

The Use of Fear Appeal in Pakistani Advertisements in Post-9/11 era and Its Impact on Viewers

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Abstract

Advertising is an important part of media. It is a form of communication in which the audience is intended to be persuaded. Different appeals used by the advertisers like women, celebrities, religion, culture, nature, place, suspense, ego, fantasy, and many more including the more worth using for getting the goals accomplished is the fear appeal. The use of fear appeal arouses more susceptibility and severity of threat which makes the attitude change process toward a significant, intentional, and behavioral impact motivated. The use of fear appeal increases in the time of any crises. This study has explored how Pakistani media has increased their use of fear appeal in the post-9/11 era. By surveying the youth, it has also been explored how the use of fear appeals is affecting them. It is proven that the use of fear appeal has increased, and more extreme forms of fear appeal cause hostile behavior among the viewers.

Keywords: Fear Appeal, Advertisement, Pakistan, Survey.

Introduction

Terrorism is associated with a confined concept after dreadful incidents like 9/11, and the coverage of these types of incidents is worth researching. After the Twin Towers attack, the world became more aware of the terrorists' activities. Soon after these incidents, the war on terrorism was started against the terrorists. The story began with the on-ground military operation and included the operation against Saddam Hussain (although not in the name of terrorist activities) because of the expected presence of weapons of mass destruction in his country, which are supposed to be used in this kind of activity. Though these weapons were not evident, the whole world kept an eye on that operation. Pakistan also took himself indulged in the war on terror as an ally of the United States. The present picture is that NATO forces are still fighting the war on terror in some countries, and many countries are supporting that operation, which encompasses the whole world in a conscious state.

Terrorism is spreading terror, cultivating fear, and provoking people to do something that is against some rule, against the general masses, and has some political aims behind it. In its literary meaning, terrorism is the "use of violence and intimidation in the pursuit of political aims." Frustration, fear, terror, violence, and other similar effects might be the outcome of terrorist activities.

But the role of media in disseminating terror, fear, violence, and other similar effects through information is also so much in debate and has been for a long time. Like so many questions were raised questions against the role of media on the issue of Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq.

Mediaterism in terms of Advertiserism: Moving beyond the coverage of 'Terrorism'.

Advertising is an important part of media. It is a form of communication in which the audience is intended to be persuaded. Most of our choices revolve around the messages disseminated through advertisements. Different appeals used by the advertisers like woman, celebrity, religion, culture, nature, place, suspense, ego, fantasy, and many more including the more worth using for getting the goals accomplished is a fear appeal. The use of fear appeal arouses more susceptibility and severity of threat which makes the attitude change process toward a significant, intentional, and behavioral impact motivated.

On the other side of the coin, as mentioned earlier, people have become conscious of terrorist activities, which raises the fear of the unusual happening as well. And if we talk about fear, the world is becoming more monoculture, even greater than the concept of a global village, through the media. And the

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advertisers made use of this increasing fear among the masses, and it is the fear appeal that can provide efficient ways of getting profit from the products shown in the advertisements, which can also be regarded as an offshoot of terrorism.

In Pakistan, different kinds of advertisements have induced fear in people. Let's try to analyze a few of them very briefly.

1. Ufone (Bachao)

Ufone is often known in the advertisements industry for the humor appeals used by them. But in the new trend of its advertisements fear appeals are used in them. One of the advertisements discussing here is the one Sanam Saeed and Mikhaal Zulfiqar are the leading actors in the advertisement. In the opening of the advertisement, a woman is shouting to call anyone for help. And a blast is heard in the upper building of a mall. And then a man suddenly turned into a Superman costume and went for the help of the woman, who was screaming for her rescue. And then the main plot of the advertisement is uttered. Ufone has nothing to do with the type of props used in the advertisement. And the blast denotes the fear appeal, and the woman who is hanging and calling for help is also a picture of fear itself.



2. Ufone (Train Advertisement)

In this advertisement, one boss is walking in front of three men. One woman is sitting and sending a text to someone. The boss of the three men arrived at the woman's place and placed her in front of the train. Suddenly, one man arrived on a bike. And the boss asks the biker if he has three seconds to save that girl. But the train is one minute late, so Ufone gives one minute extra after every minute. This is what this advertisement is all about.



3. Don Carlos (2005)



Don Carlos is famous for his shoes and has sister concerns with Service (a famous brand in Pakistan). And his advertisements are much liked by the audience due to their music. But the music used in the advertisement is so much scary and it is happened to be to fear the people of unusual happening.

4. Mortein Power Guard

The advertisement started from the fact that each year 5 million people become the victim of the dengue virus. Most of them are children. And this advertisement used to say that if the parents use the Mortein spray, then their children will be safe from the mosquitoes, and ultimately they will be saved from dengue.



5. Commander Safe Guard

This advertisement is very much famous among children. It is a soap advertisement based on an animated cartoon series. In this series, the protagonist Commander Safe Guard is fighting against the germs and teaching the children and their parents how to tackle and kill the germs which have adverse effects on our bodies, especially on children's health.



Point of divergence

What does a terrorist want to do? to create fear, frustration, and a sense of insecurity in society. In its most extreme form, they want to disseminate their ideology over all the other people and also to follow that ideology the people. What does an advertiser want? Nothing but to adopt the things by the people shown by their advertisements. In the advertisement's most extreme form, the advertisers want people to deviate from their present standard of living and adopt the things they want to be adopted.

