

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Consumer Self-Engagement with Fast Moving Healthcare Brands in India: Ad Creativity and Attitude Towards the Ad and Brand as Influencers

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**Abstract:** With television still being the dominant avenue for advertising in India, the study seeks to enhance the understanding of consumer behavior underlying ad and brand attitude formation leading to the self-engagement with fast moving healthcare goods (FMHG). Data (n =100) was collected through online questionnaires using stratified sampling from respondents in two cities of Tamil Nadu, India. The analysis reveals an indirect effect of creative divergence on consumer self-engagement with functional foods and dietary supplements through attitude towards the ad and brand. Gender, age, and income are mediating variables, with the consumers typically belonging to the female gender, the lower age groups, and lower income groups.

**Keywords:** advertisements, functional foods, dietary supplements, creativity, consumer attitude, brand engagement

According to the ASA & Associates LLP (2015) report, the fast moving healthcare goods (FMHG)—also termed “nutraceutical” (an amalgamation of the words nutrition and pharmaceutical)—business in India (that consists of meal supplements/replacement products) has reached over USD2 billion, with its primary market in South India.

The market is expected to grow at 20% by 2019 due to rising health awareness and resilient consumer spending. Factors driving this growth are greater awareness in health and alternatives and better access through new distribution channels (The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India [ASSOCHAM India], 2017). The target consumers

range from growing children to people above 60 years of age.

With players from both pharmaceutical and FMCG sectors having a strong presence in nutraceuticals, the need of the hour is to capitalize on opportunities to communicate unique selling proposition of these products in order to stay active in the consumers’ minds.

An exploration of literature on the FMHG products threw up variations in classification. Mollica (2012) positioned dietary supplements, nutraceuticals, and functional foods into separate subcategories, with fitness enhancement and diet supplementing role as the common denominator among them. However,

she also noted that these terms vary in meaning from country to country.

The ASSOCHAM India (2017) report categorized the nutraceutical industry in India under (1) functional foods and beverages (nutrition fortified and probiotic) and (2) dietary supplements. Though categorization varies, all literature commonly defines functional foods and beverages and dietary supplements.

Leading companies in the functional foods and beverages segment in India are Nestle, Amul, Danone, Kellogg, PepsiCo, Harnid Laboratories, Coca-Cola, Britannia, Baidyanath, and Pantanjali. Dabur, Himalaya, Abbot, GlaxoSmithKline, Herbalife, and Amway are major players in the dietary supplement market (ASSOCHAM India, 2017).

While print ads provide product-related information, TV ads are more entertaining (Tan & Chia, 2007). Television is still the dominant avenue for advertising in India (Bhowmik, Gopinath, Kumar, Duraivel, & Kumar, 2013), with TV advertisement being a major influencing factor on buying decision of consumer for nutraceutical products (Pise et al., 2012). What then is the competitive advantage or effectiveness of a creative television ad over another that simply lists product attributes or benefits? Are creative ads more inspiring to consumers? How are they relevant to the consumer in terms of brand engagement?

## Literature Review

In reviewing the literature related to concepts relevant to this study, a number of relevant constructs emerged. These were: (1) creative divergence, (2) creative relevance, (3) attitude towards the ad, (4) attitude towards the brand, and (5) brand engagement self-concept. The following sections summarize each of these and the connection between them.

According to Baack, Wilson, van Dessel, and Patti (2015), creative ads had a significant relationship with attitudes toward the ad, brand and brand engagement.

Maslow (1943) proposed a model delineating human needs as a pyramid of hierarchy of needs, with the most ultimate need at the bottom. It is said that the attitude is developed by tracking needs closely related to consumer cognition. Thus, the importance of proximity to the needs is inevitable in forming attitudes (McLeod, 2007).

The functioning of creativity is not the same for every service organization. In the advertising industry, it focuses on satisfying the client's attitudes, needs, and desires where, as in other business streams, its main intention is to produce queries and problems (Mahboul, 2012).

Friestad and Wright (1994) discovered that customers see advertisement based on their requirements; they can consider an advertisement as creative even when creative personnel from the ad industry do not. From this perspective, it is clear that both customers and creative professionals have a different practical approach towards the concept of "effective creativity"—the "little c" and the "big C" creativity. Little c is effective when the general audience of the ad thinks of creativity as an answer for their everyday needs. On the other hand, big C creativity is about how specialists see creativity—how it strongly affects clients and how they think and feel about the ad. In this way, what is creativity for customers is not the same for professionals and the other way around (West, Kover, & Caruana, 2008).

El-Murad and Douglas (2004) stressed that the main applicable approach to measure levels of creativity in an advertisement is to evaluate the consumer reactions and response to the advertisement.

In a recent study, Heath (2017) analyzed 160,000 ads around the world to study consumer engagement variables that drive ads effectiveness. His post-campaign study revealed that ads that were strong on emotional relevance and creatively engaging messages led to greater sales of the brands. In the study, India was one of the leading markets where more than 50% of ads contained story narrations—brand involvement (story fitting the brand)—and emotional tenor in storytelling.

The appropriateness of the advertisement is generally assessed after implementing it. But according to Schultz and Barnes (1999), many advertising agencies push to assess the advertisement at the start of creating it just as a pre-test.

