



Semiotic Analysis of Anti-Aging Product Advertisement.

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Background:

According to a report from Transparency Marketing Research (2014), the global anti-aging market is growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.8% between 2013 and 2019. With the market's value being 122.3 billion in 2013, it is expected to reach US\$ 191.7 billion by end of 2019. These include anti-aging facial creams, hair lotions, lipsticks, eye balms and foot creams. A report suggests a 30% year-on-year growth in this segment. The demographics of anti-aging cosmetics are changing rapidly and market penetration is pursued aggressively. With a flurry of marketing communication about these products, print advertisements top the list, starting from lifestyle to women's magazine across different cultures. There is an interest about what they contain and what they suggest to the curious reader.

Research Issue:

The anti-aging product print advertisements are loaded with visual cues (such as signs, images, colors and so on) in order to captivate consumer psychology and appeal to the consumer. This research sets out to analyze these visual cues and examine them for their intent, operation and use. The role of culture in incorporating these visual cues is also studied.

Methodology:

Semiotic analysis is the tool used for analyzing the select print advertisements. The inclusion criteria for the advertisements are their recency and appeal to the women segment of the market. The selected advertisements represent brands such as Dove pro-age, L'Oreal Revival Lift, Himalaya Wrinkle Lift, Olay Total Effect, Pond's Age Miracle and Allergan's Botox. They represent a multi-brand, multi-cultural context.

Findings/Insights:

The semiotic analysis yields findings related to the proportion of visual and verbal content in the advertisements. The visual appeal falls under either self-focused or others-focused categories. The visual cues interact to induce a range of emotions such as fear, sensuality, sexuality, anxiety and humor in driving home the point. The presence or absence of celebrity, cultural mores and traditional profusion are also considered in the analysis. It brings out the adherence to celebrity-obsession in a culture and also the practice of cultural sensitivity.

Practitioner implications:

This paper demonstrates the use of semiotic analysis to study multi-brands from multi-cultures and also single-brand across multi-cultures. The findings help to draw generalizations upon print advertisements representing a product category with high involvement of consumers.

Key words: Semiotic analysis, anti-aging products, print advertisement analysis JEL code: M37

1. Introduction

The anti-aging product print advertisements are loaded with visual cues in order to captivate consumer psychology and appeal to the consumer. One qualitative research technique to study and evaluate such marketing communication is Semiotic analysis. The term ‘semiotic’ is derived from the Greek word ‘Semeion’ meaning sign, a mask and is defined as any object or word that can produce meaning. It was first said to be used in English by Henry Stubbes (1672) to denote a branch of medical science relating to the interpretations of signs

Semiotic analysis or Semiology is the study the study of signs and sign process. It is closely related to the field of linguistic which studies the structure and meaning of language more specifically. Semiotics can be studied under the categories such as Semantics that is the relation between sign and the things to which they refer – meaning, Syntactic – relation among science in formal structures and Pragmatics that is the relation between science and the effects they on the people who use them.

2. Conceptual background

Well known Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) was considered as the founder of Semiotics. His work, *The Course in General Linguistics* (1967) was a famous work in semiotic studies. Saussure viewed Semiotic as a science that would study how signs function in society, especially through the use of language. He divided the sign into two elements: the physical form that we perceive the sign and the concept image or an idea that these physical form designates. The former he called as the Signifier (the sound, image or word) and the latter as a Signified (the concept the signifier represents or the meaning). Signifiers have different signifieds. So it is important to distinguish between a signified, the concept to what a sign refers

and a 'referent' the actual physical object that embodies the sign. Semiotician tries to find meanings in signs which means they look at what components of meaning in general are in order for particular manifestations.

Charles Sanders Peirce known as the founder of American semiotics approached semiotics from a more philosophical and psychological perspective. He focused on the perception of people about the phenomenal world and how they communicate it through their representation like visual and verbal mode of communication. He defined semiotics as a 'quasi – necessary or formal doctrine of signs...' and therefore in one sense by no means necessary, as to what must be the characters of all signs used by a scientific intelligence capable of learning by experience. (Marsen, 2006)

Peirce (1934) proposed three models of semiotic analysis. They are Representament, Object, and Interpretant. Representament is the form which the sign represents. Object is the thing or the event to which the sign refers and Interpretant is the understanding or the meaning made out of sign. Peirce also distinguished three types of sign – icons, symbols and index. Icon is the sign that represent its object mainly by its similarity to it. It can be images and diagrams. Symbol is signified on the basis of convention. Indexes signify the cause and effect.