During a television program when advertisements are being bombarded during your favorite TV program, a sign of frustration might be seen on your face. And when someone is watching an ad for a mediated reality product and that individual is not capable of buying that product, a sign of fear is triggered in their mind. And that individual uses his quasi-statistical sense to gauge the climate, knowing that if he is not going to buy that product, he will be mocked by his or her society.

So it can be said that by getting used to the spreading of fear among the masses, advertisers got benefited by using fear appeals which can have adverse effects on the consumers not only in doubling the effect of real terrorist activities but also in changing the attitude of their daily life (i.e. aggression, violence, etc.).

Literature Review

Butler (2007) conducted research on the construction of terrorism in the media and the differences between that construction from pre-9/11 to post-9/11 by using a sample from LexisNexis and through using the method of content analysis he found that the media was much inclined to use the word terrorism and the frequency in terrorism reports were high in numbers which were creating the minds of the Americans fear-induced.

The fear appeal is always observed to be very effective. Exploring the question in the research, did

the fear appeal cause consumer behavior to change? And the findings explained and proved the hypothesis that more use of fear appeals in advertisements reduced the economic consciousness in consumers' minds. This study explains how fear appeal and mental stimulation are attached (Williams, n.d.).

By disclosing the facts, a scholar explained that even 15% of all the advertisers between the 1920s and 1950s used fear appeals of even the most careful sort. And they were supposed to be responsible advertisers because in the 1940s, initial efforts were made to control nuclear weapons, and scientists told the public that creating more fear among minds would not be more productive in serving humanity. But in the 1970s and 1980s, the tactics changed dramatically. The advertisers realized that because people were so fear-averse, they could make use of the fear appeals to draw reluctant attention and win over customers. New problems like AIDS were discovered, and the toilet seat manufacturers used the fear to spread the fearful notion that fear is in the air. Political campaigns notoriously began to use fear-based appeals." TV programmes took a back seat, and the front seat was taken by the advertisers in commercial breaks by using fear appeal as a gear in the car," said an advertiser guru at that time. And the picture became darker after 9/11. In this era, an advertiser said that if you want to spend some cash to persuade, why waste it on fairness and context? The whole idea is to present the idea in hard terms, which may be exaggerated, never mind what he suggested (Stearns, 2005).

Fear appeals were often used in political advertisements as well after 9/11. Especially in the 2004 elections, when Bush sent the military to Afghanistan and Iraq in the name of winning the war on terror, the opposition presidential candidate Kennedy opposed the strategy. By doing a semiotic analysis of political advertisements, it was proven that the advertisements depicted that if Kennedy continued and won elections, America could be lost the war on terror (Zaluzac, 2010).

After the WTC (World Trade Center) attacks, fear appeal even became a more potent force we can say in American culture, and advertising was not an exceptional case. Not a clear example of Hummer's advertisements can be quoted, which was less a car than a 1000 pounds of the manifestation of creeping culture of American anxiety. Between 2002 and 2003, the number of car sales doubled as compared to history. The advertisements showed that it can prone to rollover, offering terrible visibility of terrorism incidents and a frightening amount of braking at the distance. In advertisements, it showed that there is nothing safer than a vehicle on the whole planet. The picture becomes more vibrant when we take into account the antibacterial soaps and the fear appeal of viruses. The study was linked to James Watson's Behaviorism theory (Hazon, 2015).

After 9/11, researchers found that Americans bought homes and cars in record quantity which depicts that they needed a sense of security. And when we are reminded of death looms (fear appeal) threats by the advertisers, we are motivated to buy their products (Dowler, 2003).

Even some social welfare messages are arousing fear. Thornton (2005) conducted research on anti-speeding advertisements by using fear patterns and stated that "Many road safety advertisers use fear appeals, such as "shock" advertising, that result in fear arousal, leaving the viewer feeling extremely tense" (p. 6).

Fear appeal is used sometimes in a covert manner. Hayku (2010) stated that when a woman saw an advertisement and found that his outer look is not in accord with the mediated reality shown by the advertisement. And she thinks of buying the product to achieve that target of looking alike. It is similar to waiting for the utopianism culture to live life.

The main task of an advertiser is to present his product in an advertisement in such a manner that the whole environment around buyers turns into a positive mental stimulus towards that product. This is also a reflection of the theory of Behaviorism. The advertisers made the mind conducive to the external environment which acts as a catalyst in the decision-making process. For example, if we evaluate it from terrorism's point of view, the environment is quite supportive of the use of fear appeal and which leads to the notion that the whole environment takes part in the behavioral change process and it increases the use of fear appeals in advertisements (Jakstiele, 2008).

Advertisers are known to be the major monitor of public sentiments to improve the effects of the

message strategies in advertising campaigns. When there will be health hype, advertisers are supposed to use that type of material in their advertisements. They keep an eye on the national and international events which are the major responsibilities of advertising professionals. Due to the two incidents of the beginning of the 21st century, the attack on WTO as well as the Iraq war, the people of the United States got together and the advertisers make use of the appeal of patriotism. They have also experienced devastation, sorrow, and fear and the advertisers also made use of that appeal as well. So the advertisers made use of the two appeals (patriotism and fear) to make an effective advertisement that can have a significant impact on the consumers (Yu, 2009).

