



Surrogate Advertising- A way of Branding Unwholesome Products

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Abstract:

Many tiny things have grown in importance thanks to effective advertising. Yes, advertising have a significant impact on our lives since they inform consumers and raise their consciousness. However, certain advertisements are alleged to promote hazardous and misleading goods, leading to their exclusion from the media. A new trend known as "Surrogate Advertisements" has emerged as a loophole challenge to the government's action, but the firms' large investment has forced them to reinstate it. Due to the legal restriction of such things (alcohol beverages, cigarettes, and tobacco products), this practice gained traction.

The goal of the current study was to examine the positive aspects of surrogate advertising and its effects on consumer purchasing behavior and company brands. Thus, for this inspection, the necessary information was gathered from 110 respondents utilizing a thorough, open-ended questionnaire that underwent judgmental sampling. Additionally, the Weighted Factor Method along with the Ranking Method and Karl Pearson's Chi Squared test were utilized to provide potential study-related recommendations.

The question of "How the surrogate advertisements have become a pioneering trend in the current scenario" thus seems to be pertinent to the study. What makes this study even more intriguing is the question of "How it has proven to be a boon for the marketers."

Keywords: *Surrogate Advertising, Brand Image, Awareness, Tobacco & Alcoholic beverages, Familiarity.*

1. Introduction

Surrogate advertisements are ones that are used to promote goods that are deemed harmful to health and are therefore prohibited by law. Alcoholic beverages, tobacco goods, and Gutka, which brands itself as pan masalas, are among the several products that have seen such commercials. There are many reasons why businesses would turn to such ads. One of the most popular of them is to get around a legal prohibition on direct advertising of certain items in numerous nations, aside from the fact that it is unhealthy.

Hence different techniques used to promote such brands might include, endorsing their products using public service announcements, advertising well established brand embedding such surrogate products or duplicating the brand image of one product extensively to promote another product of the same brand or if not the case, endorsing themselves as discharging some social obligation towards the society (Ex: Officers Choice – Alcohol).

Whereas the primary objective of the companies behind such prohibition is to compensate the losses occurred due to such prohibition.

"Sales of these substitute items are not prohibited, but advertising related to them is strictly forbidden!"

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the consumer's familiarity with the knowledge of substitute advertising.
2. To comprehend how surrogate advertising affects the company's brands
3. To ascertain the impact of substitute advertising on consumer purchasing decisions.
4. To know the consumer perception towards surrogate ads & its products.

3. Importance of the Study

The current research study is very important since it gives businesses additional avenues for successfully promoting their outlawed goods.

The study also sheds insight on how businesses can successfully market their illegal products using the emerging trend of surrogate advertisements.

4. Research Gap

The investigation was done to find out if the government has banned any items that might not be in the best interests of the general public. How are they reinventing themselves with Surrogate Advertising as a new dimension?

Even if such advertisements are against advertising ethics, the study also makes an effort to assess the good aspects of surrogate advertising.

5. Review of Literature

In his work titled "Ethical Issues in Surrogate Advertisement & its Impact on Brand Building," Dr. Abhijeet Agashe and Ms. Harleen Vij stated that direct marketing of surrogate products is wholly immoral and has thus been outlawed by the government. However, businesses are already adopting the newest fad known as "surrogate advertisements," which involves ethically marketing unethical goods.

As a result, Zee and STAR ceased airing the commercials after the Cable TV Act of 1995 went into effect. Soon after, Aaj Tak and Sony did the same. I&B Ministry also employed a private monitoring organization to check all advertising for contraventions of the Act.

Twelve advertising were outlawed by the I&B Ministry by August 2002, and prominent satellite TV networks like Zee, Sony, STAR, and Aaj Tak received show-cause letters asking them to justify why they continued to air surrogate liquor advertisements.

In their essay "Surrogate Advertising: A Successful Marketing Strategy for Liquor, Whisky Products," Dr. S. G. Khawas Patil and Laxmikant S. Hurne state that "Most of the companies witnessing the ban of their products are recovering themselves to the new concept called "Surrogate advertising." He also says that businesses are now using these advertisements as a new form of weapon to make enormous profits.

In his article "Surrogate advertising — Needed, a spirited attack," Pradeep S. Mehta claims that "The companies whose products are subject to the prohibition are following a different way of promoting their products, like "old wine" in a "new bottle" or with a soft-drink label, or in some other way they are duplicating the image of well-established brands."

In her paper "Surrogate Advertisements: A New Judicial Concern," Rima Bharadwaj makes the case that the Indian government has always made an effort to curtail or at least control the rampant advertising of such products through the use of the proper laws, regulations, and directives.

6. Utilizing Surrogates to Promote Various Brands

The government has outlawed the advertising of tobacco, alcohol, and cigarette goods in the media due to their harmful impacts. In spite of this prohibition, brands have been mockingly advertised through surrogates.