Umberto Eco (1986) stress on communication done by a representation of ideas and emotions through words, images, colors to draw a picture of something we can sense or imagine. In his opinion, a sign never really tell the truth in a direct and objective form. They mediate reality by allowing us to select aspects of the perceptible world and create stories with them through which we communicate ideas about the world.

Study of Semiotics in the field of Humanities is a recent one. Only in 1960s Semiotics study legally established itself in the area of human concern. It studies the common elements in all systems of signification and it forms part of the system of thought that led to the philosophy of language, which is an extended form of rhetoric and philosophy.

2.1. Importance of Semiotic Analysis

Semiotics study has helped to increase awareness of the fact that we know the world by means of signs, whether these are verbal or sensory. In material form of reality there is semiotic existence too. The way we understand and perceive objects, ideas or other people and the meanings, we give to them are mostly influenced by the way they are represented and the medium through which they are represented.

Terms like denotations and connotations are used by scholars like Roland Barthes (1964) to indicate primary meaning of a sign and connotation as secondary meaning of a sign (that is, the added meaning of a sign).

2.2. Semiotic analysis as a tool for ad analysis

Print advertising works according to the combination of illustration and copy. By way of comparison of these elements from semiotic study, we can trace the basic units of meaning that connects them into a coherent whole. Gunter Kress (2006) in his co-authored work with Theo Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, dwell on visual and verbal semiotics. He analyzes the compositional interpretations of experience and different forms of social interactions.

We live in a world full of symbols where we build meanings from these images. Semiotic school of thought believes that the meanings of the pictures are not in the pictures but what we bring to them. Visual interpretation is rooted in the perception through cognition and language and it is influenced by social, cultural and personal frames. Thus semiotic analysis can help us explain the complexity of visual communication while processing visual information and producing meaning from advertisements. There are subtle conventions and major differences and opposite positions if we categorize the system of relation in terms of connotations denotations or in combinations. The various images and meanings we perceive in the advertisement depend on how and when we try to analyze to uncover the social and cultural realities.

Advertising system consist of distinct signs and meaning of the advertisement in how the signs are organized. Semiotic analysis helps us discover that it may not always be the surface appearance and its meaning is the real motive in the advertisement.

3. Research domain: The case of anti-aging product advertisements

It is a universally accepted fact that people all over the world have been constantly searching for eternal beauty and youth. We all desire for flawless, wrinkle free and glowing faces in spite of the fact that there is a biological clock which wear and tear the once youthful beauty that we were endowed with. This evergreen desire often comes up to the surface of our daily living. It has almost become impossible for men and women to accept themselves as they are as made by nature and have become customers for unwanted necessities in following rigorous beauty regime.

Modern technology in fact has come to the rescue of men. Men have learnt to harness and unlock his findings not only for mastering the universe but to keep to his age at bay. It is a basic knowledge that everything comes to an end in this world including youth and beauty which are rags of time. In spite of this awareness, there is an increasing quest to retain beauty and youth. To fulfill these desires of men and women, personal care market has boomed up with beauty products like creams, lotions and serums which promises anti-aging. Anti-aging products have become a market in itself to quench the thirst for these ever-growing desires. And the advertising

world has aided in creating a “magic system” where beauty product promises a world of instant gratification.

Beauty advertisement promotes vast vistas of ideas and promises in their product to keep the consumers physically and mentally satisfied. Many of the readers of these advertisements do not believe that these products would in any way make them look younger and bring them love, acceptance, attraction and attention. But this does not disappoint the advertising world. They make it as if it is a new found challenge and never stop short in the pursuit of this irresistible soft target in men and women.

In spite of the changing values and pressures of the modern life – men and women cling to the primeval desire to be young, loved and to be acceptable. Hence the search for anti-aging products which promises to grant us these desires.

3.1. The focus in anti-aging product advertisements

The following advertisements on anti-aging product deserve a special reference to women because it affects the minds and hearts of women’s feelings. They seem to satisfy the very psyche of women with their make-believe promises which has almost become a reality in their life. The tall promises in the product make women see and mould their world around the images that is found in the print media. They build a surreal dream around them which boost up their spirit in the midst of the daily humdrum life. Advertisements also create and depict images which are accepted as standard behavior in the society they live. So the images of the women in the anti-aging beauty product adverts are depicted as role models to emulate.