The pre-test assessment would be beneficial for the professionals to find the efficiency of the advertisement and they can make reliable changes by enhancing the relevance, originality, and uniqueness in it which is allied to the consumer choice.

Creativity in ads is predominantly used to help show brands as solving issues that consumers grapple with in terms of their day-to-day lives. Media organizers,

economic analysts, marketing specialists, art directors, and copywriters are in search of innovation (Moriarty, Mitchell, & Wells, 2012). Accordingly, creativity is critical thinking, a state of mind of creating new thoughts concerning originality, uniqueness, and relevance of the brand to the consumer (Mahboul, 2012).

Goldenberg, Mazursky, and Solomon (1999) came up with 16 unique formats for ad creativity, while Torrance's (1966) five measurements of creativity included originality, flexibility, elaboration, synthesis, and artistic values.

Smith, MacKenzie, Yang, Buchholz, and Darley (2007) incorporated the dimensions of creativity categorized by Torrance (1966) and also defined creativity in terms of divergence and relevance. The divergence construct includes originality, flexibility, synthesis, elaboration, fluency, imagination, and artistic value. Relevance was distinguished as advertisement-to-consumer relevance and brand-to-consumer relevance.

While most researchers acknowledge divergence as the chief cause of creativity in ads (for example Lehnert, Till, & Ospina (2014) who found divergence to be the main factor while relevance was identified as a different and separate construct from creativity), many such as Smith and Yang [2004] and Thorson and Zhao (1997) took up the need for relevance in ads. The former studied different domains and found creativity to be a function of both divergence and relevance.

Sallam and Algammash (2016) posited that while the importance of the role of attitude as a trigger for consumer behavior has been widely acknowledged in earlier academic literature, recent research on attitude has extended the study of attitude in relation to advertisements of products/brands. For example, Hoyer and MacInnis (1997) defined consumer attitude towards the ad in terms of fondness and liking of the ad, and explained the concept of transference of the fondness to the brand.

Scholars have empirically recorded attitude towards advertisement's (Aad's) unique ability to be perceived in varied ways—as antecedent, independent, mediating, or dependent variable (Yi, 1990; Homer & Yoon, 1992).

Many studies have considered Aad as the chief contributor towards a consumer's attitude towards a brand (Ab). Phelps and Hoy (1996) defined Ab as an

individual's tendency to respond favorably/unfavorably to a certain brand after exposure to the ad. In their study on Saudi consumers, Sallam and Algammash (2016) investigated the relationship between Aad and Ab and found a positive and significant relationship between the two. Their findings suggested that the association between Aad and Ab was influenced by ad messages, particularly when the consumer was unfamiliar or unaware of the brand. Thus, consumers tended to rely heavily on Aad for forming Ab. On the other hand, consumers with prior brand knowledge relied on their existing brand familiarity, offsetting the influence of Aad on Ab. Other researchers such as Campbell and Keller (2003) have also found evidence for the mediating effect of familiarity with the brand on the influence of Aad on brand evaluations.

There is prolific academic literature on the link between Aad, Ab, and creativity in a television advertisement. Ali (2016) found support for creative ads in creating a positive attitude toward an ad through multiple regression analysis. Similarly, Billore (2013) found a positive correlation between ad creativity and Aad, with relevance to be the strong influence. The study also found Aad to be a strong mediating variable between creativity and Ab. Kim and Yu (2015) indicated the role of creativity levels in ads affecting people's Aad, as well as Ab.

Mahboul (2012) stated that creativity has a connection with the consumer loyalty and in which this wide idea can be simplified using the concepts of service quality and disruption as two reasons for the connection. Customer loyalty is the emotional attitude that the consumer poses on the brand which serves at its best. According to Dru (2002), disruption, which is an integral part of the thought process, paves the way to the diverse possibilities in creating a focused innovation. Creativity and service quality are inseparable, and also, disruption is directly connected to creativity.

Markus (1977) defined self-concept as a set of self-representations that shape inbound self-related information that help individuals make sense of themselves in their surroundings. The cognitive dimension of consumer-brand engagement, representing mainstream consumer-brand engagement studies, embraces this concept of self and is defined as a process of mental stimulation towards a brand that includes the inclination of consumers to add

brands in their conceptualization of self—the brand engagement self-concept or BESC (Sprott, Czellar, & Spangenberg, 2009; Goldsmith, Flynn, & Kim, 2010).

Banahene (2017) developed Sprott et al.'s (2009) measures of BESC in terms of two dimensions: (1) self-congruence (3 items Cronbach's alpha = 0.853)—having a special bond with the brand, feeling a personal association with the brand, and having a close personal association with the preferred brand and (2) value congruence (3 items, Cronbach's alpha = 0.861)—identifying with important brands, connections between preferred brands and self-view, and brands as an important indication of who they are. Sprott et al. (2009) claimed that their BESC scale is a global tendency, which means it does not depend on the product category.