The use of fear appeal is not out of the debate. The use of fear appeal would be in some other domain if it was not used in parallel to the fear of terrorism. The main picture behind the fear appeal used by the public service message to encourage people to stop smoking by comparing the impact of the incident of 9/11 and the outcome of smoking on human lives using imagery, the result found through content analyses of the advertisement ASH (Huan, 2005).

Throwing light on the consequences of using fear appeals Bliss, et al (1996) stated that the use of fear appeal in advertisements can backfire and can have unintended negative effects on its consumers. This type of advertisement invokes fear among consumers.

Another remarkable work is done by Witte, K & Allen M (2000) by doing a meta-analysis of fear appeals. They concluded that these types of advertisements are creating a high level of severity and a level of susceptibility. This study also concluded that a high level of fear appeal produces negative behavioral change among the audience. It also needs to be known that the use of environmental stimuli in support of the argument of your message might have adverse effects as well.

Advertisers always make use of the environment. After nuclear weapons were used for the first time in the world, soon after the incident the masks advertisements designed to save the body from germs, especially in hospitals had more fear appeals than history in advertisements and this can be considered as an argument for the future concerns (Cicote, 1962).

Emotions work hand in hand with the cognitive process i.e., in accord with the way we think in a situation or event. Emotional appeals are commonly found in advertising. Research proved that fear appeal usage is increased due to the aftereffects of terrorist activities. By researching the no-smoking advertisements, he argued (Cacioppo, 2005). When a country is under threatened or under attack, the perceived threats or fears, resulting from political or economic situations, not only influence the values and beliefs held by the people but also their consumption behavior (Lee, 2003)

Theoretical Framework

The study has borrowed the ideas from Behaviorism Theory (which is given by James B. Watson) which explains that any human action is dependent on external stimuli and Cultivation Theory which emphasizes the notion that the more view of the content the more addiction will be observed. Though the fear appeal was used before the war on terror in past it can have a 2-pound effect in the present scenario. Let's try to find out how the advertisements use fear appeals in advertisements and are there any linkage between the increasing inclinations toward the use of fear appeals by the advertisers through the environmental stimulation of terrorism and are these fear appeals have adverse effects on the behavior of the audience in the light of the prescribed theories.

Objective: To find out the audience perception regarding fear appeals used in ads in the present context.

Research Question: Do fear appeal advertisements result in hostile behavior among youth?

Hypothesis: Extensive exposure to advertisements having fear appeal causes hostility in viewers.

Variables: Extensive exposure to fear appeals in advertisements, Hostility behavior caused by the concerned advertisements.

Indicators: Sense of insecurity among individuals, Aggression in behavior, Frustration, Sense of deprivation, Fear about relative's health, Economic Deficit fear

Sampling Technique Purposive

Population: Youth

Sampling: Simple random sampling

Control variables: Age: 19 to 25

Gender: Male and female

Dataanalysis: Microsoft Excel and Microsoft word software will be used for data analysis

Table 1: Q1. Do you watch advertisements?

Options	Percentage
Yes	69
No	9
Sometimes	19
Never	3
Total	100

According to table 1 and figure 1, the percentage of people who watch advertisements. 69% of people responded yes, 9% respondents responded no, 19% responded sometimes whereas 3% responded never. Hence, it is proved that a large number of people watch advertisements.

Figure 1: Percentage of people who watch advertisement

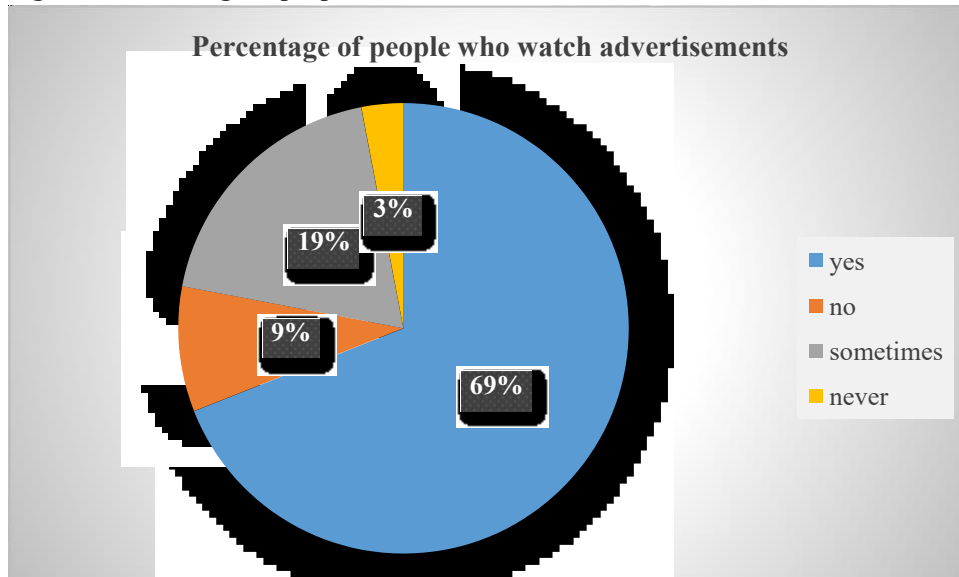
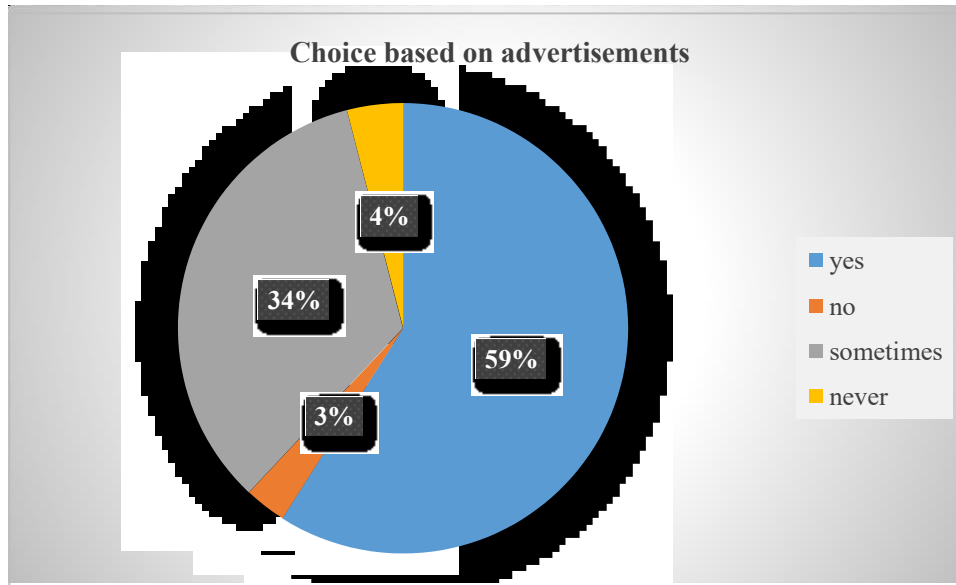


