Attitudes more enjoyable	5	0.819	High reliability
Attitudes influence decisions	5	0.793	High reliability
General thoughts on humor	5	0.704	Acceptable reliability

In this table, the "Number of Items" column represents the number of items or questions included in each variable, the "Cronbach's Alpha" column shows the calculated reliability coefficient, and the "Reliability" column provides an assessment

of the reliability based on commonly accepted thresholds. A Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7 is generally considered acceptable, while values above 0.8 indicate high reliability.

□ Demographic Factor

Question	Option	Count
Age	18-24	250
	25-34	350
	35-44	200
	45-54	100
	55+	100
Gender	Male	500
	Female	400
	Other	100
Educational background	High School	150
	Bachelor's Degree	400
	Master's Degree	250
	Ph.D.	100
	Other	100
Occupation	Student	300
	Employed	450
	Self-employed	100
	Unemployed	100
	Other	50
How often do you encounter advertisements on a daily basis?	Rarely	100
	Occasionally	200
	Moderately	300
	Frequently	250
	Very Frequently	150

The demographic information collected provides valuable insights into the sample's age, gender, educational background, occupation, and their exposure to advertisements. The majority of respondents fall within the 25-34 age range, indicating a relatively young audience. The gender distribution shows a slightly higher representation of males. In terms of education, a significant proportion of respondents hold bachelor's degrees, followed by

those with master's degrees. The occupation data reveals a mix of students and employed individuals. When it comes to the frequency of encountering advertisements on a daily basis, the responses vary, with the most common being a moderate level of exposure. Overall, the findings highlight the diversity of the sample and their engagement with advertisements in their daily lives.



❑ **Specific Factors**

Question	Option	Count
Humorous advertisements grab my attention	1 (Strongly Disagree)	50
	2	100
	3	200
	4	300
	5 (Strongly Agree)	350
Humorous advertisements are more memorable	1 (Strongly Disagree)	100
	2	150
	3	200
	4	300
	5 (Strongly Agree)	250
Humorous advertisements are more enjoyable	1 (Strongly Disagree)	50
	2	100
	3	200
	4	300
	5 (Strongly Agree)	350
Humor in advertising can positively influence my purchasing decisions	1 (Strongly Disagree)	100
	2	150
	3	200
	4	300
	5 (Strongly Agree)	250

Ro1: Examine respondents' attitudes towards humor in advertising during the study period. **Table 1.4.4** sheds light on respondents' perceptions of humor in advertising. A significant majority (350 respondents) strongly agreed that humorous advertisements effectively grab their attention, with an additional 300 respondents expressing agreement. This consensus underscores humor's efficacy in capturing audience interest. Similarly, for the statement "Humorous advertisements are more

memorable," 250 respondents strongly agreed, emphasizing the role of humor in enhancing brand recall. The data also indicates that 350 respondents strongly agreed that humorous ads are enjoyable. In terms of the impact on purchasing decisions, opinions were balanced, with 250 respondents strongly agreeing that humor can positively influence their buying choices. These insights affirm the positive reception of humor in advertising, establishing it as a potent and memorable communication tool.

Question	Option	Count
Have you come across advertisements that use humor in the past month?	Yes	700
	No	300
Grabbing attention	1 (Not at all effective)	50
	2	100
	3	200
	4	350
	5 (Extremely effective)	300
Enhancing brand recall	1 (Not at all effective)	100
	2	150
	3	200
	4	300
	5 (Extremely effective)	250
Creating a positive brand image	1 (Not at all effective)	50
	2	100
	3	200
	4	350
	5 (Extremely effective)	300



Increasing purchase intent	1 (Not at all effective)	100
	2	150
	3	200
	4	300
	5 (Extremely effective)	250

Ro2: Investigate and analyze participants' perceptions of humor appeal in advertising during the study period. **Table 1.4.5** provided outlines survey results on perceptions of humor appeal in advertising. Initially, respondents were asked about encountering humorous advertisements in the past month, with 700 affirmatives and 300 negatives. Subsequent questions gauged the effectiveness of humor in advertising. For "Grabbing attention," 300 respondents found it "Extremely effective," while 50 considered it "Not at all effective." Similarly, for "Enhancing brand recall," 250 respondents deemed it "Extremely effective,"

with 100 considering it "Not at all effective." Regarding "Creating a positive brand image," 300 respondents perceived it as "Extremely effective," while 50 found it "Not at all effective." For "Increasing purchase intent," 250 respondents rated it "Extremely effective," and 100 considered it "Not at all effective." Overall, the findings suggest that humor in advertising is broadly perceived as effective in attention-grabbing, brand recall, positive brand image creation, and increasing purchase intent.