Research has shown that consumers attend to advertising that echoes their personality and wants, and connects it to their self-concepts (e.g., Alwitt & Prabhaker 1992; Marshall, Na, State, & Deuskar, 2008; Mehta, 1999). The use of different creative appeals, language, and advocates in advertising communicates messages about specific personality types to its targets (consumers). The consumers use these messages in defining their self-perceptions or as indicative of their personality or character. Thus, it is expected that advertising creativity would affect consumers' perceptions of the type of person the ad targets and also prime consumers' perceived brand engagement self-concept.

Najafi and Alvandi (2017), in their study of luxury brands, indicated that there is a positive correlation between BESC and out of the box thinking/creative choice. Spangenberg, Voss, and Crowley (1997) devised a universal scale to measure the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions of consumer attitude. Johar and Sirgy (1991) suggested a connection between BESC (self-congruity and value congruity) and Aad. Self-congruity influences the relationship between self-image and ad-evoked hedonic traits. Value congruity, on the other hand, links the performance-related functions to the consumer's self-image.

Scant literature exists on the consumer-centric perspective of creativity in ads specifically relating to the influence of consumer-perceived creativity on attitude toward the ad, and its subsequent influence on BESC through attitude toward the brand.

Krishen and Sirgy (2016), in their study of ad placements in music videos, found consumers with high self-congruity to have a more positive Ab. Kosteljik (2017) used the expectancy value theory and the self-congruency theory to explain how these stimulate the consumer towards a better Ab.

The objective of this study is to find the importance of creativity in advertising of functional food/beverages and dietary supplement brands and whether the creativity as a function of divergence has an effect on the consumers' brand engagement self-concept with relevance, Aad, and Ab as mediating factors. Influence of other moderating variables such as demography, brand purchase, and prior exposure to the ad will also be studied.

From the literature reviewed, the following research questions were framed:

RQ1: Does creative divergence have a direct effect on brand engagement self-concept for FMHG brands?

RQ2: Does creative divergence have an effect on brand engagement self-concept through creative relevance for FMHG brands?

RQ3: Does creative divergence have an effect on brand engagement self-concept through Aad for FMHG brands?

RQ4: Does creative divergence have an effect on brand engagement self-concept through attitude towards the brand for FMHG brands?

RQ5: Do demographic variables such as age and gender affect the ad creativity, consumer Aad, and brand engagement self-concept dimensions?

## Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework used in the study.

## Methods

An online questionnaire was created using Google forms. The questionnaire was emailed to 120 respondents across Chennai and Coimbatore, two cities in Tamil Nadu, India, of which 100 were returned completely filled in all aspects. In this study, the FMHG

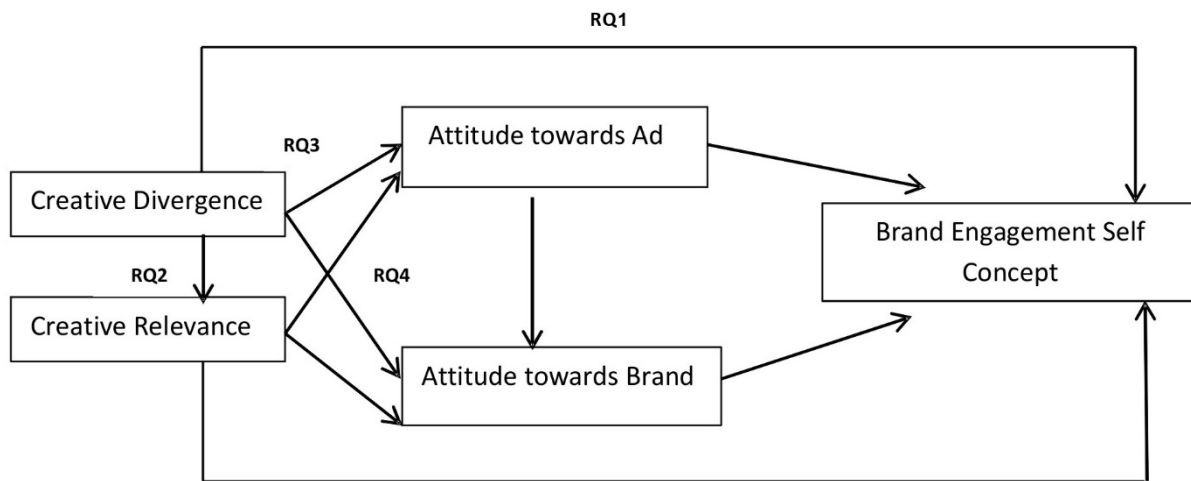


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

products were categorized into two—(i) functional foods/beverages and (ii) dietary supplements—based on the ASSOCHAM India (2017) report. For each category, four leading brands (Multinational Corporation (MNC) and Indian) were chosen, again based on the ASSOCHAM India (2017) report. The top four leading brands in functional food and beverages category were Kellogg's, Patanjali, Danone, and Glaxo. Dabur, Amway, Herbalife, and Abbott were the top four leading brands in dietary supplements category. The most viewed ads during 2016–2017 on YouTube for each of these brands were chosen as the unit of study.