Table 2: Q2. Does your choice depend upon the products shown in the advertisements?

Options	Percentage
Yes	59
No	3
Sometimes	34
Never	4
Total	100

According to table 2 and figure 2, the percentage of people whose choice depends upon the products shown in the advertisement is 59% as 59% of respondents responded yes, 3% respondents responded no in this regard, 34% responded sometimes whereas 4% responded never. Hence, it is proved that a large number of people's choice depends upon the products shown in advertisements.

Figure 1: Percentage of people who watch advertisement**Table 3: Q.3 Different kinds of appeals are used in advertisements like celebrity endorsement and emotional appeals etc.**

Options	Percentage
Strongly agree	20
Agree	54
Neutral	16
Disagree	9
Strongly Disagree	1
Total	100

According to table 3 and figure 3, when asked about the different kinds of appeals used in advertisements like celebrities etc. then 20% of respondents responded strongly agree, 54% respondents responded agree, 16% responded neutral, 9% responded disagree whereas 1% responded strongly disagree. Hence, it is proved that different kinds of appeals are used in advertisements through the ratio of agreed (54%) respondents.

According to table 4 and figure 4, 16% of respondents responded strongly agree about the fear appeal used in advertisements, 34% of respondents responded agree, 29% responded neutral, 14% responded disagree whereas 7% responded strongly disagree. Hence, it is proved that fear appeal is much used in advertisements through the ratio of agreed (34%) respondents.

Table 4: Q4. Fear appeal is also much used in advertisements

Options	Percentage
Strongly agree	16
Agree	34
Neutral	29
Disagree	14
Strongly Disagree	7
Total	100

