

Advertising Appeal in the Car Industry

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Dvopredmetni sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti i hrvatskog jezika i
književnosti

Dario Kožić

Privlačnost u reklamiranju na primjeru autoindustrije

Završni rad

Mentor: doc. dr. sc. Goran Milić

Osijek, 2020.

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Abstract

Various types of advertising appeal, as one of the most popular modern advertising methods, are used daily. Therefore, this paper describes advertising in general and advertising appeals, as well as their function in the car industry. To this end, this paper addresses the importance of advertising. After that, a chapter that explains advertising appeals in detail is provided as well. Furthermore, two highly regarded studies regarding the usage of advertising appeals are attached, too. The last segment of theoretical part features the relevant statistics, i.e. an insight into investments in contemporary advertising. In the end there is an analysis of certain car commercials. In other words, those commercials are analysed with the emphasis on their advertising appeals, which are the topic of this paper. More precisely, it focuses on Škoda, Volkswagen, Chevrolet, Tesla, Hyundai, and Toyota commercials. After dealing with already mentioned theoretical and practical segments, there is a discussion and a conclusion, which states that modern commercials are, beyond any doubt, part of our lives. Although each analyzed advertisement possesses various advertising appeals, they all differ and resemble in some segments such as absence/presence of dialogues, action display, atmosphere creation, etc. Despite their differences, the fact is that modern car commercials contain intriguing and strong messages, and the target audience finds it difficult to be indifferent towards them.

Key words: advertising, advertising appeal, cars, car industry.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century advertising has become a common phenomenon; it has become a part of our environment and everyday life. Apart from classic, old-fashioned paper advertisements, many modern gadgets such as TV, PC or mobile phone provide certain advertisements via the Internet as well. Very often it goes to such an extent that a user encounters an advertisement that represents a product that he had searched or mentioned. It can be claimed with certainty that an average man encounters at least few advertisements on daily basis.

In a sea of commercials and advertisements there is a lot of competition and each and every advertisement has to be intriguing and striking. Taking into consideration that the target audience is versatile and diverse, it is necessary to have various approaches and types of advertising. There are several advertising appeals which are used regularly in order to attract different types of people and to cause different emotions in the eyes of customers, too. Among a multitude of advertisements, cars advertisements are quite common and popular.

The fast pace of life has caused the necessity of owning a car and a competition has never been this big, so many car brands have perfected their products and adapted to the futuristic point of view. However, good publicity is required to reach complete success. Consequently, the aim of this paper is to present, analyse, and compare advertising appeals by using the car industry as an example.

For complete understanding of the topic, one should introduce some basic terminology. That is why some theoretical background will be given in Section 2 and Section 3. In other words, it will be explained how both the advertisements and advertising appeals work and how they are used in everyday advertising. Section 4 features studies that explain effects of advertising appeals. Furthermore, the content of Section 5 briefly addresses advertising in the car industry. After an overview of methodology used in Section 6, certain concrete examples regarding advertising appeal in the car industry will be presented and analysed as well in Section 7. In the end, Section 8 features a discussion and a conclusion.

2. Advertising

In order to understand advertising appeal in the car industry properly, it is necessary to have a theoretical knowledge regarding modern advertising, advertising appeals, and advertising in the car industry in general.

2.1. Modern Advertising

According to Richard F. Taflinger (1996), advertising is the non-personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services, or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media.

As it has already been stated, advertising and commercials surround us almost all the time. Of course, advertising has its past and beginnings. In other words, it has changed with the development of technology. Unlike early advertisements, which were less complex and technologically limited, the contemporary ones possess much more calculability, tactics, visual effects, teamwork, and intelligence. In addition, they are also quite widespread because of the Internet and gadgets; it is absolutely impossible to surf through the Internet and not to run into 'cookies' and advertisements. This is one of the reasons they are more successful and intriguing.

According to OPR8 Agency's web-site¹, a modern Croatian advertising agency, there are five steps in the realization of mass communication:

1. *Audience analysis* – to determine the target audience
2. *Mass communication channels selection* – to consider the type of media that will be used to reach the target audience
3. *Forming a clear message* – no ambiguities
4. *Timeliness of the message* – dealing with the latest events and products
5. *Content of the message* – type of the message (e.g. different types of advertising appeals)

¹: <http://www.opr8.agency/how-pr-agency-assists-in-mass-communication/> Accessed 27 August 2020

Furthermore, Stocking (1931) claims that “the fundamental aims of advertising are: the creation of wants, the shaping of tastes, the determination of values“ (Stocking 1931: 50). Bearing that in mind, it is easy to understand that advertisements and commercials can easily create an idea, i.e. to impose what is desirable and necessary to possess. The goal is to present certain merchandise to an individual as a likable object which brings advantages and practicality. Consequently, there is definitely a good reason why modern advertisements are described as “well-organized news bureaus that merely announce and describe new products and herald coming events” (Stocking 1931: 52).

