

Influence of Visual Online Persuasive Marketing of Products on Buying Attitudes of Adults: A Review

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ABSTRACT

With the growth of business models and global competition, every brand is attempting to establish its individuality in society. While improving one's organization is a component of growing better, persuasion is the process of influencing others to discover reasons to acquire or purchase a product. The purpose of this review article is to determine the impact of persuasive marketing in the online mode of various items on adult purchasing behavior. While the virus has compelled everyone to resort to their screens, numerous companies have used social media, advertisements, and websites to establish their own brand identity and develop new ways to persuade consumers to buy a product. Selected research depicts the use of persuasion in marketing and, to some extent, concludes that it works. Different visual characteristics such as color, symmetry, and aesthetics are factors that influence attention, arousal, and memory, and these factors are an important part of a brand since they attract customers and influence their purchasing decisions. With the unavoidably expanding use of social media and technology to promote and establish companies and their identities, it is critical to investigate the influence of visuals on online persuasion.

Keywords: *Buying attitudes, Marketing, Online, Persuasion, Visual Persuasion.*

We see advertisements virtually every day, whether on television, billboards, or even outside of showrooms. Nowadays, knowing how to market a product to a certain target audience is a talent, and as time goes on, we are coming closer to disclosing the simple reality that human psychology lies underneath a flawless product recommendation. As we observe a surge in diverse business models and goods designed to satisfy people's objectives, the purposeful need to convince people is expanding on a daily basis. Humans are now inventing items to fulfill even the tiniest of other people's demands, which is both a benefit and a drawback for society. Persuasion isn't just for selling, purchasing, or bargaining; it's used in a variety of settings and scenarios that we don't even realize! While the global exposure of different companies through e-commerce is growing beneficial and advantageous to the sellers, marketing strategists must grasp consumer psychology and numerous persuasive strategies in order to persuade customers to acquire a particular product or concept. Current review aims to understand the impact of visual persuasion i.e., online persuasion on the buying attitude of adults.

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Persuasion and Marketing

According to psychology, persuasion refers to the process of communicating to individuals with an aim of convincing them to change their attitudes and beliefs regarding a particular thing or an issue. (VeryWell Mind, 2020). The catch with this is that people are not coerced, instead, they are left with their own decisions and thoughts to decide their stand and choices on particular things. Specifically, in marketing, persuasion applies to the promotional aspects of the goods and services provided by the sellers and different techniques to encourage the buyers to act on their impulsive buying decisions. These messages are communicated through various ways i.e verbally, through pictures, proofs, advertisement videos, etc. Today, many companies are competing against each other to sell similar products with different and unique persuasive techniques to lure in customers. Because the market is growing more diversified every day, firms are developing more sophisticated and informational persuasion techniques that encourage customers to pursue the company's projected lifestyle, which is attained with that particular product. The aesthetic look of a product on an e-commerce site has a major influence on 93 percent of e-commerce customers. (Justuno, 2016). It is difficult to purchase goods without first seeing them, whether in person or online. As a result, the client places a high value on the visual presentation, which includes branding, logos, websites, product endorsements, and images. Everything has been online since the Covid-19 pandemic, and the majority of people all around the world are purchasing their necessities online. According to UNCTAD, in 2020, due to restrictions in movement and traveling, the total real shares in the e-commerce sphere of business rose from 16% to 18% in 2020. The visits to e-commerce sites shot up to 21.8 billion in 2020 which was around 16.07 billion at the start of 2019. This portrays the great usage of online shopping sites in and after the pandemic. Even though this was a great advantage to the sellers but at the same time, the already competitive side of business got even more competitive which made it difficult for small businesses and start-ups to survive. Different marketing and persuasion strategies were and are essential for sellers in order to capture their attention and, most likely, purchase the goods. Despite the fact that psychology plays a significant role in marketing campaign design, it is critical to determine the extent to which persuasion works and if it is sufficient to persuade an individual to buy a certain product or engage in other advertising. A dissertation by Baryshnikova (2017) tried to understand the different persuasive techniques used concerning the psychological factors in marketing and also understand the influence on people. The study included the analysis of existing literature and for the empirical data, qualitative interviews which included the interviews of seven individuals falling between the age group of 20-30 years were done to understand the influence. Results showed that even though psychological factors are necessary for a marketing campaign to be successful, but it is not enough. The development of technology is something that needs work on in the field of neuromarketing.