Figure 3: Kinds of Appeals used in advertisements

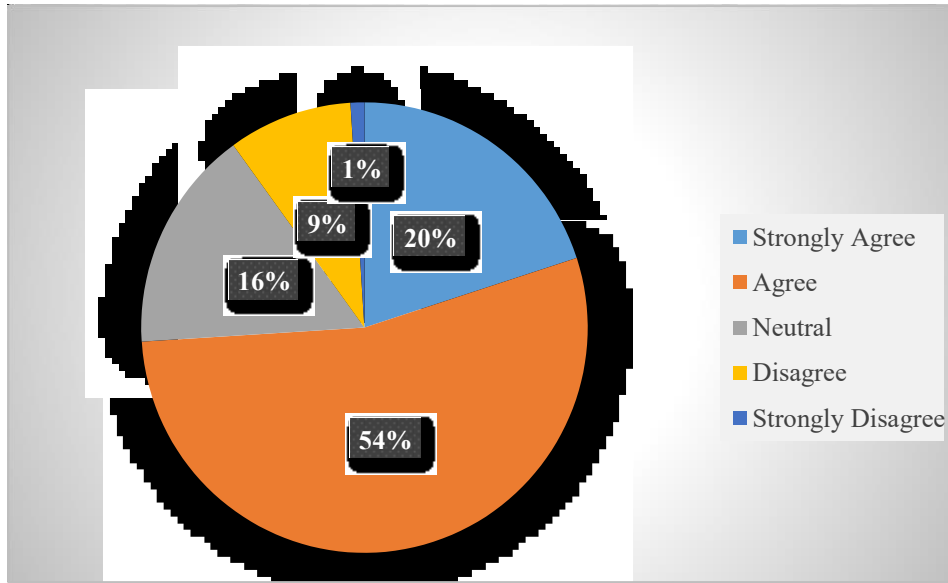


Figure 4: Use of fear appeal in Advertisements

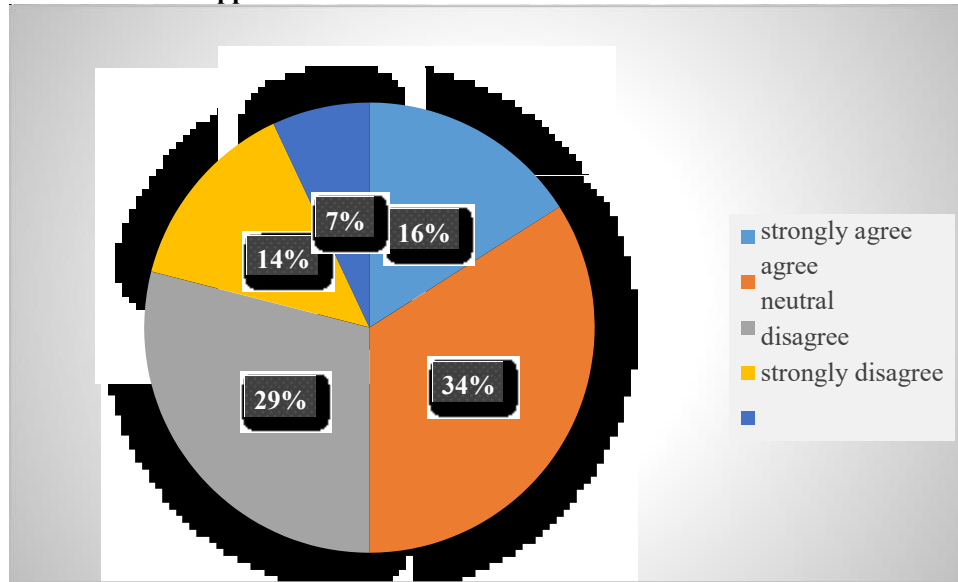
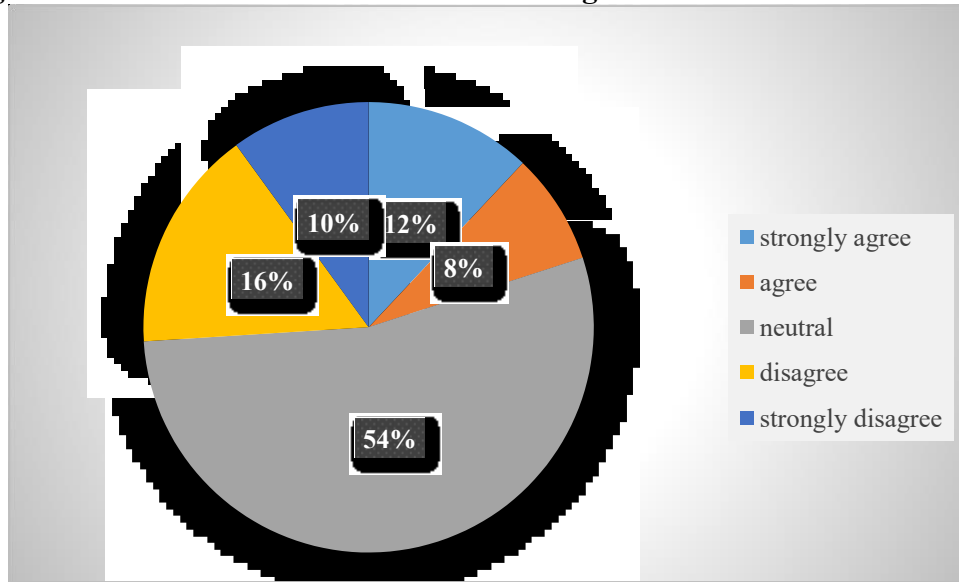


Table 5: Q5. The use of bloodshed in advertisements gives a sense of adventure.

Options	Percentage
Strongly agree	12
Agree	8
Neutral	54
Disagree	16
Strongly Disagree	10
Total	100

According to table 5 and figure 5, 12% of respondents strongly agree when it comes to the sense of adventure given by advertisements by using bloodshed, and 8% of respondents responded agree, 54% responded neutral, 16% responded disagree whereas 10% responded strongly disagree.

Figure 5: Use of bloodshed in advertisements gives a sense of adventure**Table 6: Q6. I feel comfortable while watching bloodshed, killing, or listening to scary music in an advertisement.**

Options	Percentage
Strongly agree	6
Agree	14
Neutral	5
Disagree	54
Strongly Disagree	21
Total	100

Table 6 and figure 6 show that 6% of respondents strongly agree when they were asked about their comfort level while watching bloodshed, killing, or listening to scary music in the advertisement. 14% respondents responded agree, 5% responded neutral, 54% responded disagree whereas 21% responded strongly disagree. Hence, it is proved that people did not feel comfortable while watching bloodshed, killing, or listening to scary music in an advertisement through the ratio of disagree (54%) respondents.

Table 7: Q7. If you are a part of a cartoon advertisement, where would you like to shoot germs?

Options	Percentage
At head	49
At legs	16
At chest	31
You just leave them to go	4
Total	100

According to table 7 and figure 7, when asked about shooting germs 49% of respondents responded at the head, 16% respondents responded at the legs, 31% responded at the chest, whereas 4% responded they just leave them to go. Hence, it is proved that if people are a part of cartoon advertisements then they would like to shoot the heads of the germs.