## Measures

The stratified sampling method was used to collect quantitative data through online questionnaires. The questionnaire was mailed to 60 males and 60 females of which 42 males and 58 females responded. The questionnaire had five sections: (1) personal profile of respondents (age, gender, socio-economic status, etc.) and previous ad exposure and purchase, (2) divergence scale questions, (3) relevance in terms of ad to consumer and brand to consumer, (4) brand engagement self-concept scale questions, and (5) Aad scale questions (adapted from Spangenberg et al., 1997).

All questions in sections (2) and (3)—drawn from Smith et al. (2007)—and section (4) questions—drawn from Sprott et al. (2009)—were on a scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Reliability

statistics of Smith et al.'s (2007) divergence and relevance item scales had a reported alpha of 0.50 and greater while Sprott et al.'s brand engagement self-concept scale had a reported alpha of 0.90.

## Results

Table 1 presents the demographic breakdown of participants of the study.

The reliability of the scales (for functional foods and dietary supplements) was computed using Cronbach's alpha method on the data collected for each of the eight brands ( $N = 100$ ). The reliability coefficients were above 0.50 for all scales and subscales. For demographic variables, only gender was found to be correlated with the scale variables. Tables 2 and 3 present the significant Cronbach's alpha results.

### Regression and Simple Path Analysis

Based on the objective of the study, multiple regression analysis was done on the variables defining creative divergence, creative relevance, Aad, Ab, and brand engagement self-concept for two models of functional foods and dietary supplements.

Variance inflation factor (VIF) was less than 3 for all variables, ruling out multi-collinearity (Myers, 1990).

Regression with (1) creative divergence (functional foods/dietary supplements) as criterion and the corresponding originality, flexibility, synthesis, elaboration, fluency, artistic value, and imagination domains as the predictors and (2) creative relevance

**Table 1.** Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=100)

| Demographic variables |                      | %  |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----|
| Gender                | Male                 | 42 |
|                       | Female               | 58 |
| Age (years)           | 18-24                | 47 |
|                       | 25-34                | 12 |
|                       | 35-44                | 14 |
|                       | 45-54                | 15 |
|                       | 55-64                | 8  |
|                       | 65 and above         | 4  |
| Occupation            | Self employed        | 14 |
|                       | Employed             | 39 |
|                       | Unemployed           | 47 |
| Income/year           | Below 2 lakhs<br>INR | 62 |
|                       | Above 2 lakhs<br>INR | 38 |

**Table 2.** Correlaton of Scale Variables for Functional foods and Gender

| Functional Foods              |        |            |                  |                     |                        |                               |
|-------------------------------|--------|------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                               | Gender | Divergence | Relevance        | Attitude towards Ad | Attitude towards brand | Brand Engagement Self Concept |
| Gender                        | 1      | -          | .208*<br>(.308)  | -                   | -                      | -                             |
| Divergence                    |        | 1          | .782**<br>(.000) | .824**<br>(.000)    | .784**<br>(.000)       | .772**<br>(.000)              |
| Relevance                     |        |            | 1                | .833**<br>(.000)    | .598**<br>(.000)       | .704**<br>(.000)              |
| Attitude towards Ad           |        |            |                  | 1                   | .724**<br>(.000)       | .839**<br>(.000)              |
| Attitude towards brand        |        |            |                  |                     | 1                      | .695**<br>(.000)              |
| Brand Engagement Self Concept |        |            |                  |                     |                        | 1                             |