This primeval desire of human being to remain forever young has herald the production of anti-aging beauty care in the ever-hungry beauty market. It is one of the most profits making enterprise in the business world. It is also a known fact that it is a market where even global recession or the economic melt- down had no adverse effect so far. In spite of the number of short comings and the skeptical results this industry manages to thrive. Women of all ages are going for anti-aging products. In the recent times, the target markets demographics have been redefined and expanded. Initially it was claimed that anti-aging products were meant for women in their 30’s and 40’s. Now this idea has been modified and there is change in the trend as younger women are also becoming conscious and the need for the preventive measures which will enable them to prevent wrinkles and lines from maturing. Anti-aging products also take adequate care to see specific skin condition and skin type and health condition to make it effective and appealing. All these research into producing and application of anti-aging products, importance was given to the face but with the change of time and style trend, market and research in anti-aging take into account the demands of culture and society. They deal with the needs and aspirations of the youth, the adults and the middle ages.

3.2. The anti-aging product market

Anti-aging product market is classified into two segments – one that provides health maintenance and another one that offers appearance enhancement. This research considers examples from the second segment that focuses on all areas of a whole personality, like hair care and other anti-aging solutions. Interestingly, this product market is resilient to economic cycles, given consumers' unchanging desire to look young despite changing times and fortunes. Product effectiveness is a key factor as consumers begin to seek multiple benefits such as visual, sensory, and functional benefits from anti-aging products. Also, concerns regarding harmful skin cancer and wrinkles caused by recurrent exposure to sun necessitate the need for multipurpose products. Like any other industry, anti-aging products also contend with skepticism and conflicting clinical research results surrounding the actual health and appearance benefits

4. Research methodology

Semiotic analysis is the tool used for analyzing the select print advertisements. The inclusion criteria for the advertisements are their recency in popular lifestyle magazines and appeal to the women segment of the market. The selected advertisements represent brands such as Dove pro-age, L'Oreal Revival Lift, Himalaya Wrinkle Lift, Olay Total Effect, Pond's Age Miracle and Allergan's Botox. They represent a multi-brand, multi-cultural context. The analysis tries to identify both the common and unique values that these brands convey.

5. Analysis and findings

This paper analyzes each of these selected advertisements in terms of semiotic status as signs whose related meanings not only reveal the positive aspect of the product but also the finer notion that vibes with feminine beauty which conveys cultural and traditional signification. The advertisement sends out its message through the iconic representation. It reveals the product and what it should stand for. So the analysis of the mentioned advertisement will center on the images and the ways in which these images manifest and create the signified concepts which in turn vouches the image of the product. A close analysis of the nuances of these advertisements will also help highlight the pros and cons of their media representation and how they manage to captivate consumer psychology and appeal to the consumers.

5.1. Advertisement-1: Botox



Figure-1. Botox advertisement

The first image – Botox anti-aging advertisement is simply classic and outstanding in its portal of idea of anti-aging. The visual effect maintains naturalness by the presentation of the image of just the eyes and wrinkled forehead of a model (made obvious with the image of a slashed electric iron) placed on a neatly ironed out Non-creasy T-shirt. The presentation of the visual could be termed as quite ‘unassuming’ as the image is of ‘any’ model (with a non-celebrity woman-next door image) and the ad’ turns out to be very effective as the subject matter is less verbal and the essence of the visuals is conveyed well within a down-to-earth expression of reality than fantasy. The image of the product figures merely at the bottom corner which clearly marks the confidence of the brand promoters and the trendy impact the visual strategy is expected to convey. Without any celebrity quotient the product speaks for itself which is a blend of contemporary and traditional marketing strategy. The ad therefore is unique and more cognitive in its drive.