Figure 6: Comfortable feeling while watching advertisements

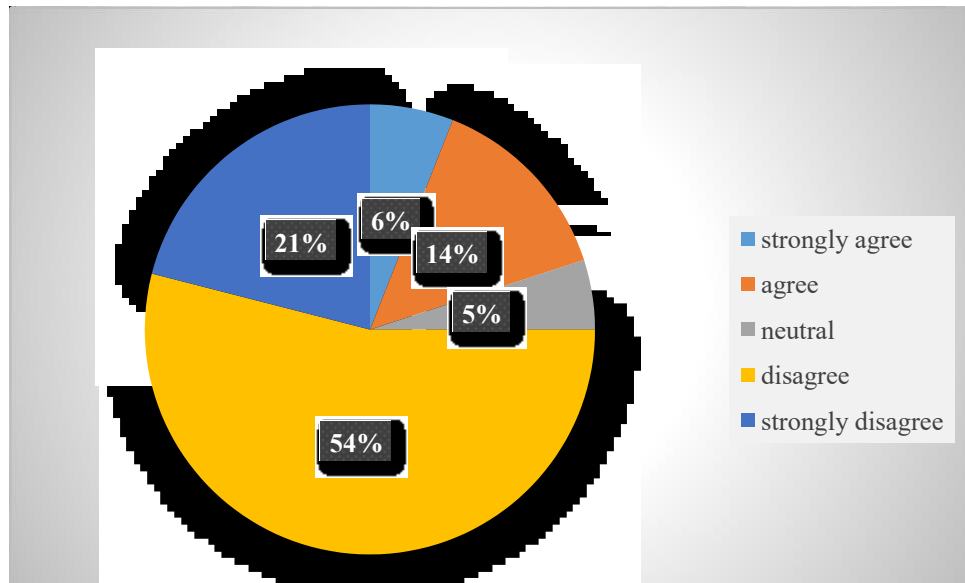


Figure 7: Part of Cartoon advertisement and Germs control

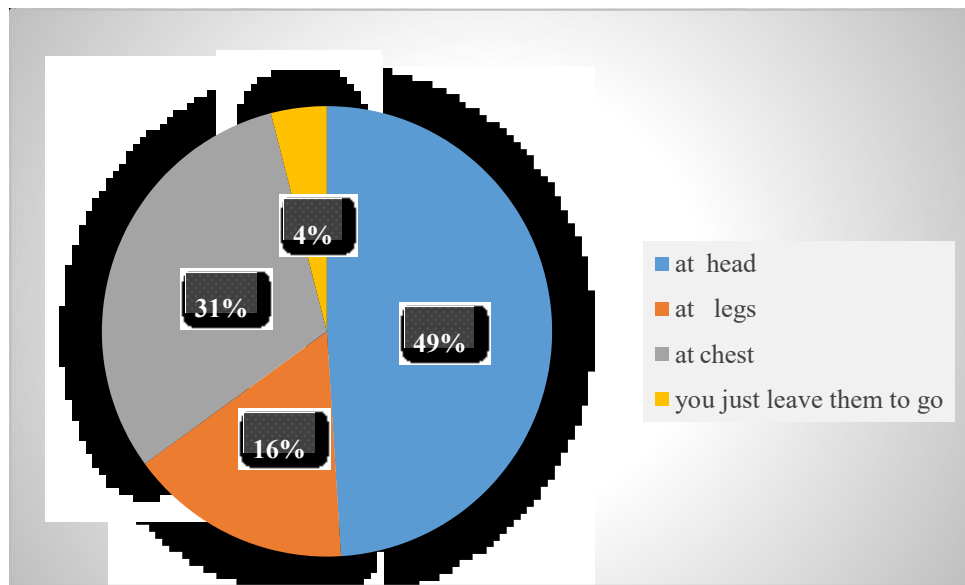


Table 8: Q8. The Safety claimed by the advertisements urges us to be less conscious about the cost of the products.

Options	Percentage
Strongly agree	14
Agree	52
Neutral	28
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	2
Total	100

According to table 8 and figure 8, 14% of respondents responded strongly agree when they were asked about the safety claimed by the advertisements and urge to be less conscious about the cost of the products. 52% of respondents responded agree, 28% responded neutral, 4% responded disagree and 2%

responded strongly disagree.

Figure 8: Safety claim in advertisements urge to be less conscious about cost

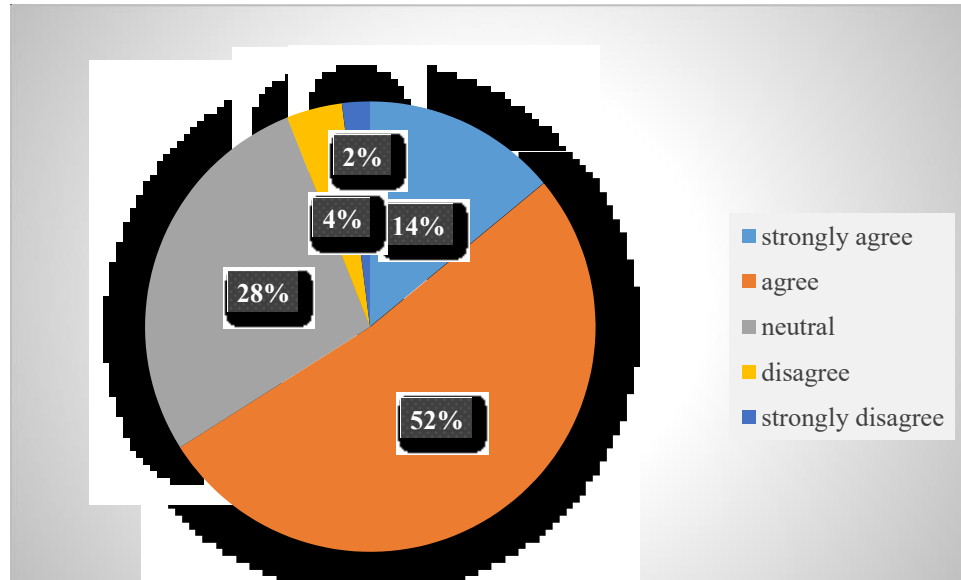


Table 9: Q9. The Penetration of cartoon germs through advertisements makes people moreconscious about their children’s health.