One of the many methods which are used in modern advertising in order to toy with thoughts and emotions of a buyer are so-called advertising appeals, the topic of this paper.

3. Advertising Appeals

3.1. Types of Advertising Appeals

There are three basic advertising appeals: rational, emotional, and moral appeal. These appeals have, of course, several subordinate appeals, according to several sources such as Visme web-site².

Emotional Advertising Appeal

This advertising appeal is achieved by using striking images or texts. A powerful and breathtaking message should intrigue and touch an observer in a new way, but without using logic or common sense. In other words, it is related to observer’s social and psychological needs for purchasing certain products and services. There are several emotional advertising appeals:

1. Personal Appeal – it appeals to personal concerns
2. Social Appeal – it appeals to observer’s need to be included into something
3. Humour Appeal – appropriate humour will attract positive attention

²<https://visme.co/blog/types-of-advertising-appeals/> Accessed 27 August 2020

4. Fear Appeal – appeal capable of provoking certain hidden fears
5. Sexual Appeal – using this taboo topic can be striking and emotionally provoking
6. Romantic Appeal – it appeals to some lovely moment and provokes observer's emotions
7. Endorsement Appeal – using mostly famous people to give an approval for certain product
8. Youth Appeal – it is self-explanatory; an advertisement makes an observer feel young and energetic
9. Popularity Appeal – it is used to raise popularity, i.e. for promotional materials (e.g. logos, tags)
10. Musical Appeal – music is an amazing medium for creating an atmosphere and mood
11. Adventure Appeal – it motivates the observer to do something new and exciting
12. Empathy Appeal – the goal is to make the observer empathize with the situation and the problem
13. Potential Appeal – it encourages an idea of turning dreams into reality
14. Brand Appeal – certain people will pay more to be part of a brand that is popular around the world

Rational Advertising Appeal

Rational advertising appeal focuses on the observer's need for practicality and functionality in a product; it represents the benefits related to the purchase of a certain product. While emotions are strongly emphasized in the previous appeal, logic, and rationality, on the other hand, are significant characteristics of rational appeal.

1. Pain Solution – it is used to show a scene of pain and discomfort which must be solved
2. Scarcity Appeal – e.g. limited editions of a product
3. Testimonial Appeal – an advertisement of people talking highly about brand or product
4. Contrasting Appeal – it is used to stress the difference between your product and the competition

5. Status Appeal – it is used to emphasize social status (certain class)
6. Statistics Appeal – clever use of statistics and facts can easily appeal and send a message
7. Beauty Appeal –aesthetics has always been important so that buyers can be aware of product’s full potential
8. Transparent Appeal – transparency may help show the real state of your product and automatically achieve a sense of authenticity
9. Natural Appeal – some people just like natural style and appearance because natural is often much more appreciated than fake perfectness

Moral Advertising Appeal

Moral advertising appeal is directed at the consumers who are supposed to get a sense of what is right and what is wrong. A common custom is to exhort people to support social and ethical causes such as cleaner environment, equal gender rights, etc.

4. Effects of Advertising Appeals

Taking into consideration that advertising appeals are very important segment in modern advertising, it is reasonable to assume that they have certain effect on the target audience. Therefore, two highly-quoted studies will serve as an evidence of the influence of advertising appeals on shaping opinions and decisiveness of the target audience.

According to Nabeel (2012), there are three hypotheses:

H1: Advertising appeal influences consumer acceptance of a brand.

H2: Consumer perception of a brand depends on advertising appeals used.

H3: Brand preference is increased by advertising message.

Results (regarding hypothesis 1) have shown that 38.3% of people are not sure whether advertising appeals actually affect their opinion, so they are not certain that advertisement of a

new product will exhort them to buy that product. Further results (regarding hypothesis 2) have shown that 31.8% of people claim that advertising appeals help in positioning of a brand. In addition, appeals create and shape emotions directed towards certain brand. In the end, results regarding final hypothesis have shown that 45.8% of people appreciate and like a good message; they feel like there is a correspondence between good advertisement and brand preference. Consequently, an average or bad message of advertising appeal might result in a lack of interest in that product.