5.2. Advertisement-2: Dove pro-age



Figure-2. Dove pro-age advertisement

The second image is of the brand Dove featuring a Polish celebrity. Usually when these anti -aging products are promoted, middle aged and famous personalities are taken in as brand ambassadors. This tactic assigns a national or community or cultural value to the product. The woman in the image is delicately feeling her skin with her finger tips, the smiling and revealing face does not leave any room for fantasy or imagination. There seems to be a conscious attempt to project the woman and her skin as innocent and delicate. The tag line and the product range have been associated by the use of the colour. So the colour is not necessarily associated with the aged but its presence allots to the context, sensuality and youthful vigor. The ad also seems to hold a positive note in its linguistic message and the product receives its stress only through the expression of a simple, direct statement as *'It's not Time but me who decides how delicate my skin is'*. The bold and the revealing image is complemented with the assertive verbal signifiers. The words and the message show the determination and the attitude of the persona which seems to defy the causes of time and age. The word 'pro-age' indicates 'time' which means the product is meant for the customer running with time. The Brand promoters however seem to have overlooked the implicit impact a visual could carry especially when both the verbal and visuals two are placed parallel on the same visual portal. However the emphasis would have been more effective if the verbal addition to the product had been made bolder and given greater or equal prominence as the image itself. In analyzing the verbal message, the word 'me' could have been given the same stress as 'Time' to convey its spirit more clearly. All the same, the verbal message that the advert conveys needs to be given its due appreciation as by itself it proves to be significant as the statement signifies a profound challenge to Time itself which quite conspicuously defies the precincts of mortal limitations. Besides, the words are also meant to be

appealing to the values of any aging woman and seem to reinstall a great deal of confidence in aging women. But the advertisement make one to think how vital it is for brand promoters and advertising media to balance both visual and linguistic representation as they need to maintain a sense of cognition from the consumers' stance too.

5.3. Advertisement-3: Dove lotion



Figure-3. Dove pro-age body lotion

The third image is Dove pro-age body lotion. The ad features a naked revealing model with a smiling face. The image can be understood at different levels. On a plain note we can say that image tries to convey a sensual beauty and youth which indicate both the product and the printed message. It gives an impression that nudity is used to depict the efficiency of the product and also to foreground the youthful skin which is the ultimate result to be attained. In addition the smile on the lips imparts a satisfaction despite the stress of daily life. However, the semiotic elements of the ad are understood within the verbal impact that is the assertion, '*whoever said, it's too late for luminous skin*'. The sense of defying aging comes alive with the bold and revealing body. So the image here signifies the attitude of the person or the effect of the product which represents. Though the ad definitely conveys hard reality, it specifically might work negatively on the consumer psyche sometimes even dissuading women from using a product. So there can be repugnance due to the explicit details of the nude body.

There is also a contrast of image and verbal impact that is disproportionate. Another noticeable thing in the ad is the assurance at the bottom in drab white. It is understandable to have a container holding the actual product with its assurance and product – ingredients message placed on the reverse. At the same time an ad needs to provide ample significance to such details and

cannot take the consumer for granted. The colour contrast and the chosen background also seem to have overshoot the technicality of the ad-maker.

5.4. Advertisement-4: Himalaya anti-wrinkle cream

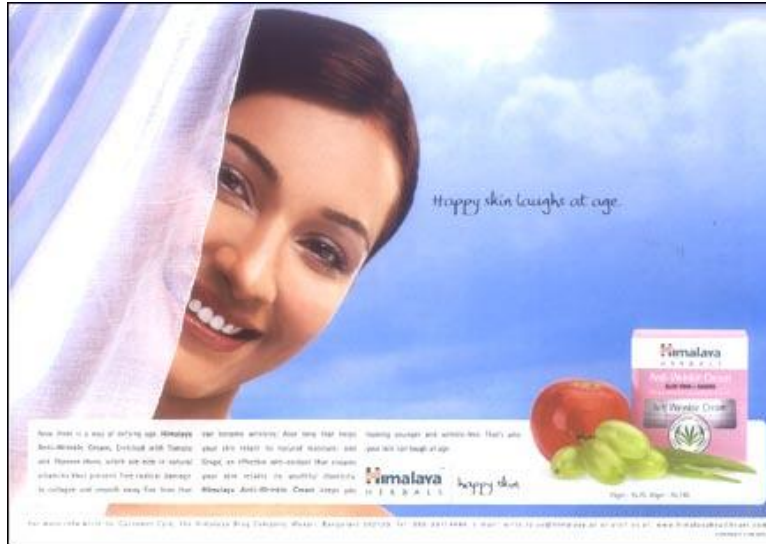


Figure – 4. Himalaya anti-wrinkle cream

The above ad features a model peeping out of the curtain. It conveys a happy radiant and smiling face. The ad tries to connect the lady and the product with nature itself. There is sense of ‘decency’ with which the ad is printed. This aspect can be associated with the projection of brand’s image itself. Himalaya is associated with the quality of purity and the tradition of Ayurveda (Indian traditional system of medicine and wellness), something that is considered as sacred and hence a ‘decent’ product. The image conveys correctness of character and spirit of subject matter – that is of an aging woman. Her skin glows against the appropriateness of colours chosen for the visual background. What the product signifies and the aspects that contribute to that are all clearly and logically arranged to the main vehicle – the woman herself. The product, its brand name and quality assurance are all made precisely available in the visual. The ad gives a reflection of the Indian society. The ‘shy’ and ‘homely’ nature of Indian women is depicted through the image who peeps out of the half open curtain.