Options	Percentage
Strongly agree	8
Agree	33
Neutral	46
Disagree	10
Strongly Disagree	3
Total	100

According to table 9 and figure 9, 8% of respondents responded strongly agree when they were asked about the penetration of cartoon germs through advertisements makes people more conscious about their children’s health.33% of respondents responded agree, 46% responded neutral,10% responded disagree whereas 3% responded strongly disagree.

Table 10: Q10. The environment in Pakistan is cultivating fear itself and advertisement make the best useof it.

Options	Percentage
Strongly agree	6
Agree	55
Neutral	23
Disagree	12
Strongly Disagree	4
Total	100

According to table 10 and figure 10, 6% of respondents responded strongly agree when they were asked about the environment in Pakistan is cultivating fear itself and advertisement make best use of it. 55% of respondents responded agree, 23% responded neutral, 12% responded disagree and 4% responded strongly disagree. Hence it is proved that the environment in Pakistan is cultivating fear itself and advertisements make the best use of it as 55% responded agree.

Figure 9: Consciousness about Children’s health

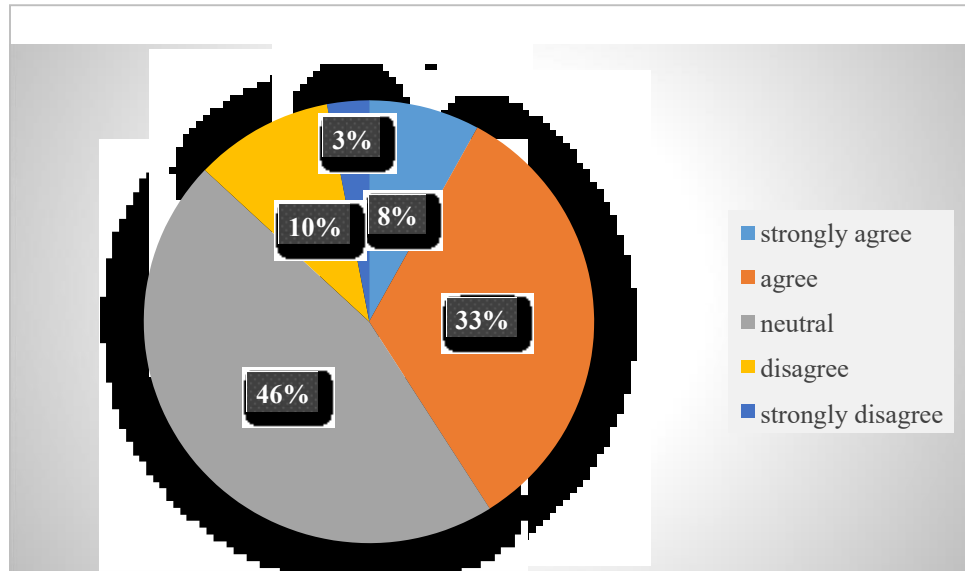
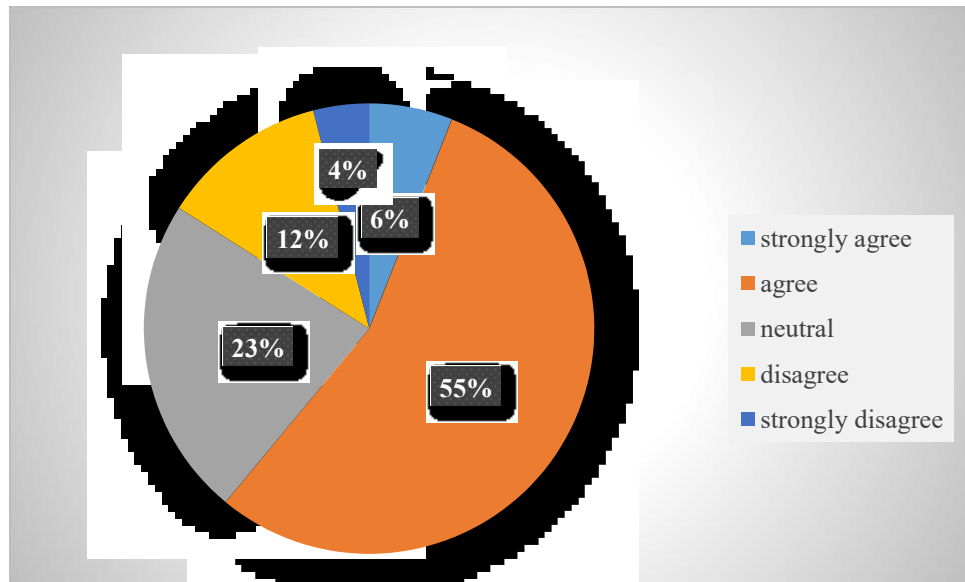