Some examples of Surrogacy Advertising (How brands use surrogates to market)

Category	Brand	Surrogate Used
Tobacco	Manikchand	Filmfare Awards
	Rajnigandha	Pan Masala (Kesar)
	Pan Parag	Pan Masala
	Goa Gutka	Pan Masala
Cigarettes	Gold Flake	Tennies tournament
	Wills	India Fashion Week, Lifestyle (textiles) showrooms, Indian Cricket Team/Matches
	Four Square white	water rafting& Gliding
Alcohol Beverages	Seagram's	Music
	Mc Dowells	Water and Soda
	Bagpiper	Water, Soda, and Music – cassettes & CDs
	Bacardi	Music
	Kingfisher	Mineral Water and Calendars
	Imperial Blue	Cassettes & CDs
	Royal Challenge	Golf Tournaments
	Red and White	Bravery Awards

Source: Article 'what is surrogate Advertising' posted by Arvind Ravikumar

7. Research Methodology

Sampling Plan

Sampling Technique: Judgmental Sampling

Sampling Type: Respondents either literate or illiterate and age group of 16-46 yrs and above (only Male)

Sampling Size: 110 Respondents

Sampling Area: Pune city

- To understand the Demographic profile of respondents percentage analysis was done
- The respondents' attitudes regarding surrogate commercials were positive as a result of the employment of the weighted factor method in conjunction with the ranking method to choose the factor with the highest weightage.
- Karl Pearson's Chi squared test was employed to determine the statistical correlations between the company's employment of a novel marketing tactic (i.e., surrogate advertisements) and its claimed exposure and the respondents' favorable perceptions of this trend.

8. Data Analysis and Interpretation

A. Demographic Profiles

Demographic Factors	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	110	100

<i>Age</i>	16-25 yrs	48	43.63
	26-35 yrs	38	35.54
	36-45 yrs	14	12.27
	46 yrs and above	10	9.09
	Total	110	100
<i>Educational Qualification</i>	Illiterate	21	19.09
	SSC	12	10.90
	HSC	21	19.09
	Under Graduate	33	30.00
	Post Graduate	23	20.90
	Total	110	100
<i>Income (Per Month)</i>	Less than 5000	10	9.09
	6000 to 15000	61	55.45
	16000 to 30000	17	15.45
	31000 to 50000	7	6.63
	Above 50000	15	13.63
	Total	110	100

B. Weighted factor method

<i>Sr. No.</i>	<i>Name of variable</i>	<i>Factors</i>	<i>Observed Values</i>	<i>Weights Assigned</i>	<i>Total Score</i>	<i>Ranking on the basis of highest loading</i>
1	Awareness	Awareness about the concept of surrogate ads	37	0.3	10.5	II
		Not aware with the name but aware about the concept	52	0.5	26	I
		Not aware and not familiar with concept	21	0.2	4.2	III
2	Restoration of new trends of surrogate ads	Promote the co banned product	24	0.2	4.4	III
		Building brand image	36	0.3	10.8	II
		Earning profit	50	0.5	25	I
3	Making surrogate ads attractive by using various ways	Celebrity endorsement	46	0.3	13.2	II
		Use of Hi-Fi Music	49	0.2	19.6	I

		Sponsorships for events	11	0.2	2.2	III
		Display of hazardous note	04	0.1	0.4	IV
4	Use of appropriate media for telecasting surrogate ads	Television	45	0.3	13.5	I
		Radio	04	0.1	0.2	IV
		Newspaper	11	0.2	2.2	II
		Magazines	05	0.1	0.5	III
		Movies	45	0.3	13.5	I

From the above table we can interpret that

1. Surrogate commercials are a subject that the majority of respondents are familiar with, and as a result, they demonstrate a high level of knowledge of it.
2. The vast majority of respondents are familiar with the idea of surrogate advertisements, and as a result, they demonstrate a high level of awareness of it.
3. The promotion of imitative goods by well-known celebrities, combined with high-end music, encourages impulsive behavior in the buying process.
4. While reality shows or live cricket matches have shown to be the best times to force viewers to watch such adverts, manufacturers of surrogate items can use television as a suitable medium to broadcast the surrogate ads.
5. Viewers' (consumers') perceptions of these advertisements are good since they believe them to be both highly entertaining and educational.
6. The trend of surrogate marketing, according to consumers, has a beneficial effect on business sales and raises the rate at which their forbidden items are consumed.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀: Respondents are not aware or familiar of the concept of surrogate advertising

H₁: Respondents are well versed with the concept of surrogate advertising

Parameters	Factors	O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) ²	(O - E) ² /E
Surrogate Advertising: Familiarity and Awareness	Awareness about the concept of surrogate ads	37	38	-1	1	0.027
	Not aware with the name but aware about the concept	52	36	16	256	7.111
	Not aware and not familiar with concept	21	36	-15	225	6.25
	Total	110	110			$\chi^2 = 13.388$

Respondents are knowledgeable about the idea of surrogate marketing and as a result have a high level of awareness as $\chi^2_{cal} > \chi^2_{tab}$ (13.388 > 5.911)

With reference to above H_0 is rejected at 2 Degree of freedom with 5% of level of significance

H_0 : Companies do not have any reason to restore them to the trend of surrogate advertisements

H_1 : Companies have significant reasons to restore themselves to the trend of surrogate advertisements

Parameters	Factors	O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) ²	(O – E) ² /E
Restoration of new trends of surrogate ads	Promote the co banned product	24	36	-14	169	5.444
	Building brand image	36	36	0	0	0
	Earning profit	50	36	14	196	5.444
	Total	110	110			$\chi^2 = 10.888$

Companies return to the practice of surrogate marketing with no good reasons.