5.5. Advertisement-1: L’Oreal Revitalift



Figure-5. L’Oreal RevitaLift

L’Oreal RevitaLift ad is catchy and trendy in terms of making awareness, appeal and assurance though the ad is not perfect in the aspect of being attractive. Still, the adverts make good, further in its choices of colour for the main image. The colour red is also suggestive of the youthful vigor and the vibrancy which the product will bring. The sign on the forehead of the celebrity model is suggestive of the deep penetration the product is capable of doing. The verbal appeal too though is made in very minute font yet has a sure impact in terms of choice of words. The advert claims to ‘*target wrinkles, even the one that ages you most*’ which is absolute in terms of assurance and makes a hit of a consumer appeal that gate crashes into the hard truth about aging yet creates a sidelong bridge that seems to fill the gap of aging through a fantastically non-aging using the product L’Oreal RevitaLift.

The fact about the process of aging seems to be lightened by the quality of assurance which is conveyed through the verbal gimmicks. The verbal impact is crucial and intense here which seems to be meant to markedly assuage the anxiety of aging in the consumer psyche. The ad though is not so impeccable after all; still it is not erroneous to refer to it as balanced in terms of image and verbal portal. For at a point where the image fails to reach perfection, the verbal impact compensates thus allowing it to retain standards of being rated as simply a good advert.

5.6. Advertisement-6: Olay



Figure-6. Olay Total effects ad (in Spanish)

The above ad is that of Olay for Hispanic market. It is predominantly ‘visual’ in its portal yet is quite a class sample of a well balanced combination of verbal and visual impact. The aging process of the image is made explicit by the image of the graying hair and youthful look made visible within a single image. The ad is outstanding in its message and spirit of the subject matter. Also, it is made relevant to all cultures and contents bearing a palpable approach and appeal. The image in the picture has a telling captivating smile and looks of the smoothness of her skin bears a tell-tale sufficiency well marked by photographic technicality and usage of colour. It is also worth noting that the product is meant for the face only and does not concern the entire body as the earlier products have done. The message of the visual overshoots all contextual queries and dubiousness that such an ad could cause as the age of the image is not camouflaged but is presented in its actuality. This adds to the totality of the visual effect of the image and holds forth an all-generation appeal. It also carries a celebrity’s endorsement on the ad copy which brings attentions to the ad and conveys reassurance to the reader.

5.7. Advertisement-7: Olay skin-care marker



Figure-7. Olay skin-care marker

The Olay Skin Care Marker ad from Argentina is primarily meant for the face though it gives out a blurring picture in the mind of the reader at the first glance. The design done on the face of the image is obscure and misleading such that the focus can be diverted to make the consumer believe that the skin care total effect is a cream meant for perhaps for some post-surgical application and not for everyday use. But the tag line gives a clearer view about the trouble which the aged and the cosmetic surgeons take to make women look younger.

The marker perhaps is meant to highlight the creases on the model's face and looks suggestive of the need for a skin care cream. But the visual impact could lead the consumer to think in terms of growing craze for tattooing and it can symbolize the carefree freedom the woman can get by which she can do anything with her face. The ad loses sight of appealing to attract the consumer at the first sight, at the same time it is suggestive of related values that may be a part of the place and location of marketing. Too much clear cut details of the skin of an aging woman make the ad a little too garish and blunt failing to make an aesthetic appeal. The verbal claim too is suggestive of more of a post care surgical application than cosmetic use such that the ad fails in following the norms of a media appeal. The theme chosen also fails to keep in mind the need to appeal to a wider audience but may fit into some select target segment.

5.8. Advertisement-8: Olay Total effect cream



Figure-8. Olay Total effect cream

The ad for Olay Total Effect Cream from UAE is apparently unconventional and potentially misleading at the same time. Among all the adverts chosen for analysis, this ad alone figures the male model and therefore requires minimum additional effect. The background against which the image and his face figures is appropriate and the model's costume is selectively presented in black uniform and curves out a special masculine face apt for a male model.

