

# Musical Appeal and Advertising: A Study of Audience Recall and Effectiveness

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## Abstract

The study of advertising with special emphasis on appeals has been the area of interest of people for long. This particular study aimed to investigate the recall of musical advertisements among the audience, compare the recall across different age groups and genders and identify popular musical advertisements. A survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire among 150 respondents, comprising various age categories and an equal proportion of males and females. The non-probability (purposive) sampling technique was employed and data analysis was performed using Datatab, an online data analysis software. The results revealed that musical ads received generally positive feedback, indicating their effectiveness in capturing audience attention. However, opinions varied concerning their attention-grabbing ability and potential to change behaviors. Nevertheless, there were no significant differences in perceptions between boys and girls, suggesting a balanced response. Additionally, age did not emerge as a decisive factor influencing recall or evaluation of musical ads.

## INTRODUCTION

Musical appeal (aka Music Appeal) is a persuasive appeal used in advertising to create a strong emotional connection with the target audience through the use of music. This means music becomes the central element in the advertisement whether product or service or commercial or public service advertisement. The goal of this specific appeal in particular is about eliciting specific emotional response and associations that enhances the overall impact of the advertising message.

Musical appeal in advertising impacts the audience in variety of ways (Cantor & Venus, 1980). First of all, it brings in the emotional response from the people. Since the music has the power to evoke emotions and feelings amongst the ones who hear it, selecting the right music that aligns with the intended emotional tone of the advertisement is of paramount importance. This way advertisers can generate a more emotional connect with the viewers. This emotional resonance can lead greater recall and impact (Hung, 20).

The musical appeal is said to create more consistent memory related association this leading to enhanced brand associations (Sharma, 2011). Hence

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when a particular music is consistently run with a brand, it is seen as linked to that brand in the minds of consumers. This is “earworm” effect of advertising where the music sticks to the minds of the people. Hence whenever they hear it anywhere, they are reminded of the brand or product through the trigger of that association. Murphy (2020) states, “jingles or catchy tunes are known as “earworms” due to their ability to wiggle into people’s less-conscious thoughts and float around for longer than most of us would like. What’s interesting about these statements is that they successfully connect with audiences without being the most convincing argument to choose the product” (para.2). This leads to a further ripple effect visible via increased attention and higher recall. Music has the tendency to grab the attention of the audience and this leads to enhanced probability of audience engagement with the content. Furthermore catchy and memorable tunes enhances the advertisements recall. It further ensures that the message stays in the minds of the people even after the advertisement has ended. Music helps set the overall tone / mood of the advertisement (Yeoh & North, 2010). Peppy, happy music sets the mood differently from a sad and intriguing music. The message generally gets complimented by the tone of the music. This makes the musical appeal essential in advertising. It helps in the generation of a memorable and emotional connection between the audience and the brand or product while taking up the overall impact of the advertisement and subsequently increasing brand recognition. This further influences the consumer behavior through alteration of their perceptions and attitudes towards the advertised brand. If used judiciously, music in advertising can leave an everlasting positive impression on the target audience.

## **Challenges of Advertising Industry and Role of Music**

The advertising industry faces challenges in getting advertisements seen and processed amidst the increasing clutter in the media landscape. Marketers must continuously develop creative strategies using new methods to capture consumers’ attention and

create lasting impressions. One effective tool in this endeavor is music, which acts as a universal language, influencing individuals’ emotions and perceptions.

Music is unique to each society, acting as a self-contained system of communication. It aids in conveying messages in both concrete and abstract forms. Studies have shown that recall increases with the use of music in advertisements, as people can remember the music they hear for a long time. Music also triggers emotions, making it an effective and efficient way of stimulating moods and nonverbal communication.

Music plays a crucial role in attracting consumers’ attention in advertisements, making commercials with music more appealing than those without it. In radio and TV commercials, music is commonly used as an executional device. Traditional research on music in advertising has focused on its effect on attitudes towards the product being advertised, as well as consumers’ perceptions of the advertisements.

The presence of music in commercials influences consumers’ attention, perception and memory. It serves as a strong cue for recall and retrieval. The congruence between music and advertising messages can enhance the processing of consumers’ information and improve brand recall. Familiarity with the music in the commercial further aids memory retention.

Music serves various purposes in advertisements, including entertaining the listeners, creating emotional connections, increasing memorability, targeting specific markets and establishing brand authority (Huron, 1989). It can convey messages in a nonverbal manner and help marketers build credibility and authority for their brands.

Although numerous studies have explored the significance of music in advertising, there is a scarcity of research specifically focusing on the effect of music on brand recall in 2-wheeler advertisements in India. This study aims to identify variables that influence listeners’ perceptions regarding music in 2-wheeler advertisements and to understand tactics that marketers can employ to enhance brand recall by catering to their target audience’s preferences.



