

**DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE ADVERTISING MESSAGE:
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY**

BY

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Abstract

There is a large number of "Soft Drinks" produced in Jordan. Such variety of soft drink brands has led to severe competition. As a result of such competition producer have turned to advertising to stimulate sales and consumption. This indicates the significance of developing and formulating effective soft drink advertising. The objective of this experimental research is to examine whether or not consumers can identify their soft drink's brand by taste alone. If so, we can use taste as an advertising appeal to attract more consumers. However, the research finding indicates that consumers can identify soft drink brand's by taste alone, therefore, taste can be used to increase the effectiveness and attractiveness of soft drink advertising. Furthermore, it was found that females differ from male consumers in their ability to identify soft drink brands by taste alone, which means that consumer segmentation strategy based on taste can be developed. Finally, it should be noted here that an effective appeal alone will not make an effective advertising. If it is to be effective advertising should be integrated with other advertising elements (such as : Get attention, arouse interest, conviction, try for action, color, size, position, timing e

INTRODUCTION :

Advertisements were written on papyrus in ancient Egypt, appeared on the walls of Roman buildings in the days of Julius Caesar, and issued forth from the mouth of public criers in the preprinting period of medieval Europe. Whenever and wherever man has had goods or services to sell or buy, or, exchange of ideas to promote, some methods of advertising have arisen to meet their needs. Today advertisements meet many needs. It is a very useful instrument of communication, a means of satisfying personal wants, a sales tool for moving merchandise, an economic force for opening new markets, or a social force spreading understanding between groups and nations, and it is the most straight-forward method of carrying a promotional message to the public.(1)

Advertising as being defined by Neil Borden "includes those activities by which visual or oral messages are addressed to the public for the purposes of informing them and influencing them either to buy merchandise or services or to act favorably toward ideas, institutions, or persons featured". (2)

The message in a persuasive communication event is generally only part of a larger campaign which attempts to communicate a certain meaning about the product. The communication objective is to create the most desirable meaning for the product and to arouse the individual's desire for it as well as to give him knowledge of how to satisfy this desire.

Soft drinks industry is expanding because of the economic development that took place recently accompanied by an increase in personal income and market expansion. There is a large number of producers of soft drinks in Jordan under different brands along with the production of internationally well known brands such as pepsi, 7up, and Sprite. Such variety of soft drinks brands has led to severe competition. As a result, these brands producers have turned to advertising to stimulate sales and consumption. There is an average increase of about 20% in advertising expenses in soft drinks industry. This indicates the significant attention and awareness of advertising. The local brand (called viva) is competing strongly against Pepsi (The internationally known brand). The two Soft drink brands have just about the same market share, which means that there is more or less strong loyalty towards each of the two brands from their users. Thus, it could be said that taste could be one of the reasons or attributes for such loyalty. Also taste could be a theme for the product appeal in advertisement.

Marketing Management Decision Environment:

Promotion is an important element in the marketing mix, and advertising, in turn, is another important element in the promotional mix. The main element of effective advertising is conviction".

Figure 1.

Marketing Mix	Price		
	Product		
	Place		
	Promotion Mix	Sales Promotion	
		Personal Selling	
		Advertising	Get attention
			Show advantage
			Arouse interest
			Grasp it
			Conviction

Figure(1) shows the location of marketing management decision in the total marketing mix.

Marketing management is concerned with developing an effective advertising appeal which has the capability to cope with the mounting pressure from the industry competitive environment. Some of these pressures are :

- 1- Increase in number of Soft drinks brands.
- 2- Limited market size and market share.
- 3- Severe competition among Soft drinks producers leading in some cases to price war.
- 4- Higher taxes by the government making a burden of 15% increase in prices. (3)

In anticipation of these and other factors beyond their control, Soft

drinks marketing management should do everything possible to strengthen their position. One tool which can be utilized is developing an effective advertising appeal. Thus, the marketing management decision is to develop an effective advertising message for a Soft drink brand called Viva for example.

THE MARKETING MANAGEMENT PROBLEM:

More specifically, the marketing management problem is: "Soft drink taste an effective advertising appeal to Viva drinkers, "? The decision with regard to this problem should be taken at the management planning level and management control level as shown in Figure 2.