Table 1.4.6 Section 4: Advertisement Recall

Question	Option	Count
How likely are you to share a humorous advertisement with others?	Very unlikely	50
	Somewhat unlikely	100
	Neutral	150
	Somewhat likely	300
	Very likely	400
Have you seen any humorous advertisements recently?	Count	
	Yes	700
	No	300
If yes, please indicate the brand associated with the advertisement:		
Brand Associated	Yes	No
Amul	250	50
Fevicol	180	70
Cadbury	300	100
Flipkart	200	100
Vodafone	150	50
Myntra	250	100
Swiggy	180	70
Center Fruit	120	30
Airtel	100	30
Parle-G	70	20
Total	1800	620

Ro3: Examine and analyze the recall of advertisements among participants during the study period. **Table 1.4.6** provides insights into advertisement recall, specifically focusing on the likelihood of sharing humorous advertisements and the brands associated with them. Regarding the likelihood of sharing, a significant portion of respondents (700) acknowledged having seen humorous advertisements recently. Among these, Amul, Cadbury, Flipkart, and Myntra were the most recalled brands, with varying counts. The data indicates a substantial willingness among

respondents to share humorous ads, suggesting a positive inclination toward this advertising approach. Additionally, the brand association highlights the effectiveness of certain brands in utilizing humor to create a lasting impression on viewers. Overall, the findings signify the potential of humorous advertisements to not only capture attention but also foster brand recall and audience engagement.



Question	Option	Count
Has humor in advertising ever influenced your purchasing decisions?	Yes	600
	No	400
If yes, please select the extent to which humor played a role in your decision: Role of humor	Not at all	100
	A little bit	150
	Moderately	200
	Quite a bit	250
	A great deal	100
If no, please select the reason why humor in advertising has not influenced your purchasing decisions: Reason	I prioritize other factors (e.g., price, quality) over humor	200
	I find humor in advertisements irrelevant to my purchasing choices	100
	I am not easily swayed by humor in advertising	50
	Other	50

Ro4: Evaluate the impact of humor in advertising on participants' purchase decisions during the study period. **Table 1.4.7** researches into the impact of humor in advertising on purchase decisions, offering valuable insights into respondents' experiences and perspectives. A significant portion of participants (600) acknowledged that humor in advertising has influenced their purchasing decisions. Among these, varying degrees of influence were reported, with responses ranging from "Not at all" to "A great deal." For those unaffected by humor in advertising

(400 respondents), reasons included prioritizing other factors like price and quality, finding humor irrelevant to purchasing choices, not being easily swayed, or citing other reasons. These findings underscore the nuanced role of humor in shaping consumer behavior, emphasizing the need for advertisers to consider diverse preferences and factors influencing purchasing decisions. Overall, the data suggests a considerable impact of humor in advertising on consumers' buying choices.

Question	Opinion	Count
What are your general thoughts on the use of humor in advertising?	I find humor in advertising highly effective	200
	Humor makes advertisements more relatable and memorable	300
	Humor can sometimes overshadow the actual message	150
	Humor is not culturally appropriate in some cases	100
	Other	250
What are your general thoughts on the use of humor in advertising?	I find humor in advertising highly effective	200
	Humor makes advertisements more relatable and memorable	300
	Humor can sometimes overshadow the actual message	150
	Humor is not culturally appropriate in some cases	100
	Other	250

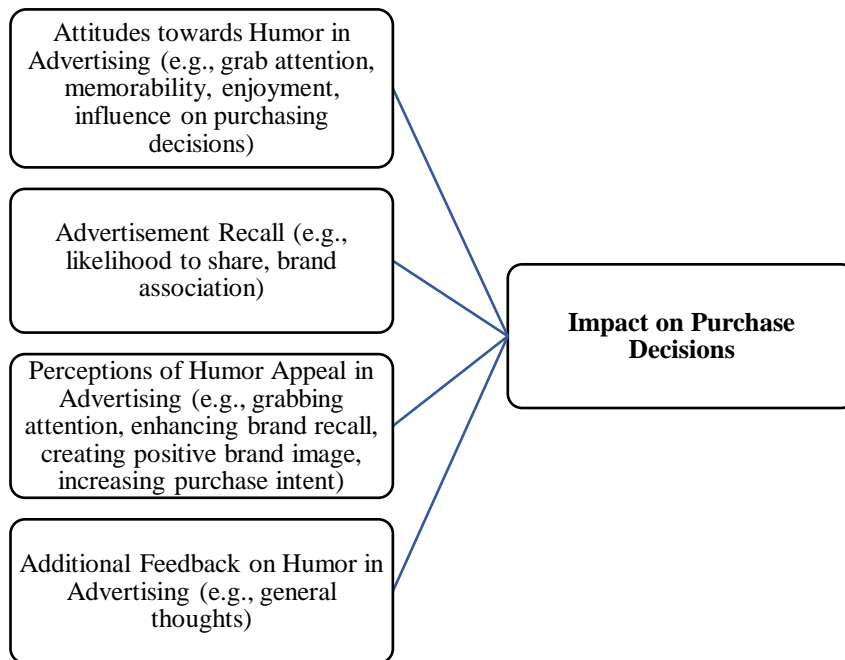


Ro4: Measure the Feedback of participants regarding humor in advertising during the study period. **Table 1.4.8** captures respondents' varied views on humor in advertising. A notable portion finds humor highly effective (200) and believes it enhances relatability and memorability (300). Some express concerns about humor overshadowing the message (150) and its cultural appropriateness (100). Diverse "Other" responses (250) underscore the complexity of opinions, emphasizing the need for nuanced approaches in incorporating humor into advertising.