The posture of the cop is empathetically masculine though the manner in which the card is held could have been made more weighing upon the passenger while the cop scrutinizes the passenger. This makes the body language of the cop slightly drawn toning down the overall effect of the adverts. However the tense facial muscles of the cop reveals a sense of surprise combined with a tinge of humour. And the tiny words '*Believe it*' near the product speaks for the unclear part of the whole image, that is the lady sitting at the driver's seat that seems to be younger than the photograph that is in the ID card. There is the sense of fantasy and imagination in the depiction of the image as the ad leaves space for humor and wit pertaining to the non-revelation of the image of the lady. The unrevealed image provides enough space for the readers to understand and connect the concept of the image in the larger spectrum of the society where the brand is marketed. This could be a part of the advertising policy of the marketers of the anti-aging products for its targeted customers. The male image in the ad also signifies the importance and prominence given to the exposes of male beauty rather than the female beauty as it is advertised in UAE and compliance with the local socio-cultural norms and religious traditions. The choice of the colour Black also adds glamour and beauty. So the image signified is the effectiveness of the product that is being promised. On the whole the ad could be definitely rated as better than merely average.

5.9. Advertisement-9: Olay Total effects



Figure-9. Olay Total effects

Olay Total Effects ad features a celebrity model and actor Sushmita Sen. Her popularity and skin tone speaks for the ad by itself. The ad also conveys a clear-cut image with an open boldness, '*Helps fight the 7 signs of aging*' which relates a sense of down-to Earth honesty about the reality of aging process. Still, the spirit behind the product and the text is convincing and persuasive enough owing to the suave yet appealing sex-appeal the model makes to the customers. The image is encrypted in layers of signifiers. At one level it would signify that the product is meant for both young and the middle ages or 40 plus. At another level it indicates a sense of femininity that emits out of the radiant smile. Another dimension of the bold verbal assertion would mean that the product is mainly targeted for the younger generation who would use preventive measures to keep themselves young and beautiful. In all these levels of signifiers, there is one common desire – that is, to remain young and beautiful. Hence there is a coordination between the sign and signifiers to attain signification. Another aspect of the image is the presence of ideology. The fact that the ad uses well known celebrity has its own purpose. Sushmita Sen comes across as a face of modern Indian woman who is a sophisticated combination of bold, beautiful and brainy. So there is a presence of ideology. Where there is a sign, there is an ideology too. In a nutshell the image of Sushmita Sen adds to the credibility of the brand in the Indian market and appeals to the mindset of the customers who would like to emulate the ideologies of what she stands for in relation to the effectiveness of the anti-aging product. The association of the image and the character too get encapsulated into the psyche of the reader who would take her as their role model. There is both fantasy and reality in the projection.

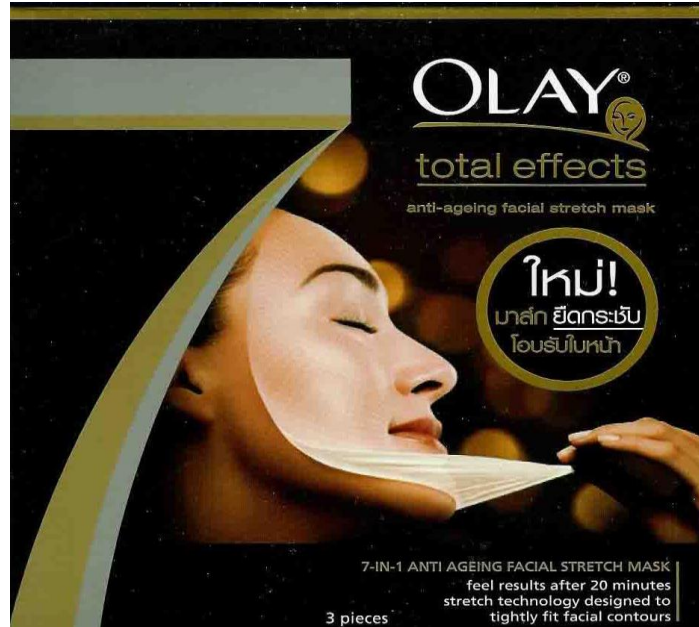
5.10. Advertisement-10: Olay Total effects mask

Figure-10. Olay Total effects anti-aging facing stretch mask

The above Olay Total effects ad is from Thailand. The image features a model taking away the stretch skin mask as if peeling away the layers of aged and weary skin only to reveal the glowing beauty radiance beneath. The image and the verbal caption co-relate and give a complete and wholesome understanding of the effect of the cream. The signifier ‘mask’ is suggestive of the idea that age can be discarded with the use of this anti-aging product. There is also a sense of relief and amazement indicated in the process. The content is implicit and the calm looks and self-confident smile on the model’s face is meant to reinstall adequate confidence about the product in the customer. However the background lacks quality and the choice of colour contrast and the design is done at random.