The second study, made by Kenneth G. DeBono and Michelle Packer (1991), is quite related to human psychology. It set to explain the connection between self-monitoring and reactions to advertising appeals.

The study has proven that high self-monitors (people who try to create images appropriate for their social contexts) attach great importance to image-based advertisements. However, low self-monitors (people who care that their behaviour is an accurate reflection of certain values and attitudes) tend to appreciate high quality advertising appeals, while the image attached to advertisement is less important. The conclusion is that image-based and product quality-based advertisements have different effects because different types of people (high and low self-monitors) observe and evaluate them.

5. Advertising in the Car Industry

“The advantages of a car depend somewhat on the type of travel, whether it is urban or inter-urban. Taking the latter first, given today’s transport scenario, the advantages of a car include flexibility, private cost, speed, time, luggage handling and privacy.” (Stokes and Hallett 1992: 172) The previous statement briefly describes the purpose and importance of having a car. Because of that, it is of extreme importance to advertise and popularize these vehicles. It is not a surprise that the car industry has become one of the most developed and popular industries in the world. Both adolescents and elder people enjoy the benefits of possessing a car and it is almost impossible to imagine everyday life without one.

Statistics are the best indicator of importance of advertising in the car industry: “In the U.K. in 1989, £235 million was spent by the ten major West European car manufacturers on advertising. Out of the 50 companies of all types spending most on advertising, nine were car

manufacturers. Thus in the 'big league' of advertisers cars account for about 20% of U.K. spending on advertising.“ (Stokes and Hallett 1992: 175) While this information is more than 30 years old, it describes the situation quite accurately. Regarding the latest information, this graphical representation published by Statista represents the costs for advertising of various car brands in the United States of America in 2019.

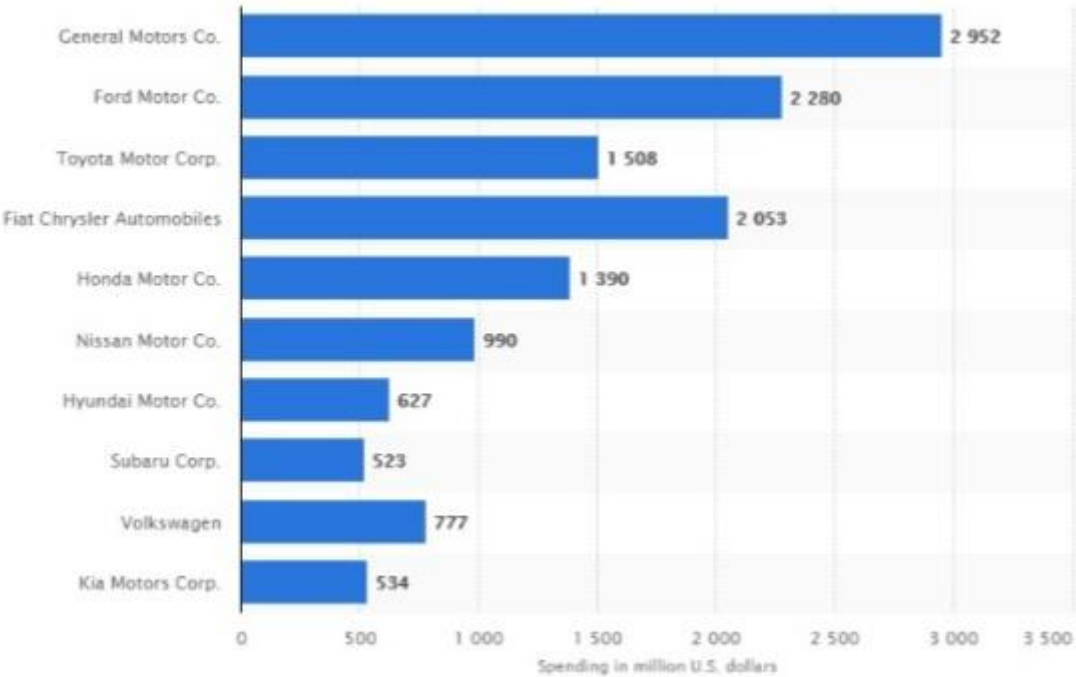


Figure 1: Advertising spending of selected automobile manufacturers in the United States in 2019³

³<https://www.statista.com/statistics/261767/advertising-spending-of-selected-automobile-manufacturers-in-the-us/> Accessed 27 August 2020

6. Methodology

In a sea of car brands, the analysis will address some of the most popular European, American, and Asian car brands. This includes the following six car brands: Škoda, Volkswagen, Chevrolet, Tesla, Toyota, and Hyundai. These brands were chosen arbitrarily and there is no personal interest behind the selection other than the territorial criterion.