Structured communication, storytelling, copywriting, and neuromarketing are the four components that make up a convincing marketing campaign. The sellers must use their items to create a storyline that will entice buyers to listen and potentially be convinced to reconsider their impulsive purchasing decisions. Structured communication refers to the process of initiating a pre-planned dialogue with a consumer, which can be done through a website that, rather than interrupting the customer with a sale, sends out a message that initiates a conversation. Storytelling has the potential to influence people's emotional states and elicit subconscious responses. When particular words and visuals are revealed to them, they may experience feelings such as empathy, faith, and so on. (Marketing Schools, 2020)

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Research by Seo (2020) studied the influence of visual stimulation on persuasion through a meta-analysis. He studied whether adding images to different texts influenced perception. 12 studies were taken into final consideration which had a total of 2,452 participants and the final results had shown that adding images to verbal texts did not have a significant influence on persuasion. But, when moderating variables were included i.e photographs, drawings, proof, etc., it was seen that several significant visual effects emerged so that photographs, positive images, and health-related images influenced persuasion. So through this research, we can clearly understand the importance of the 4 elements of marketing mentioned previously. Undoubtedly, a picture and a tagline that tells a story clearly to the customer and gets through to them is the key to being successful in the game of persuasive marketing.

Brand Colors and Visuals on buying attitudes

Any firm that wants to carve out a niche in an already crowded industry has to consider what type of brand identity they want to project. This is where brand positioning comes in, when the company decides what image, they want to project in the minds of their customers so that they can be distinguished from their competitors. Colors and palettes play a significant part in determining how a brand is viewed in the market, but brand positioning is a far broader topic. Colors are frequently used by brands to generate a brand connection in the minds of customers, which is often confirmed by color psychology research. (MasterClass, 2021). There is still a lack of research on the topic of color psychology but from a buyer's perspective, it is very crucial in the marketing arena. A cross-national analysis by Ackay et al., (2011) studied the perception of color in product choices across students in India, the USA, China, and Turkey with a sample size of 112, 120, 112, and 96 respectively. The data was collected through a questionnaire which focussed on the importance of color perceived by individuals for various products and it was divided into three parts- the first one being the importance of color while buying a certain product, the second one being the color that they most associated the products with and the final one being the specific emotional words associated with the colors. The results concluded that color plays a huge role in determining the buying attitudes of individuals. It relies highly on culture and color choice. Even though most Indians associated the color black with death and evil, it was found that most individuals preferred buying products that were black. Different colors signify different meanings for individuals belonging to different parts of the world. In the 1950s, the well-known brand of Pepsi changed its logo in the vending machines of Southeast Asia from dark blue to icy blue. But because light blue was associated with death and sorrow, the brand witnessed a huge decrease in its sales which was alarming (Summa Linguae, 2021). This portrays the impact of cultural influences and associations to colors which can definitely impact the buying attitudes of individuals on a greater scale. These associations are something that the seller and the company should understand before selling a particular product to a specific population.

Colors and Symmetry- Attention, Memory, and Arousal

Because colors play such a crucial role in human visual experience, having a distinct color and visual presentation for a brand may influence people's attention and recall. Colors have a significant part in capturing a buyer's attention, which is necessary for a seller to leave an impression of the product or ad in the customer's permanent memory store. Farley and Grant in 1976 were one of the first people who derived a theory that suggested a possible connection between color and attention. It was hypothesized that the 52 undergraduate nursing subjects will reminisce about the colored multimedia presentation shown to them

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and not the black and white presentation. The hypothesis was proven to be true as, during the seven-day retention, the subjects did reminisce more about the colored presentation and not the black and white one. This shows that color does have an impact on memory and attention. The color that impacts the most on the customer's brain or is the most attention-seeking is the color red and that is the reason why it is used as warning signs and at places that require extra attention. On the other hand, the same color signifies fearlessness and is often associated with the concept of love and affection. A color that falls in between these two colors, the color orange, identifies itself with fun energy. Whenever we think of it is an unsaid fact that people associate the environment and nature with the color green or blue and thus many non-profit organizations prefer to go with these colors. Similarly, the color white is associated with cleanliness and purity and is often used for hygiene-related products and services. (Digital Synopsis, 2019)