Figure 10: Environment of fear in Pakistan and advertisements



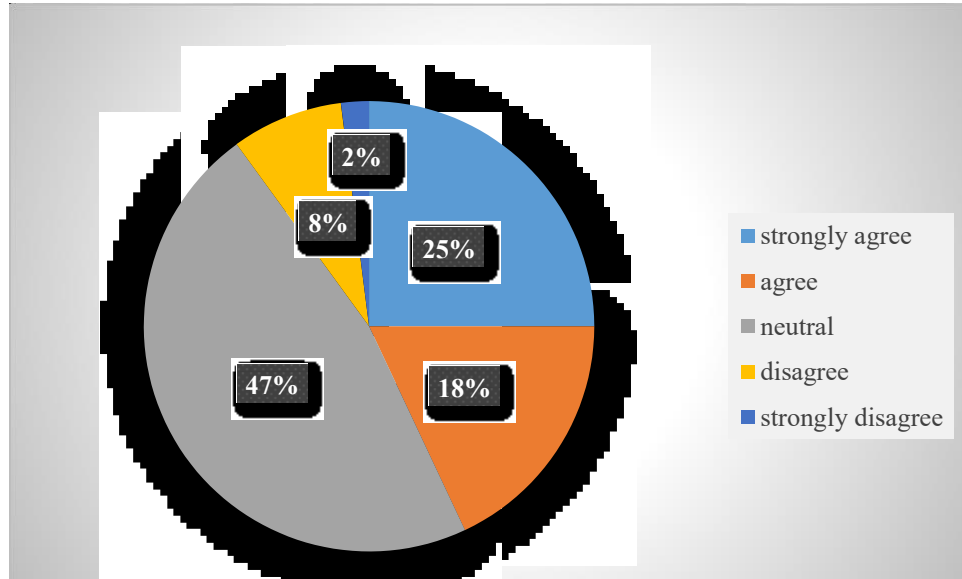
According to table 11 and figure 11, 25% of respondents responded strongly agree when they were asked about advertisements must use less fear appeal in an environment like Pakistan. 18% of respondents responded agree, 47% responded neutral, 8% responded disagree and 2% responded strongly disagree.

Table 11: Q11. Advertisements must use less fear appeal in an environment like Pakistan.

Options	Percentage
Strongly agree	25
Agree	18
Neutral	47
Disagree	8
Strongly Disagree	2

Total

100

Figure 11: Requirement of use of fear appeal in advertisements in Pakistan

Analysis and Discussion

According to the results of the conducted survey, the ratio of respondents who watch advertisements is higher than those respondents who do not watch advertisements. Most of the agreed that their choice of products depends on what they see in advertisements. A large number of respondents agreed that celebrity endorsement and emotional appeals etc. are mostly used in advertisements and the most common appeal they know about is the fear appeal used in advertisements.

The research objective of the current study was to find out the audience's perception regarding fear appeals used in advertisements in the present context. Question no 4 has been designed to find out the results of that objective and it has been found that Fear appeal is much used in advertisements as many respondents agreed on this statement (see the results of Q.4).

The hypothesis of the current study is extensive exposure to advertisements having fear appeal causes hostility in viewers. Although all of the questions revolve around the research objectives, research questions, and research hypothesis but Question number 4 and question number 7 particularly have been designed to find out the results of the particular hypothesis. It has been found that most people know about the fear appeal and responded that too much fear appeals is used in the advertisement. And when it has been asked the respondents where they want to fire the germs then a large number of respondents respond that they will fire the germs on their heads (See results in table 4 and table 7). These results show that the use of fear appeals in advertisements are being caused aggressive behavior of the viewers so from these results the hypothesis is also got approved.

This is the research question of the current study to find that fear appeal advertisements result in hostile behavior among youth. It has been found that fear appeals are resulting in increased hostile behavior among youth (see table 4 and table 7).

A large number of people responded that they do not feel comfortable watching bloodshed or listening to scary music in advertisements. It has been found that people give more attention to their safety rather than giving attention to the price of the product. Most of the respondents shows neutral behavior when children's consciousness became part of the discussion.

It has been found that the Pakistani environment is the cause behind the more use of fear appeals in Pakistani advertisements (see results in table 10) and when it has been asked that fear appeals should be less used in an environment like Pakistan then most of the respondents remain silent and marked that

they want to be at the neutral side. But significantly 43% of the respondents strongly or partially agreed to the notion that there must be less usage of fear appeal in the environment that itself cultivates fear as in Pakistan. Advertisers are supposed to get used to the efficient means for the purposive goals. It is also a common practice that during cricket matches, the patriotic appeal is used because it is suitable to the external stimuli which cause affect the mental stimulation of the consumer. Similarly, as we saw in the literature that the use of fear appeals after the incident of 9/11 increased in advertisements, by using the environment of fear the advertisers want to have a common culture of fear.

Conclusion

As the study throws some light on how the advertisements in Pakistan use fear appeal in their advertisements. And how the viewers perceive that. It is proven by the study that the environment in Pakistan itself is cultivating fear and to induce more fear among the masses here is no less than a criminal activity. It is also proven that the more extreme forms of fear appeals cause hostile behavior among the viewers. So as well as ethical responsibility (i.e. PEMRA code of ethics), it is the need of the time to lessen the fear among the masses.

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