The main reason for choosing the territory of three continents is to analyse and to compare their style of advertising, i.e. advertising appeals, which are hypothesized to have both similarities and differences in certain details and aspects.

Every commercial was accessed via YouTube, arguably the most popular website for publishing videos, which is free and easily accessible.

Not every commercial is of English origin or language, but each is adapted so that English speakers can understand the content they see.

Since these commercials are videos that last approximately a minute, it is impossible to put a whole video into this paper. However, there will be a visual relatedness; there will be images cropped from each video. The link for each video is available in the references.

7. Analysis of the Advertisements

As already stated, the focus of this analysis will be advertising appeal in some of the most popular European, American, and Asian car industries.

7.1. European Car Industry

7.1.1. Škoda



Image 2: Škoda Commercial

The first commercial is one by Škoda car industry. The plot of the commercial is basically a story about a young boy who encounters awkward social situations because of his parents. Firstly, they make him look childish in front of a girl he likes. Secondly, he sits separately (with the kids younger than himself) from the adults during family gathering. Thirdly, they make him wear a hat in front of his friends, which also results with embarrassment. There is no sign of communication, i.e. dialogues.

However, the ending goes in a different direction when his father buys a Škoda car, which is good looking, pleasant, comfortable, and safe. This probably indicates that Škoda, as well as boy's family, cares and makes him feel happy and protected. Consequently, social appeal is obvious because Škoda makes their customers feel like a part of their family and tradition. Humour appeal is present as well and the proof of that is boy's constant inability to avoid unpleasant situations, which is very entertaining in the eye of the observer. Empathy appeal is

strongly emphasized, too. The situation the boy is going through might be reliable to certain male observers who could have had similar experiences earlier in their life.

In the end, Škoda commercial is supposed to make a good impression fulfilled with rationality and presentation of facts, which is without a doubt the most important aspect. That is why they used the slogan *For all the things that truly matter*. Rational, i.e. transparent appeal is detected here because Škoda advertisement creators want to represent their product as authentic and worth buying, as is emotional appeal, due to hints at family role models.

7.1.2. Volkswagen



Image 3: Volkswagen Golf Commercial

The following European car brand is Volkswagen. In this commercial, potential buyers can see an old lady who is willing to sell her old Volkswagen car. There is a young boy who wants to buy that car. The first impression is that the old lady used to drive her vehicle carefully, but after seeing a few flashbacks we can understand that she is a wild driver, eager for adrenaline. Despite that, her car is perfectly preserved, which proves Volkswagen's reliability and quality. At the end of the commercial there is a textual effect which states: *Not every old lady is as reliable. Fortunately, each Golf is.*

Rational appeal in general (as the most significant appeal in this commercial) is drawn upon in the slogan because Volkswagen advertisement creators want to represent their car as

durable, quality, and authentic. In addition, it is true that not every old lady is reliable, unlike Volkswagen cars, at least according to this commercial.

Apart from the already mentioned appeal, musical appeal is present, too; pleasant and relaxing music creates a nice atmosphere. Furthermore, youth appeal is recognizable by the fact that the old lady drives wildly and carelessly, just like a young and carefree girl. What is the purpose? To show that even elder people can feel young while driving Volkswagen Golf. Humour appeal is present in the already mentioned flashbacks where the lady was driving as if she was racing.

Regarding the communication, there are no monologues or dialogues; compensation is based on body language.

7.2. American Car Industry

7.2.1. Chevrolet



Image 4: Chevrolet Commercial

This 2012 Chevrolet Super Bowl commercial presents a young man, who just recently graduated, in the company of his parents who have planned a gift for him. As soon as his parents take off the blindfold from his head, he sees a car. Unfortunately for him, he is confused and thinks that the car is his present, but in reality, the present is a small fridge which is standing next to someone's Chevrolet. The young man's reaction is priceless. He

invites his friends, screams, and enjoys the moment. In the end an old man, probably neighbour, arrives and sits in the car, which results in shock and disbelief.