5.11. Advertisement-11: Olay Total effects

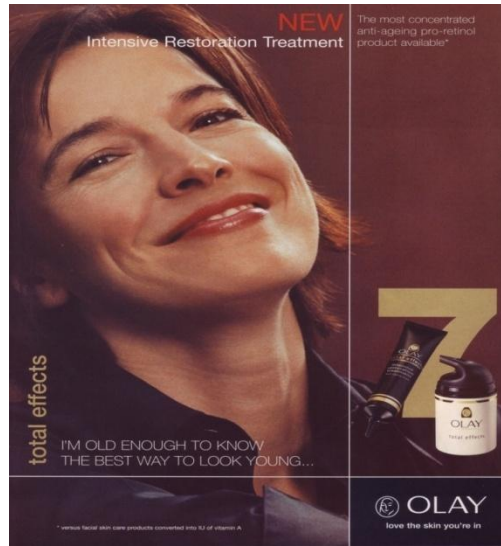


Figure-11. Olay Total Effects

This Olay Total effects ad from U.K. opens with the words – ‘*New intensive restoration treatment*’ with the added phraseology ‘*I am old enough to know the best way to look young*’ - a bold statement with a ting of *who-cares* attitude at the same time.

The image is of a middle aged lady most probably in the age group of 40 – 50. The image is an iconic rendering of the product itself. The ad copy is important as it suggest what is to be expected of the product. The Olay logo is also visible and the fact that the range is exclusive for the women can be guessed. The facial expression is of the calm and confident personality who is aware of her age and there is no problem in trying to keep her look young. So there is a conscious effort to use anti-aging products like Olay. However the image seems to be too large and carries much detail in its visual presentation. And so there is no room for fantasy or imagination.

5.12. Advertisement-12: Pond’s Age Miracle

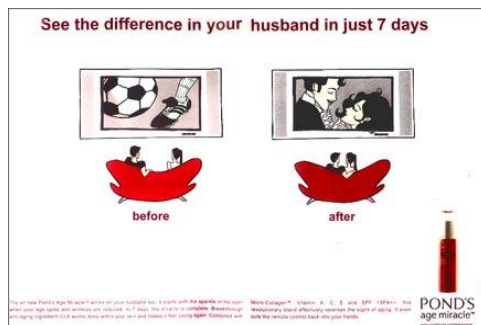


Figure-12. Pond’s age miracle

The ad for Pond's Age Miracle is too down to earth and lacks quality in its conveyance of fantasy. The use of red colour is symbolic of igniting passion. The pictures *before* and *after* are two blatant and conventional and perhaps outdated in its mode of appeal.

The *before* image is of a husband engaged in a football match added to this is an image of a husband and wife sitting apart on a couch. Through the body language the image shows the loveless relationship. So it conveys a negative feeling. But the second picture indicated by the word *after* evokes a positive body language. The second image sitting very close to each other also shows the kind of relationship they attain after using the particular product. There is warmth in the relationship or at least that is what the audience is made to believe. The sign here signifies the effect or the result of the product. Through the speaking images, the ad certainly targets the softer sentiments of men and women relationship. In the present context the ad seems to be inappropriate and could only appeal to certain cultural milieu. As a result the ad at some point fails to make the intended or expected appeal from the customer point of view.

While anti-aging Ponds miracle could be more about reinstalling self confidence in aging women, here the ad seems to overlook the fact and the creative production makes the ad appear as though Ponds age miracle is some sort of pill that enhances love relationship. There is a kind of filmy touch in the pictures. The colors chosen for presentation are visually engaging and appropriate. The *before* image has light red colour and the *after* image has a deeper red. They signify the kind of passion and closeness the couple experience before and after.