Decision Area	Level of Decision	Strategic Planning	Management Planning	Management Control
Market Analysis				
Price				
Place				
Product				
Promotion				

Figure 2.

The level of decision with regard to marketing management problem

The Importance of the Study :

The importance of this research project to the marketing manager is that:

- It is a scientific research, i.e. systematic, objective, logical, empirical, and replicable. It will generalize accurate information which will enable the marketing manager to make a sound decision to develop an effective advertising appeal.
- Furthermore, the research is expected to help the marketing manager to segment the market based on taste differential.
- This study, also, could be useful in similar situations especially for those products in which taste plays a major role in consumers decisions to buy.

If the marketing management is to be able to develop an effective ad-

vertising appeal, the following information is needed:

- To know if taste is considered an effective appeal to Viva drinkers.
- To know whether consumers can be segmented based on taste.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS :

There is enormous brand loyalty among Soft drinkers. Soft drink is used in many occasions, and brand selection is an extension of the drinkers personality. One of the important factors in brand loyalty is taste. Taste claims have come to be nearly the only area covered by advertising campaigns. As one Soft company spokesman comments on the trend, "We had a lot of themes which ran into objections....Now we concentrate on taste differentials."(4)

Thus, the research problems will be to (1)" DETERMINE WHETHER CONSUMERS CAN IDENTIFY SOFT DRINK BRAND BY TASTE ALONE." If that is so, then taste can be used as an effective advertising appeal to Soft drinkers.

(2), To "DETERMINE WHETHER MALE AND FEMALE CONSUMERS DIFFER IN THEIR ABILITY TO IDENTIFY SOFT DRINK BRAND BY TASTE ALONE." If that is so, then consumers can be segmented based on taste.

Limitations of the Study :

The following limitations should be noted:

- 1- Due to time and money constraints, the sample will be very small which, in turn, will affect the validity and reliability of the study.
- 2- Only three blind Soft drinks were given, one was Viva the second was Pepsi, and the third would be Cola.
- 3- Consumers must be at least 21 years old, and have been using the brand for at least 3 years.

Review of Literature:

There have been numerous studies regarding consumer taste. In Taylor's dissertation, "Cigarette Smoking Behavior" three self-managed treatment programs were compared with respect to their ability to affect and maintain change in the cigarette smoking behavior. Subjects were randomly assigned to a self-imposed delay group, a self-directed relaxation group, and a self-monitoring group. The result of a 3x3 analysis of variance procedure indicated that only the self-imposed delay group reduced its smoking behavior significantly. Combining the three groups, there was a 53% reduction in smoking at the end of the treatment.(5)

Frank in his article, "A simultaneous Equation Regression Study of

advertising and Sales of Cigarettes," demonstrates the application of simultaneous equation regression methods in analyzing limited time series data for sales and advertising. In testing a model with sales and ad relationship for filter and nonfilter cigarette brands, we could not reject a model in which the advertising elasticity for filter brands is substantially greater than that for nonfilter brands. (6)

An experiment conducted by Trucker examines the growth of brand loyalty in setting where there is no prior consumer knowledge about any of the available brands. Search behavior precedes the development of brand loyalty, which grows to measurable strength the virtual identity of the available brands, suggesting that some consumers are prone to brand loyal behavior.

The conclusions of Trucker's experiment are:

- 1- Some consumers will become brand loyal even when there is no discriminable difference between brands other than the brand itself.
- 2- The brand loyalty established under such conditions is not trivial, although it may be based on what are apparently trivial and superficial differences.
- 3- Consumers vary greatly in their susceptibility to brand loyalty.
- 4- Brand loyalty and preference for particular product characteristics are quite different considerations that together make up what is normally referred to as brand loyalty.
- 5- While it is difficult to identify exploratory consumer behavior, it seems clear that some consumer selections are largely exploratory in nature and may indicate that a repeat purchase is highly unlikely. (7)

On another study, Farley tested hypotheses about why measured "brand loyalty" varies over product classes. Factor analysis is used to solve certain difficulties in the empirical testing. Brand switching in a product class appears to be associated with price activity, distribution, characteristics of the supply structure, and the importance of the product in the consumer's consumption patterns. (8)

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES :

HO (1) Soft drinkers cannot identify soft drink brand by taste alone.