**Table 3.** Correlaton of Scale Variables for Dietary supplements and Gender

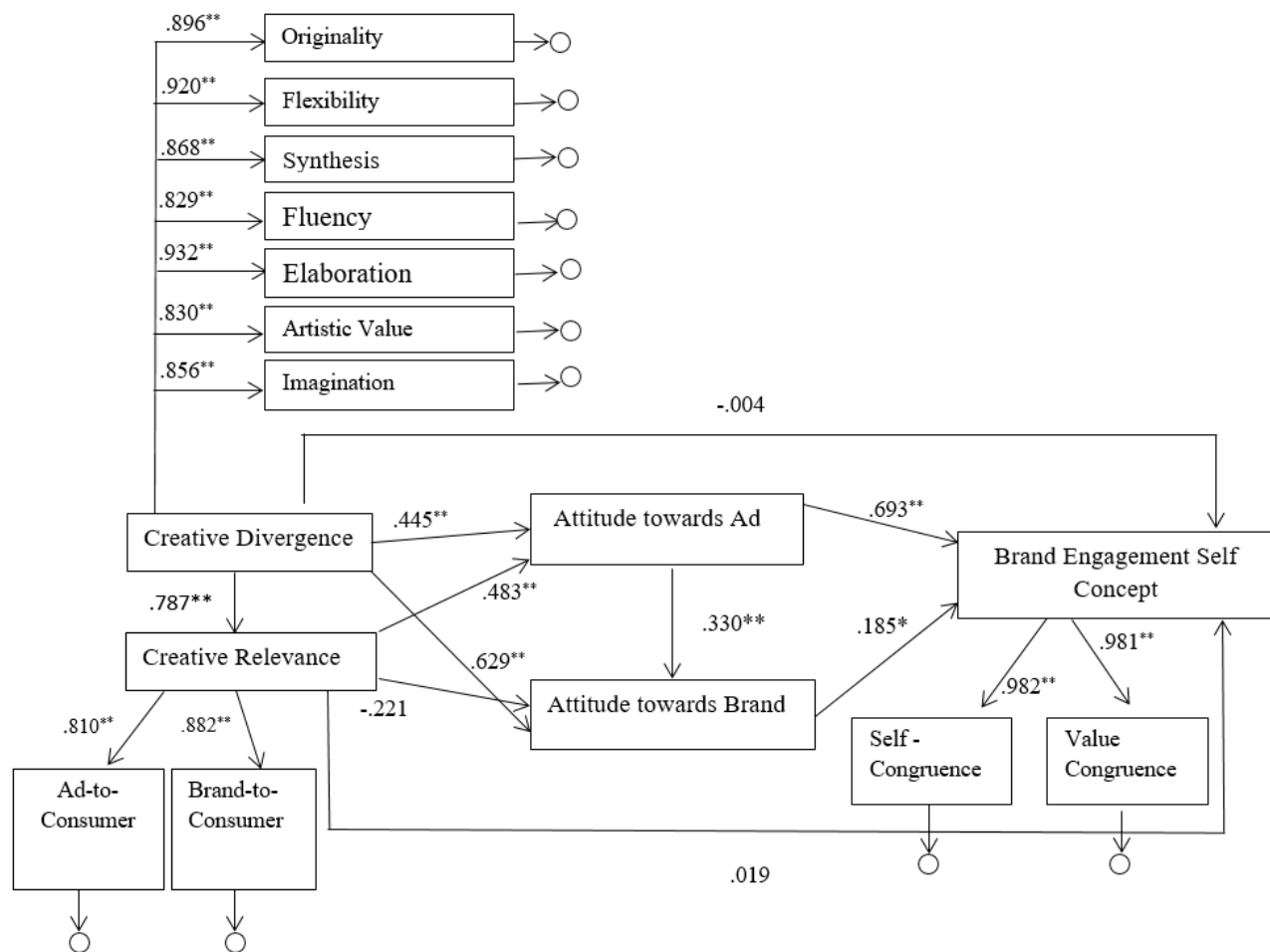
| Dietary Supplements           |        |                  |                  |                     |                        |                               |
|-------------------------------|--------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                               | Gender | Divergence       | Relevance        | Attitude towards Ad | Attitude towards brand | Brand Engagement Self Concept |
| Gender                        | 1      | .321**<br>(.001) | .276**<br>(.005) | .303**<br>(.002)    | .246**<br>(.014)       | .285**<br>(.004)              |
| Divergence                    |        | 1                | .812**<br>(.000) | .732**<br>(.000)    | .727**<br>(.000)       | .784**<br>(.000)              |
| Relevance                     |        |                  | 1                | .841**<br>(.000)    | .653**<br>(.000)       | .855**<br>(.000)              |
| Attitude towards Ad           |        |                  |                  | 1                   | .703**<br>(.000)       | .791**<br>(.000)              |
| Attitude towards brand        |        |                  |                  |                     | 1                      | .791**<br>(.000)              |
| Brand Engagement Self Concept |        |                  |                  |                     |                        | 1                             |

(functional foods/dietary supplements) as criterion and the corresponding ad-to-consumer and brand-to-consumer domains as the predictors were done.

As a next step, simple path analysis was conducted. Multiple regression was done using a four layered approach for both categories (functional foods and dietary supplements): (1) consumer divergence, consumer relevance, Aad, Ab > brand engagement self-concept; (2) consumer divergence, consumer relevance, Aad > Ab; (3) consumer divergence, consumer relevance > Aad; and (4) consumer divergence > consumer relevance. The regression coefficients in these four analyses will provide path coefficients. The corresponding beta statistics are reproduced along with the path analysis in Figures 2 and 3.