6. Discussion of results

In a print advertisement, all signs, whether they are icons or symbols, are indexes. All signs must be located in a material world. Generally colour is used to disguise a fact or to identify the key features of a product. Marketers feel that colour sells and the right colour sells the better. Colors are the first things that attract people emotionally to a product or space. It evokes feelings and meanings and has incredible ability to influence the buying behavior.

The ultimate object of advertising is to gain more attention, evoke more interest, kindle stronger desire and lead to purchase of the product to ensure growth and long term profit from the brand. While maintaining their supremacy in international markets, successful global brands localize their advertising messages to make them unique, saleable and relevant to local conditions. The localization is accomplished using local celebrities or by targeting local values.

From the analysis of the several anti-aging product advertisements, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. Visuals dominate the verbal communication in the ad. The verbal aspect seeks to explain and enhance the visual attributes of the ad.

2. The product benefits suggested by the ads vary from self-focused (such as a feel-good factor or who-cares attitude) to others-focused (such as to appease or attract).
3. Several vehicles are used to communicate meaning and appeal to cognition, emotion or volition. These vehicles include humor, logic, sensuality, sexuality, fear, anxiety, and accomplishment and so on. No rigid patterns were observed here.
4. The expression of need and statement of benefit were portrayed both explicitly (through a simple careful observation) and implicitly (enabled by a simple careful interpretation).
5. Some of the ads analyzed in this paper had a celebrity's picture prominently included in the visual copy of the ad. This is done essentially to attract attention to the ad and then build confidence and provide reassurance to a hesitant, apprehensive customer.
6. Though aging is a universal phenomenon, different cultures react differently to aging. The reactions vary from a graceful acceptance and transition to a more aggressive resistance and efforts to delay if not deny. This emerges from the analysis of the ads.
7. The semiotic analysis in this research is set in a multi-cultural context. As a result, the cultural overtones are observed in the ads. For example, Olay total effects has a contextualized its marketing communication. In the ads in UAE, there is no show of a beautiful face of a woman, whereas, in India, a prominent celebrity's face is shown and in Thailand, a masked face is shown in the ad.

Advertising fascinates people. It romances with the lives of people and creates in the mind of man the beautiful image and dreams. Semiotic analysis gives us a broader outlook about the beauty products, its influence in the life of people, their sense of appeal and fulfillment and adherence to social custom and traditions. Our construction of beauty and our general belief about feminine beauty may differ from place and culture to culture.

While semiotic analysis gives us the possible insights into the various dimensions about the visual images, we cannot be conclusive about them. It needs thinking and putting meaning into this thinking from various dimensions. Thus semiotic interpretations help us discover the intricacies and nuances of cultural instinct into the process of interpretation. Our personal life background, moods and necessities and aspirations contribute significantly to the way we interpret signs and symbols. It is an interesting area because it provides a broad spectrum of possible meanings. There are no rigidities involved in the process. It depends on how we organize the signs and attribute meaning into them by bringing alive the diversities and beauty of human nature.

7. Conclusion

Marketing and advertising have grown by leaps and bounds. It is no longer a question of message and its authenticity but how we develop meanings into those messages. Semiotic

analysis brings about varied dimensions to the understanding of advertisements in beauty products segment and its target customers.

The basic concept in marketing reveals that it is all about satisfying consumer wants and needs. All appeals are credited for the purpose of advertising human needs and wants and projecting how the advertised brands can satisfy those needs and wants. Denise Shiffman, the author *The Age of Engage* (2008) says that in this new emerging era of advertising, hearts, not eye balls, count. Dan Hill, the author of *About Face: The secrets of emotionally effective advertising* (2010), too talks about three people-cum-customer-centric P's. They are Passion, Purpose and Personality. The first P indicates 'Passion,' which deals with the subconscious reaction to an advertisement that comes out as a result of our sensory perception. The second P stands for 'Purpose' which could be about the offers that are given by the company with strings attached to market supposed to be laden with values and beliefs in the society. And the third P indicates 'Personality' in brands which are emotionally engaging, unique and authentic and have made inroads into the marketing mind. By this, Dan Hill tries to drive home the point that focusing on passion, purpose and personality, marketers can connect and relate to the target customers. Anti-aging beauty products too have penetrated into the psyche of human mind the eternal urge to keep one young and beautiful. So the construction of 'Beauty' is no more confined to facial looks, it includes the attributes that we give to the apparent appearance and semiotic analysis plays an important role. Ads also trade on values such as one's culture and tradition, status, social concerns, sense of nationalism, love and so on.

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