$B \neq (T)$

Where

B= brand identification

T = perceived taste

Ho (2) male and female consumer are equal in their ability to identify soft drink brand by taste alone.

$M \neq M2$

Where

M1 = correct identification by male consumers.

M2 = correct identification by female consumers.

Operational Definitions Variables:

1. Taste: The perceived flavor of soft drink in the mouth; in other words, the perceived taste (flavor) when soft drink is brought into contact with the tongue.
2. Consumers: Those who drink soft drink regardless of their brand preferences.
3. Brand name: Refers to the soft drinks brand name by which it can be identified.
4. Population: All soft drinkers (including male and female).
5. Independent Variable: Brand identification based on taste.
6. Dependent Variable: Soft drink consumers based on sex.

Experimental Design:

In this particular research project, informal experimental design is chosen. Two groups (men and women) were selected. The treatment (taste of three soft drink brands - blind test) is then introduced and the effect of the treatment (correct brand identification) is observed.

The experiment model:

Before - and - after without control design

<u>Test group</u>	<u>Treatment</u>	<u>Effect</u>
(Men and Women)	Taste of 3 blind soft drinks	Brand identification

The major problems with this design is that considerable extraneous variable can be introduced. For example, possible bias in response of test subjects due to the awareness that they are being observed, or due to prior exposure to test materials, and to awareness for what are being tested.

Sampling Technique :

Since the population is infinite (for all practical purposes), the following formula is supposed to be used to find out the sample

$$\text{Size } Sp = \sqrt{\frac{P \cdot Q}{n}}$$

However, due to time limits, a small number of consumers were selected (30 men, 20 women). Of course, this sample would not represent the population; consequently, the finding of this study could not be generalized. Also, due to time limits, a nonprobability sample is selected (convenience sample) and population elements are selected for inclusion in the sample based on ease of access. Therefore, getting data from elements that are convenient can create a biased result.

Data Collection Procedures :

Participants in the experiment must be at least 21 years of age, must have been drinking their brand for at least 3 years. Three blind soft drink brands were given to each person in the sample. One of them was the consumer's brand.

Then each person was asked to drink each one of them and find out his brand. Of course, there is 33% probability that he will identify his brand by mere chance. To eliminate that, the consumer was given the option to say "I do not know which one is my brand" if he really was not able to identify his brand or got confused. If that is so, the "I do not know" was counted "in correct." This is to say, he was not able to identify his brand by taste.

Also, the respondents were asked about the number of years they have been drinking to see if there is any relationship between years of drinking and consumer's ability to identify soft drink brand by taste alone.

Achi-square (χ^2) will be computed to determine whether the variables experiment are related to one another at level of SIGNIFICANCE = .05.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS :

Experiment findings are summarized in the following tables:

Consumer	Brand Identification			Total Correct	Incorrect	Total
	Years of drink					
	1-3	3-6	6+			
Male	4	7	13	24	6	30
Female	2	3	3	8	12	20
Total	6	10	16	32	18	50

Before starting the analysis, study limitations being mentioned earlier should be noted because they have their impact on the reliability and the validity of the study.

Achi-square was computed using this formula $\chi^2 = \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$

(see Appendix 1) and was found to be 8.33. With the degrees of freedom equal to 1, the probability of finding a value as high as 8.33 is 0.015. This indicates that the difference in taste preference is significant at the 0.05 level. The results show that taste is a significant factor in the appeal to soft drink consumers. Furthermore, females differ from male consumers in their ability to identify soft drink brand by taste alone. It has been found that 80% of male sample can identify soft drink brand by taste alone versus 40% of female sample. This, surprisingly, is double. The explanation, however, could be that women do not drink as much as men, the weight scare may have relatively stronger influence over women than men. The weight scare could cause consumers to shift their preferences from taste to a soft drink with low sweet (less taste). Because females were found to differ from male consumers in their ability to identify soft drink brand by taste alone, so consumers can be segmented based on taste.