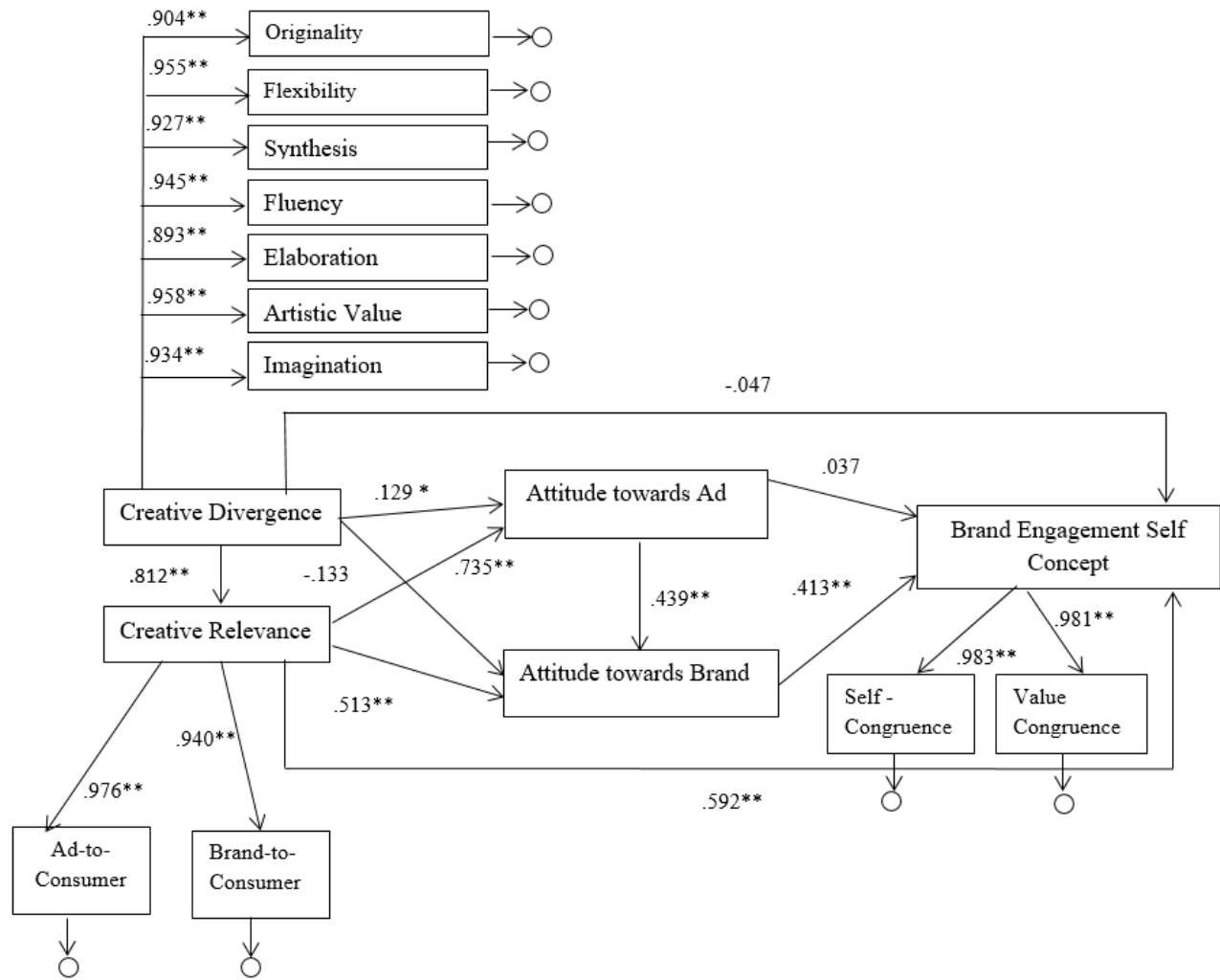
**Functional foods.** There is no direct effect from creative divergence on brand engagement self-concept. The indirect effect of creative divergence on brand engagement self-concept is through creative relevance, Aad, and through Aad and Ab.

The indirect effect of creative divergence through creative relevance and Aa to brand engagement self-concept amounts to 0.2634 [.787\*.483\*.693]. The indirect effect of creative divergence through creative relevance, Aad, and Ab to brand engagement self-concept amounts to 0.0232 [.787\*.483\*.330\*.185]. The indirect effect from creative divergence through Aad amounts to .3083 [.445\*.693]. The indirect effect from creative divergence through Ab amounts to .1163 [.629\*.185]. The indirect effect from creative



Note: All standardized beta (r) values are shown (\*p < .01 \*\*p < .05).

Figure 2. Functional foods path analysis.



Note: All standardized beta (r) values are shown (\*p < .01 \*\*p < .05)

Figure 3. Dietary supplements path analysis.

divergence through Aad and Ab amounts to .0610 [.445\*.330\*.185].

The principal tenet of path analysis as applied to multiple regression is that the correlation between an independent and dependent variable is the sum of the direct effect and all indirect effects (Carey, 1998). Thus, the correlation between creative divergence and brand engagement self-concept is .2634 + .0232 +.3083 + .1163 + .0610 = .7722 as reported in Table 2.

We can summarize that creative divergence’s total indirect effect through Aad on brand engagement self-concept is .30 which is the highest. The dimension elaboration contributes most towards creative divergence (.932) among the seven dimensions

followed by flexibility (.920). The dimension that contributes least is fluency (.829).

For relevance, it is the brand-to-consumer dimension that influences the highest (.882) than ad-to-consumer (.810).

For brand engagement self-concept, both self-congruence and value congruence contribute equally with self-congruence (.982) having a slight edge over value congruence (.981).

**Dietary supplements.** There is no direct effect of creative divergence on brand engagement self-concept. The indirect effect from creative divergence on brand engagement self-concept is through creative relevance, Aad, and through Aad and Ab.



The indirect effect of creative divergence through creative relevance amounts to 0.4807 [.812\*592]. The indirect effect of creative divergence through creative relevance, Aad, and Ab to brand engagement self-concept amounts to 0.1082 [.812\*.735\*.439\*.413]. The indirect effect of creative divergence through Aad and Ab to brand engagement self-concept amounts to 0.0233 [.129\*.439\*.413]. The indirect effect of creative divergence through creative relevance, and Ab to brand engagement self-concept amounts to 0.1720 [.812\*.513\*.413]. The correlation between creative divergence and brand engagement self-concept is  $.4807 + .1082 + .0233 + .1720 = .7842$  as reported in Table 3.