While colors are definitely a great influence on people's buying attitude and highly determine a company's brand and personality, the shape and symmetry of brand logos also matter highly on the perception of the brand on people. Bajaj and Bond (2017) tried to elicit the difference between the symmetry of the logo of brands and how individuals inferred it concerning the brand personality. It was proposed that symmetry did play a significant role in delivering the image of the brand personality. Four different experiments were done- the first one was the logo evaluation where 147 undergraduate students were presented with different logos and their perception was studied. Study 2 was the subjective arousal which studied the link between symmetry and perceived brand excitement in a controlled environment which revealed that individuals associated asymmetry in visual elements with brand excitement which is partly driven by subjective arousal. The third experiment was to understand the artwork and to prove that brand imagery was manipulated using artwork rather than logos. In the fourth experiment of product choice, it was revealed that the asymmetry was associated with 'brand excitement' among the individuals.

The logo is considered to be the face and the personality of a brand. All the components of the same determine the level of arousal and the excitement a person may feel when encountering a certain product of the logo. Yang et al., (2018) through their article explain the 'visual asymmetry effect' which is where the asymmetry of a certain logo has a positive impact on the excitement and arousal of individuals. The asymmetry is perceived as more congruent with brands that have exciting personalities. This was concluded using five studies that used a variety of experimental approaches and secondary data that helped in eliciting the link between the symmetry of a brand logo and the feeling of excitement and arousal.

Another study was done by Hall and Hanna (2004) that examined the effect of web page text/background color combination on readability, retention, aesthetics, and behavioral intention. The sample consisted of 136 participants who were presented with two different kinds of web pages- one consisted of educational content and another consisted of commercial content in one of four color-combination conditions which were black on white background, white on black background, light blue on dark blue background and teal on black background. All the participants were assigned randomly to different web pages with different color combinations and they were given the time frame of 10 minutes to view the sites, after that, they were handed out a multiple-choice questionnaire with 10 different questions which assessed the readability, retention, aesthetics, and behavioral intention. It was assumed that the web page with the highest color contrast would lead to higher

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readability and retention rate. Major findings were that high color contrasts did lead to greater readability, the color combination did not specifically affect that retention, the preferred colors led to a higher rating of aesthetics and intention to purchase, and lastly, the aesthetic rating greatly depended on the intention to purchase.

Online persuasion and its effectiveness

Because we are becoming closer every day to the idea that each human behavior is related with diverse motives, beliefs, and experiences that may be comprehended via psychology, there are many different fields of psychology emerging. Because marketing persuasion is persuading customers to act on their impulses, a thorough understanding of human psychology is essential.

The internet has provided several possibilities for people to come forward and exhibit their innovations, which have the potential to improve human lives. Every day, we are exposed to hundreds of various advertisements, whether on our phones or on television, and as a result, creating the ideal marketing campaign has become a difficult effort owing to the world's rising competitiveness. When it comes to internet marketing campaigns, designing them is considerably more difficult than it appears because most people will only glance at an ad for 6-8 seconds. The term "web psychology" refers to the study of how the online environment influences our attitudes, ideas, and behavior patterns (SocialMediaToday, 2015). Companies use different marketing strategies to stand out and sell their products to a targeted audience. Companies need to curate their techniques in a way that reaches the part of the audience who desires that product. Different persuasion claims have been coming up in the market which influences and manipulates a consumer to buy a certain product. Jeong et al., (2012) conducted a study to understand two different types of persuasion claims i.e limited product availability (only 4 left in stock!) and product popularity (96% of the people bought this product after viewing this site) and studied their effectiveness by performing two studies. The sample included 208 college students and the risk aversion tendency, purchase intention and perceived product quality were assessed using three different scales through a questionnaire. It was found out that the popularity claims enhanced perception of quality, particularly among highly risk-averse consumers, and their purchase intention for that product. On the other hand, the limited availability claims had low to no influence and the reasons could include lack of psychological reactance and low credibility of the message.