Finally, it has been noticed that consumers (men and women alike) were able to identify soft drink brand as years of drinking increased. This might be explained by further research to test the relationship between brand loyalty and years of drinking. It is expected that with increased years of drinking, brand loyalty becomes clearer and stronger, thus better able to identify soft drink brand by taste alone.

Findings, in summary:

1. Consumers in general can identify soft drink brand by taste alone. It has been found that 64% of consumers can identify soft drink brand by taste alone versus 36% who could not.
2. Females differ from male consumers in their ability to identify soft drink brand by taste alone. It has been found that 80% of male sample were able to identify soft drink brand by taste alone versus 40% of female sample.
3. As years of drinking increased, consumers, both male and female, were better able to identify soft drink brand by taste.

IMPLICATIONS :

Now, what do these findings imply for the marketing manager? what

do they mean to him? specially regarding advertising.

Based on the preceding analysis, the marketing manager can utilize taste as an effective advertising appeal. Furthermore, consumers segmentation strategy based on taste can be developed. For example, taste (high sweet) might appeal to women, while low sweet (less taste) might appeal to men. Good strategy is to combine both appeals in one advertising copy.

The marketing manager can use the following format, for example:

"Viva WHERE GREAT TASTE AND LOW SWEET CAN MEET"
or this appeal.

"ONLY "Viva" THE NATURAL SOFT DRINK CAN TASTE SO RICH YET BE LOW SWEET"

Another implication is that taste appeal might not be effective for those who drink for a long time because they are most likely to be brand loyal and it is very difficult to induce them to shift to other brands. Thus, taste appeal would be more effective if it is directed toward young drinkers.

A further implication is that brand awareness or lack of it is a big problem in the soft drink market. To have brand awareness, the following should be noted:

- * Good advertising appeal is critical for advertising effectiveness.
- * Soft drink promotion must be part of the brand's marketing mix in order to achieve the brand objective.
- * The promotion of soft drink must have clear, specific and measurable objectives in order to evaluate results.
- * The advertising appeal must have a major impact in order to achieve increased sales.
- * The appeal should be simple and clear.

Recommendations:

- * Taste can be used as an effective advertising appeal.
- * Consumers segmentation strategy based on taste is possible and feasible.
- * One advertising with two appeals (taste-low sweet) is recommended for both groups; e. g. "Viva ... No other soft drink with this little sweet ... has this muck taste. "This appeal will be efficient (more effective, less costly).
- * We recommend further research that would include more variables (age, education, income, number of soft drink per day etc.), use more sophisticated techniques, and select more scientific sample.



- * Furthermore, we recommend a qualitative research (the focus group interview technique) to probe consumers behavior in more depth in order to find out why consumers keep drinking despite the health hazard resulting from sweet, chemicals used. This recommended technique will provide direction and more sinight into the problem.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it has been found that soft drinkers can be segmented into two distinctive groups (male and female). Also, it has been found that consumers can identiy soft drink brand by taste alone. Consequently, taste can be used as an effective advertising appeal. However, the marketing manager should be aware of the trends that might cause consumers ot shift their preferences to a a better soft drink. Also, it should be notd here that an effective appeal alone will not make an effective advertisement. If it is to be effective, it should be integrated with other advertising elements (get attention, arouse interest, conviction, try for action, color, size, position, etc.) in order to form an effective advertisement as a whole.



Notes

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APPENDIX 1
 χ^2 computation
Brand Identification

Consumers	Correct	Incorrect	Total
Male	24	6	30
Female	8	12	20
Total	32	18	50

using this formula

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

$$= \frac{(24 - 19.2)^2}{19.2} + \frac{(6 - 10.8)^2}{10.8} + \frac{(8 - 12.8)^2}{12.8} + \frac{(12 - 7.2)^2}{7.2}$$

$$= \frac{(4.8)^2}{19.2} + \frac{(4.8)^2}{10.8} + \frac{(4.8)^2}{12.8} + \frac{(4.8)^2}{7.2}$$

$$= \frac{23}{19.2} + \frac{23}{10.8} + \frac{23}{12.8} + \frac{23}{7.2}$$

$$= 1.2 + 2.13 + 1.8 + 3.2$$

$$= 8.33$$

8.33 > critical value at .05 = 6.63

Thus, null hypothesis is rejected.



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