We can summarize that creative divergence's total indirect effect through creative relevance on brand engagement self-concept is .48 which is the highest. The dimension artistic value contributes most towards creative divergence (.958) among the seven dimensions, followed by flexibility (.955). The dimension that contributes least is elaboration (.893).

For relevance, it is the ad-to-consumer dimension that influences the highest (.976) than brand-to-consumer (.940).

For brand engagement self-concept, both self-congruence and value congruence contribute equally with self-congruence (.983) having a slight edge over value congruence (.981)

#### *t*-tests/Kruskal-Wallis

For determining the effects of demographic variables, t-test was done with scale variables for functional foods and dietary supplements to find out if there were any statistically significant differences between groups for age (grouped into low and high), gender, income (grouped into low and high); and Kruskal-Wallis for occupation (grouped into self-employed, employed, and unemployed), having watched the ad, bought the product, creative divergence, relevance, Aad, Ab, and brand engagement self-concept. The significant results are presented below:

**t-test. Age.** Comparing means for age with buying the product for functional foods. Thus, Bought the product for functional foods:  $t(98) = 1.632$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . Respondents in the lower age category ( $n = 59$ ) had

higher means ( $M = 1.254$ ) than higher age groups ( $n = 41$ ,  $M = 1.122$ ).

Watched the ad for dietary supplements:  $t(95.97) = 3.323$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . Respondents in the lower age category ( $n = 59$ ) respondents had higher means ( $M = 6.016$ ) than higher age groups ( $n = 41$ ,  $M = 5.317$ ).

Bought the product for dietary supplements:  $t(98) = 2.382$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . Respondents in the lower age category ( $n = 59$ ) respondents had higher means ( $M = 7.067$ ) than higher age groups ( $n = 41$ ,  $M = 6.536$ ).

**Gender.** Relevance for functional foods:  $t(85.195) = -2.080$ ,  $p = 0.041$ . Female ( $n = 58$ ) respondents had higher means ( $M = 120.60$ ) than males ( $n = 42$ ,  $M = 111.28$ ).

Divergence for dietary supplements:  $t(76.765) = -3.351$ ,  $p = 0.014$ . Female respondents ( $n = 58$ ) had higher means ( $M = 263.27$ ) than males ( $n = 42$ ,  $M = 226.90$ ).

Relevance for dietary supplements:  $t(77.857) = -2.759$ ,  $p = 0.005$ . Female respondents ( $n = 58$ ) had higher means ( $M = 120.91$ ) than males ( $n = 42$ ,  $M = 109.57$ ).

Aad for dietary supplements:  $t(95.520) = -3.228$ ,  $p = 0.002$ . Female respondents ( $n = 58$ ) had higher means ( $M = 73.60$ ) than males ( $n = 42$ ,  $M = 64.76$ ).

Ab for dietary supplements:  $t(84.186) = -2.477$ ,  $p = 0.002$ . Female respondents ( $n = 58$ ) had higher means ( $M = 23.62$ ) than males ( $n = 42$ ,  $M = 20.52$ ).

Brand engagement self-concept for dietary supplements:  $t(83.468) = -2.896$ ,  $p = 0.005$ . Female respondents ( $n = 58$ ) had higher means ( $M = 69.37$ ) than males ( $n = 42$ ,  $M = 56.88$ ).

**Income.** Bought the product for functional foods:  $t(98) = 1.338$ ,  $p = 0.005$ . Respondents in the lower income category ( $n = 62$ ) had higher means ( $M = 1.241$ ) than those in the higher income category ( $n = 38$ ,  $M = 1.131$ ).

Watched the ad for dietary supplements:  $t(85.194) = 2.048$ ,  $p = 0.044$ . Respondents in the lower income category ( $n = 62$ ) respondents had higher means ( $M = 5.903$ ) than those in the higher income category ( $n = 38$ ,  $M = 5.447$ ).

### **Kruskal-Wallis**

There was statistically significant difference between occupation and relevance, divergence, and Ab for functional foods.

Divergence:  $H(2) = 5.869$ ,  $p = 0.050$ , with a mean of 58 for self-employed ( $n = 14$ ), 55.80 for unemployed ( $n = 47$ ), and 41.42 for employed ( $n = 39$ ).

Relevance:  $H(2) = 6.324$ ,  $p = 0.042$ , with a mean of 63.36 for self-employed ( $n = 14$ ), 53.06 for unemployed ( $n = 47$ ), and 42.79 for employed ( $n = 39$ ).

Ab:  $H(2) = 5.990$ ,  $p = 0.050$ , with a mean of 62.32 for self-employed ( $n = 14$ ), 53.71 for unemployed ( $n = 47$ ), and 42.38 for employed ( $n = 39$ ).

Overall, the tests showed that female respondents had greater levels of engagement with the ad and the brand. Females found more creative relevance in ads for functional foods than male respondents. As for dietary supplements, females seemed to find more creativity and had a better liking for the ad and the brands advertised, and also saw the brands as the reflection of themselves and engaged themselves with the brand much more.

These results point towards the fact that health and nutrition ads (especially those of dietary supplements) seem to engage female viewers more than males, and they seemed to like the ad and the brand more than males. This could be in part due to their overall higher interest in health (Bogue & Ryan, 2000).