$\chi^2_{cal} > \chi^2_{tab}$ (10.888 > 5.991), H_1 is accepted at 2 Degree of Freedom with 5% of level of Significance

H_0 : little matter how they are endorsed, consumers have little interest in surrogate advertisements.

H_1 : Customers are highly receptive to surrogate advertisements as long as they feature Hi Fi music and endorsements from well-known personalities.

Parameters	Factors	O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) ²	(O – E) ² /E
Making surrogate ads attractive by using various ways	Celebrity endorsement	46	27	19	361	13.370
	Use of Hi-Fi Music	49	27	22	484	17.925
	Sponsorships for events	11	27	-16	256	9.481
	Display of hazardous note	04	27	-23	529	9.592
	Total1	110	110			$\chi^2 = 36.998$

Customers are highly receptive to surrogate advertisements as long as they feature Hi Fi music and endorsements from well-known personalities.

$\chi^2_{cal} > \chi^2_{tab}$ (36.998 > 7.815),

H_0 is rejected at 3 degree of freedom with 5% of level of significance

H_0 : Surrogate ads and the media used for its broadcasting don't have positive correlation

H_1 : Surrogate ads and the media used for its broadcasting have positive correlation

Parameters	Factors	O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) ²	(O - E) ² /E
Use of appropriate media for telecasting surrogate ads	Television	45	21.6	23.4		
	Radio	04	21.6	-17.6	309.76	14.34
	Newspaper	11	21.6	-10.6	112.36	5.20
	Magazines	05	21.6	-16.6	275.56	12.75
	Movies	45	21.6	23.4	547.56	25.35
	Total	110	110			$\chi^2 = 57.64$

Positive correlation exists in between surrogate ads and media used for broadcasting

$$\chi^2_{\text{cal}} > \chi^2_{\text{tab}} \quad (57.449 > 9.448)$$

Hence, H_0 is rejected at 4 degree of freedom with 5% of level of significance.

9. Findings

In today's economic climate, surrogate advertisements are not just deceptive but also a profitable marketing tactic for businesses. Given this information, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1 Surrogate advertisements on television are similarly repugnant because they have been shown inadvertently thanks to goods, occasions, or other sponsoring programs
2. Although consumers are not as aware as they should be, they are very familiar with the idea of surrogate advertising.
3. The latest trend in surrogate commercials is a result of companies' covert plans to increase earnings by improving their brand image.
4. Endorsement of surrogate products by the well-known celebs coupled with Hi Fi music inculcates impulsive behaviour in the consumer decision making process.
5. While reality shows or live cricket matches have shown to be the best times to force viewers to watch such adverts, manufacturers of surrogate items can use television as a suitable medium to broadcast the surrogate ads.
6. Surprisingly, respondents are not opposed to the trend of surrogate advertisements since they believe that such advertisements may encourage the consumption of illegal goods, but ultimately, whether or not consumers choose to use such goods is up to them.

10. Suggestions

1. Marketers should exercise extreme caution when returning to the trend of surrogate marketing because the Indian government has consistently worked to limit or at least curb the rampant advertising of such products.

2. As long as the marketer doesn't break any laws put in place by the government and designed to protect the general public, opening or advertising such products is not illegal.
3. Marketers should ensure that substitute advertisements inform customers more than they convince them to consume more; in other words, their intention should be to market their outlawed items without endangering the health of their consumers.
4. Marketers may promote their alcoholic beverages and cigarette brands, but not Gukta products, as that is not permitted by the Cable Television Act of 1995.
5. As these brands promote even worldwide events, precautions may also be taken to ensure that the brand names or logos of tobacco goods and alcoholic beverages are not visible.
6. developing a consumer education program to give them the knowledge necessary to comprehend the clever marketing techniques used by well-known firms.

Conclusion

Surrogate advertising has both advantages and disadvantages, just like a coin. Such advertisements are becoming more common, which may be advantageous for well-known companies since it increases brand recall and allows them to promote their restricted items. Smaller businesses and newcomers would also struggle to establish themselves in the altered environment.

Despite the fact that this approaching trend is unhealthy for young consumers and others in the interest of community health, surrogate advertising has established themselves as a powerful & effective marketing strategy for the illicit commodities today. At best, surrogate marketing generates enormous profits for the advertisers, but it sends customers to the water! Therefore, it is up to the buyers to accept it or not.

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