## Objectives and Research Methodology

### Objectives

1. To study the recall of musical advertisement amongst the audience
2. To compare the recall of musical advertisements across different age groups and gender
3. To identify the popular musical advertisements amongst the respondents

The study is conducted using survey method by employing structured questionnaire. Survey is conducted amongst 150 respondents of different age categories and a similar proportion of males and females. The purpose of maintaining the proportion is to ensure a fair comparison. The sample frame is infinite since anyone of any age, having any experience with music advertisements qualifies to be part of the survey. Sampling technique is non-probability (purposive sampling) technique. Data is further analyzed using Datatab (online data analysis software)

## Data Analysis and Findings

### Statement 1

#### Rating Effectiveness of Musical Ads: Analysis

The average rating for how well the musical advertisements work is 4.48, which means most people gave them a high score. The rating scale goes from 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. The small standard deviation of 0.29 shows that people mostly agreed and gave the ads similar high scores. So, it can be inferred that most people really liked the musical ads and thought they were effective as shown Table 1.

### Statement 2

#### Rating Recall of Musical Ads: Analysis

The average rating for how well people remember the musical ads is 3.67, which means they found them pretty easy to remember. The standard deviation of 1.49 shows that people had different opinions about how memorable the ads were. Some thought they were super memorable (closer to 5), while others didn't find them as easy to remember

**Table 1:** Descriptive Analysis of Statement Ratings by Respondents

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Statement#1 Rating Effectiveness of Musical Ads	4.48	0.29	1	5
Statement#2 Rating Recall of Musical Ads	3.67	1.49	1	5
Statement#3 Rating Attention Grabbing Ability of Musical Ads	3.3	1.25	1	5
Statement#4 Rating the Ability of Musical Ads to Change Behaviors	2.77	1.21	1	5

(closer to 1). So, some people really remembered the ads well, but others didn't find them as memorable.

### Statement 3

#### Rating Attention Grabbing Ability of Musical Ads: Analysis

The average rating for how well the musical ads grab people's attention is 3.3, which means they were kind of successful in getting people's attention. The rating scale goes from 1 to 5, where 5 is the best at grabbing attention. The standard deviation of 1.25 shows that people had different opinions about how attention-grabbing the ads were. Some thought they really grabbed attention (closer to 5), while others didn't find them as captivating (closer to 1). So, some people were really hooked by the ads, but others didn't think they were that attention-grabbing.

### Statement 4

#### Rating the Ability of Musical Ads to Change Behaviors: Analysis

On average, people gave musical ads a rating of 2.77 for their ability to change behaviors. This means that some people thought the ads could somewhat

**Table 2:** Rating Effectiveness of Musical Ads and Gender T-Test Result

		<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
Rating effectiveness of musical ads	Female	75	4.47	0.28	0.03
	Male	75	4.49	0.29	0.03

influence behavior change. The standard deviation of 1.21 shows that people had different opinions about how effective the ads were in changing behaviors. Some believed the ads could really change behaviors (closer to 5), while others weren't so sure about their impact (closer to 1). So, some people thought the ads could make a difference, but others were not so convinced.

The results of the study compared how boys and girls rated musical ads. Girls gave an average rating of 4.47 with a small difference between their ratings, while boys gave an average rating of 4.49 with a similar small difference between their ratings.

A T-Test was done to check if the ratings from both groups were similar or not. The test showed that there is no significant difference in the ratings of boys and girls, meaning their ratings were almost the same.

The study compared how well boys and girls remembered musical ads. Girls remembered them with an average rating of 3.65 and a little variation in their ratings, while boys remembered them with an average rating of 3.68 and a similar little variation in their ratings.

Further T-Test was done to check if there was a big difference in how well boys and girls remembered the ads. But the test showed that there is no significant difference, meaning both boys and girls remembered the ads almost the same.

The study looked at how boys and girls rated the attention-grabbing ability of musical ads. Girls gave an average rating of 3.25 with a little difference in their ratings, while boys gave an average rating of 3.35 with a similar little difference in their ratings.

T-Test test was done to see if there was a big difference in how well boys and girls found the ads attention-grabbing. But the test showed that there is no significant difference, which means both boys

**Table 3:** Rating recall of musical ads and gender T-test result

		<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
Rating recall of musical ads	Female	75	3.65	1.5	0.17
	Male	75	3.68	1.48	0.17

and girls found the ads attention-grabbing in a similar way.

Based on this study, we can say that boys and girls have similar opinions about how attention-grabbing the musical ads are and there is no big difference between their ratings.