In this study, a higher percentage of females had watched the ad for functional foods and bought the product (83% and 70% respectively). They had watched the ad, with a significant correlation between watching the ad for functional foods and buying the brands advertised ( $r = .303$ ,  $p < .005$ ). This trend is echoed in the dietary supplements category as well, with a higher percentage of females having watched the ad and bought the product (66% and 65% , respectively) than men.

In the age category, the lower age group of respondents was more inclined towards the ad and buying the product.

Both the results reported for age and gender in this study find support from the academic literature. Ek (2013) found women to be more engaged in pursuing health-related information about brands purchased than men. Researchers such as Patterson, Kristal, and

White (1996) and Greger (2001) have found females to be more likely consumers of dietary supplements than their male counterparts, with Bailey, Fulgoni, Keast, and Dwyer (2011) finding the trend among women, and Poulsen, Kyvik, Vaag and Beck-Nielsen (1999) among the older age groups as well. Kim et al. (2002), in contrast, found gender to be an insignificant predictor of the use of supplements, while Childs and Poryzees (1997) found the younger generation more oriented towards the products. Verbeke (2005), however, discounted socio-demographic factors as having any influence on consumer attitude towards nutraceutical products.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study support Kim, Han, & Yoon's (2010) conclusions that creativity can be seen as one of the many essential dimensions of an advertisement. This study also reveals that televised nutraceutical ads in India are no longer dull and factual, but are entering the creative zone to engage with consumers.

Regarding RQ1, it can be seen that for both functional foods and dietary supplements, creative divergence in ads does not directly influence a consumer's brand engagement self-concept. The effect is indirectly seen through the moderating effects of creative relevance in the ad, consumer's Aad, and Ab.

Regarding RQ2 and RQ3, it is seen that creative divergence influences consumers' brand engagement self-concept highest through Aad for functional foods and creative relevance for dietary supplements.

For RQ4, it is seen that while creative divergence influences brand engagement self-concept through Ab for functional foods, the same is not the case for dietary supplements.

Overall, consumers are able to engage themselves with nutraceutical brands due to their favorable attitude towards the ad. Analysis related to RQ5 revealed that women, younger respondents, and those belonging to the lower income groups had higher engagement levels (in terms of Aad, Ab, creative relevance, and creative divergence), and they had both watched the ad earlier and bought the brand advertised. This reveals that nutraceuticals are no longer an elitist product nor are they only in demand from older people. Indian youth have become more health conscious and, hence,

are veering towards functional foods and dietary supplements.

Although all dimensions related to creative divergence had a significant positive impact, elaboration had by far the most powerful one for functional foods, while for dietary supplements it was artistic value. Flexibility was the next important influencer for both functional foods and dietary supplements.

In the case of functional foods, the presence of unexpected or intricate details probably spurs consumers to self-engage themselves with the brands for example (1) in the Kellogs K ad, the use of celebrated film actress as an endorser for physical body size and the promise of the brand to get women back into shape—their college figures—to be exact, (2) a mother worrying about impurities in cooking oil leading to her son's stomach ache and Baba Ramdev (the yoga Guru—a symbol for fitness in India) extolling the features of Patanjali Mustard Oil in comparison to other brands are examples of how consumers are engaged with elaborative techniques.

For dietary supplements the example of Abbot PediaSure elaborates on how artistic value leads to divergence in the ad. The use of animation to show 37 nutrients falling into the PediaSure bottle, cute dialogues, the use of color, and storytelling all provide artistic relief. The Amway Nutrilite ad features a male celebrity endorser and shows him having Nutrilite shake and outrunning a dog, missing the lift, climbing up a big flight of stairs, and impressing a beautiful woman, saying no to junk food while working through the evening and having a Nutrilite capsule instead. These add to the artistic value of the story of selling the dietary supplement and not just extolling the product features.

In the case of creative relevance, both brand-to-consumer and ad-to-consumer influence the level consumers positively. This is true for both functional foods and dietary supplements. This can be looked at in parallel to the significant influence of elaboration and artistic value for functional foods and dietary supplements respectively. The elaboration factor adds to the brand-to-consumer relevance (where consumers have a personal interest in the brand) for functional foods ( $r = .844$ ,  $p .000$ ).

For dietary supplements, where artistic value has high significance, the ad-to-consumer dimension (where the ad contains meaningful elements for the

consumer through the use of celebrities, music, visual images, etc.) is significant too ( $r = .722$ ,  $p .000$ ).

## Conclusion

The Indian nutraceutical market is booming. Advertisers and marketers of functional foods and dietary supplements are looking to leave a mark on the consumer's mind amongst the cluttered media space, must understand the dynamics and influence of creativity, consumer attitude, and brand engagement. Millions of rupees are spent by them in trying to get the consumer's attention. If the advertisers can focus on and target the audience in the right manner, the market could be their playfield. Indian consumers are no longer looking at just product information for nutraceuticals; they are willing to drown themselves in marketing creativity that would influence their attitudes towards the ad and the brand.

## ETHICAL CLEARANCE

This study was approved by the institution.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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