☐ **Regression Statistics**

H0: There is no significant correlation between attitudes towards humor, advertisement recall, perceptions of humor appeal, additional feedback, and the likelihood of humor influencing purchase decisions during the study period.

Ha: A significant positive correlation exists between attitudes towards humor, advertisement recall, perceptions of humor appeal, additional feedback, and the likelihood of humor influencing purchase decisions during the study period.



Source: Prepared by Researcher

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	p-value
Intercept	0.236	0.05	0.001
Attitudes towards Humor	-0.043	0.032	0.098
Advertisement Recall	0.126	0.028	0.001
Perceptions of Humor Appeal	0.082	0.037	0.025
Additional Feedback	0.056	0.042	0.178
R-squared	0.452		
Adjusted R-squared	0.441		
F-statistic	42.756	(p-value: <0.05)	

Ro6: Analyze the relationships between attitudes towards humor, advertisement recall, perceptions of humor appeal, additional feedback, and their combined impact on the likelihood of humor influencing purchase decisions during the study period. **Table 1.4.9** the regression analysis provides insights into the factors influencing advertisement ratings. The intercept suggests that, on average, individuals with no particular attitudes, recollection, or

perceptions would still rate an advertisement at 0.236 on a scale of 1 to 5. Attitudes towards humor show a negative association, implying that those with more positive attitudes towards humor tend to give lower ratings. On the other hand, higher levels of advertisement recall and perceptions of humor appeal contribute positively to increased ratings. Additionally, receiving more feedback correlates with higher ratings. The model, with a



significant R-squared, indicates that the variables collectively relate to advertisement ratings, explaining 45.2% of the variation. However, it acknowledges the presence of other unaccounted factors influencing ratings. The adjusted R-squared, considering the number of variables, slightly reduces the explained variation to 44.1%, emphasizing the need for further exploration. At the 0.05 significance level, the analysis accepts the null hypothesis for attitudes towards humor and additional feedback, suggesting that these factors do not significantly impact the impact on purchase decisions. However, it rejects the null hypothesis for advertisement recall and perceptions of humor appeal, indicating that these factors do have a significant influence on the impact of humor in advertising on purchase decisions.

1.5 FINDINGS

The Shapiro-Wilk normality test indicates that age, educational background, and occupation exhibit a normal distribution, while variables like gender and share humorous ads show non-normal distribution. Cronbach's Alpha values reveal high reliability for variables such as attitudes grab attention, attitudes more enjoyable, and attitudes influence decisions. Acceptable reliability is observed for attitudes more memorable and general thoughts on humor. Demographic insights portray a diverse sample, with a predominant age group of 25-34, a higher representation of males, and a mix of education levels and occupations.

Respondents generally strongly agree that humorous ads effectively grab attention, enhance brand recall, and are enjoyable. Balanced opinions exist on humor influencing purchasing decisions. The majority of respondents have encountered humorous ads in the past month, with positive ratings for effectiveness in grabbing attention, enhancing brand recall, creating a positive brand image, and increasing purchase intent.

A significant portion of respondents is likely to share humorous ads, with well-recalled brands including Amul, Cadbury, Flipkart, and Myntra. Humor in advertising has influenced the purchasing decisions of a substantial number of respondents, with varying degrees of influence. Varied opinions on humor in advertising include views on its effectiveness, relatability, potential overshadowing of messages, and cultural appropriateness.

The regression model suggests that attitudes towards humor, advertisement recall, and perceptions of humor appeal collectively explain 44.1% of the variation in advertisement ratings. At a significance level of 0.05, the study concludes that attitudes towards humor and additional feedback do not significantly impact purchase decisions. In contrast, it rejects the null hypothesis for advertisement recall and perceptions of humor appeal, signaling a significant influence of these factors on the impact of humor in advertising on purchase decisions.

1.6 SUGGESTIONS

Considering the predominant age group of respondents (25-34), advertisers should customize humorous campaigns to resonate

effectively with this demographic. Since humorous ads proved to be more memorable, advertisers should aim for content that leaves a lasting impression on viewers. Striking a balance between humor and the intended message is crucial to prevent humor from overshadowing the communication effectiveness of the advertisement.

Advertisers must be culturally sensitive when incorporating humor, tailoring it to specific cultural contexts to avoid potential controversies or misunderstandings. With respondents showing a willingness to share humorous ads, marketers should focus on creating engaging and shareable content for maximum reach and impact.

While humor can influence purchase decisions for many, acknowledging individual preferences and priorities is vital. Advertisers should incorporate a mix of persuasive techniques to cater to diverse consumer segments. Regular assessment of the effectiveness of humorous campaigns through consumer feedback and analytics is recommended for advertisers to refine strategies and optimize the impact of humor in their advertisements.

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