When a person is contemplating whether or not to buy a given product, one of the factors that influences their decision is the availability of reviews. When a lot of individuals are talking positive things about a product, it persuades the customer to buy that product. It persuades them to believe the favorable feedback. Meanwhile, the bad evaluations assist them in identifying the product's shortcomings. Mangold et al. (2013) did a study to understand the effects of knowledge about manipulated online product reviews on the impact of these reviews in influencing the consumers' product evaluations. Two different empirical studies were performed with 211 students and other members of a university in Switzerland and the results showed that the people could clearly understand that the reviews of these products can be manipulated and people who had this knowledge were not influenced by these reviews for the product evaluation. And the negative reviews have even less influence on the consumers when they are buying products from a highly credible source. Through this experiment, it was concluded that the credibility and sources were of high importance and it influenced the buying attitudes of adults. A different way of advertising a product online is through banner ads and sponsored ads. Sponsored ads are

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where a company pays for a certain event or campaign and in return, they advertise their brand in that particular campaign or event. Sponsored ads are perceived as more amusing and informative than the banner ad which is the type of rectangular graphic ad shown on the bottom and the top of the screens on some websites (Tutaj and Reijmersdal, 2012)

The marketing of food products on delivery apps is becoming more creative and luring for people. Food, a basic necessity of life, has become so accessible for the privileged class and the delivery applications are taking advantage of the same. Gunden et al., (2020) studied the role of two main components in the design of the user interface of online food delivery systems i.e., the display of various pictures and calories on the application and its impact and influence on the consumers to use these applications and how they spend on the food items and their tipping behavior. A 2x2 randomized posttest-only between-subjects experimental design manipulated between-subjects experiment was conducted where the independent variables were 1. Pictures and 2. Calories. The data was collected through a questionnaire which was developed using 2 different pre-established scales from existing literature. The population included the responses of 139 college students which were given via email. Findings suggested that calorie display style influences consumers' intentions to use these food delivery systems and it influences the consumers' tipping behaviors toward the delivery driver. The type of picture that may be shown in these applications also affects the buying intention of the individuals on a high scale as a picture with a person enjoying the food is more appealing to the consumer which further influences the impulsive buying attitudes hence profiting the food delivery business and the delivery man.

When done correctly and for the appropriate purpose, a brand's persuasion and effect on customers may be rather significant. Any company may have a good influence on its specific target group by using the proper colors and marketing. Lee et al., (2012) conducted a study to understand the role of fashion retailers in the encouragement of eco-friendly fashion to their consumers. They aimed to study the power that a fashion retailing brand has which can persuade and encourage people to consume eco-friendly clothing which is much better for the environment. The influence of green products (eco-friendly products) as endorsed by the green private brands and their impact on the consumers was studied along with the influence of green fashion campaigns on the green consciousness and green behavior of the consumers. It was hypothesized that 1. consumers having positive/negative perception of the green private brands will have a positive/negative direct impact on the green behavior of the consumers, 2. Consumers' positive/negative perception of green campaigns will have a positive/negative direct impact on the green consciousness of the consumers. 3. Consumers' green consciousness has a very direct and positive impact on the green behavior of the consumers. This study was administered to 200 Korean participants with the use of a questionnaire that consisted of questions about green behavior, perception of green retailing, and green consciousness. The results showed that the perception of the green private brands has a positive impact on the green behavior of the consumers. The green consciousness of the consumer replies highly on their perception of the green campaigns and this perception has an indirect impact on the green behavior of consumers. This study indicates the powers that the green fashion retailers hold in order to influence people into a more sustainable and eco-friendly aspect of fashion and clothing.

These types of studies tell us why it is important for different brands to use the power of persuasion for greater causes as people willingly follow the brands which cater to their needs and which work for greater causes. The above-mentioned studies have depicted various

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ways in which persuasion takes place and why branding and marketing are important for brands as they play heavily on the psyche of humans.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this paper was to determine the impact of online persuasion on adult buying decisions. So far, the majority of research has indicated that persuasion works, but only to a certain amount. The human mind has progressed to the point where it can recognise what is and is not appropriate for them. Brands may sometimes convince people without the audiences' realizing it and benefit from it. Color, symmetry, branding, and other factors influence the level of attraction and attention a company or a product will receive in the market, as color and symmetry play a large role in determining a product's aesthetics, and humans are unquestionably drawn to a product that not only feels but also looks good. Humans, on the other hand, search for other people's opinions in the form of reviews and comments when deciding whether or not to buy a product. The internet approach makes it difficult for customers to purchase some things since they cannot see or feel the object with their own eyes or hands. Businesses have been able to create their brands in a way that is pleasant to the human eye, as well as promote their mottos through advertisements and campaigns, as a result of this. The pandemic has acted as a medium for online persuasion to succeed more because of the rapid evolution of social media in recent years. Though persuasion has been studied a little, we need more studies to determine how psychology plays a huge role in determining the decision-making of individuals over a certain product.

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Conflict of Interest

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