The study looked at how boys and girls rated the ability of musical ads to change behaviors. Girls gave an average rating of 2.84 with a little difference in their ratings, while boys gave an average rating of 2.69 with a similar little difference in their ratings.

A special test was done to check if there was a big difference in how well boys and girls thought the ads could change behaviors. But the test showed that there is no significant difference, which means both boys and girls had similar opinions about how effective the ads were in changing behaviors.

It can be therefore said that boys and girls have similar thoughts about how the musical ads can change behaviors and there is no big difference between their ratings.

The results show that girls rated the ability of musical ads to change behaviors higher (average score of 3.35 with a little difference in their ratings), compared to boys who gave a lower rating (average score of 2.81 with a similar little difference in their ratings).

T-Test revealed that there was a big difference in how boys and girls thought the ads could change behaviors. They found that the difference was important, which means that girls and boys had different opinions about how effective the ads were in changing behaviors.

Hence the girls and boys have different thoughts about how the musical ads can change behaviors and girls rated the ads higher in this regard compared to boys.

A one-factor analysis of variance has shown that there is no significant difference between the

**Table 4:** Rating Attention Grabbing Ability of Musical Ads and Gender T-Test Result

		<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. error mean</i>
Rating attention grabbing ability of musical ads	Female	75	3.25	1.24	0.14
	Male	75	3.35	1.27	0.15

**Table 5:** Rating the Ability of Musical Ads to Change Behaviors and Gender T-Test Result

		<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. error mean</i>
Rating the ability of musical ads to change behaviors	Female	75	2.84	1.22	0.14
	Male	75	2.69	1.2	0.14

**Table 6:** Rating the Ability of Musical Ads to Change Behaviors and Gender T-Test Result

		<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
Rating the ability of musical ads to change behaviors	Female	75	3.35	1.39	0.16
	Male	75	2.81	1.32	0.15

**Table 7:** Rating Effectiveness of Musical Ads and Age ANOVA Result

	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Above 50 Years	50	4.47	0.29
36-50 Years	50	4.51	0.29
18-35 Years	50	4.46	0.28
Total	150	4.48	0.29

categorical variable Age and the variable Rating Effectiveness of Musical Ads  $F = 0.44, p = .644$  Thus, with the available data, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

The researchers wanted to know if different age groups remember musical ads differently. They used a special test called ANOVA. The test showed that

**Table 8:** Rating Effectiveness of Musical Ads and Age ANOVA Result

	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Above 50 Years	50	3.58	1.5
36-50 Years	50	3.86	1.43
18-35 Years	50	3.56	1.54
Total	150	3.67	1.49

**Table 9:** Rating Attention Grabbing Ability of Musical Ads and Age ANOVA Result

	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. deviation</i>
Above 50 Years	50	3.14	1.26
36-50 Years	50	3.4	1.25
18-35 Years	50	3.36	1.26
Total	150	3.3	1.25

**Table 10:** Rating the Ability of Musical Ads to Change Behaviors and Age ANOVA Results

	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. deviation</i>
Above 50 Years	50	2.92	1.14
36-50 Years	50	2.76	1.3
18-35 Years	50	2.62	1.18
Total	150	2.77	1.21

there's no big difference in how well people from different age groups remembered the ads. The test gave a number called F-value, which was 0.63 and another number called p-value, which was 0.532. It means that the difference in how well people from different age groups remembered the ads could have happened by chance. So, based on the data they had, they couldn't say for sure that age makes a big difference in how well people remember musical ads.

The study didn't find strong evidence to say that age affects how well people recall musical ads.

A one-factor analysis of variance has shown that there is no significant difference between the categorical variable Age and the variable Rating Attention Grabbing Ability of Musical Ads  $F = 0.62, p = .538$  Thus, with the available data, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

A one-factor analysis of variance shows that there is no significant difference between the age and perception rating of the ability of musical ads to change behaviours  $F = 0.77, p = .464$  Hence, with

the data available, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

It means that across all ages, the perception regarding musical ads for changing behaviour is same.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of musical ads and their effectiveness, recall, attention-grabbing ability and potential to change behaviors, several findings can be summarized. The musical ads generally received positive feedback. However, opinions varied regarding their attention-grabbing ability and behavior-changing impact. The study also compared the ratings given by boys and girls and found that there were no significant differences in their perceptions of musical ads' effectiveness, recall, attention-grabbing ability and behavior-changing potential. Furthermore, the study investigated the influence of age on perceptions but didn't find substantial evidence to suggest age as a significant factor affecting how well people remembered or evaluated the musical ads. In all, musical ads were

generally well-received and both gender groups rated them similarly in various aspects. Age did not appear to have a significant impact on perceptions either. These findings suggest that musical ads can be an effective advertising strategy across diverse demographics.

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