This whole commercial is imbued with humour, which indicates humour appeal. Furthermore, the old man who owns Chevrolet is dressed very classy and he is prepared to play golf, which is associated with rich people. This is probably a sign of status appeal. In other words, Chevrolet is presented as a car which reflects high social status. In the end, we can see the logo with the motto *Chevy runs deep*. These words are probably connected with the Super Bowl and with sports jargon (running deep as an American football term), and this shows the presence of popularity appeal. The reference to sports jargon is clearly contextually related to the actual immediate context in which the commercial is aired, which adds to the appeal.

It is also important to stress the fact that characters in this commercial talk to each other, in contrast to the previous two. Consequently, there is no musical appeal because there is no need for any background noise since the commercial contains both dialogue and monologue (young man's words "This is the best day of my life!") Rational appeal, on the contrary to Škoda and Volkswagen, is not in the limelight.

7.2.2. Tesla

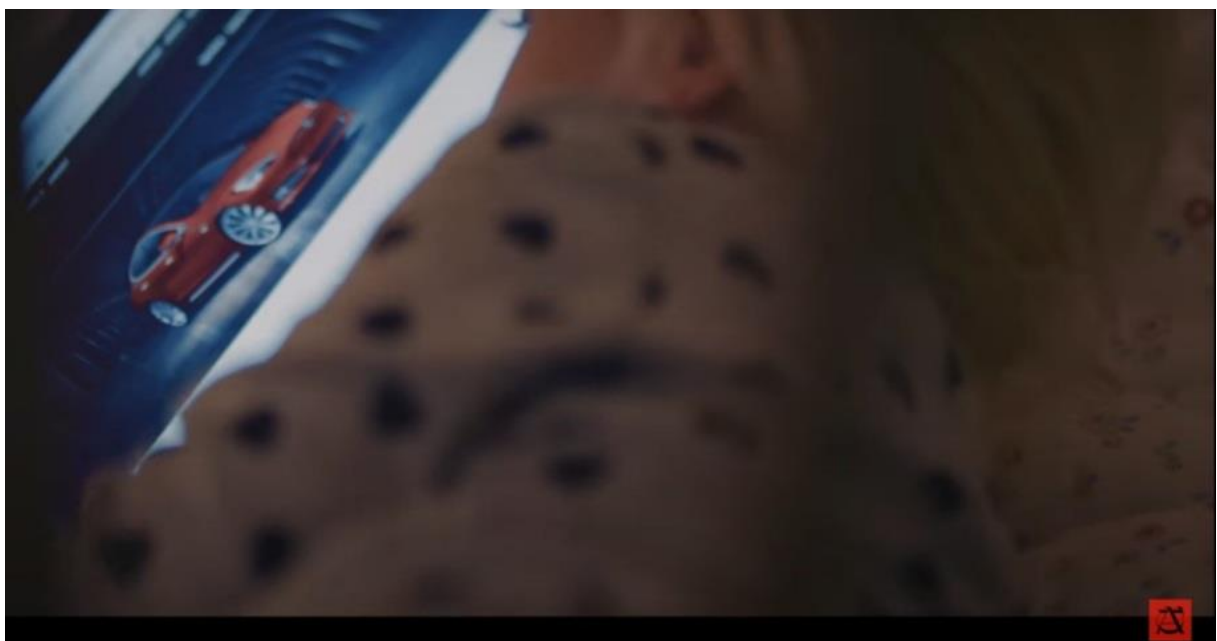


Image 5: Tesla Commercial

This commercial shows a young little girl who is very curious. She is asking questions such as “Mum, can cars use batteries?” or “Can cars drive themselves?” or even “Can cars drive on Mars?” Therefore, it is reasonable to claim that monologue is present in this commercial.

Of course, it is hard to imagine these things, but Tesla cars really have batteries and, consequently, they do not pollute the environment. After stating that, moral appeal can be recognized - drive Tesla if you care for our environment.

Potential appeal, i.e. an idea that cars will eventually drive on Mars or that they will be able to drive themselves, intrigues everyone who encounters the commercial. Brand appeal is also significant; people will probably pay more in the future in order to be part of the famous Tesla tradition. Furthermore, contrasting appeal has found its place because authors of the commercial wanted to stress that Tesla cars might offer more in the future than other car brands, and the motto *A Better Future* only supports that statement. In the end there is a beauty appeal, which is visible by the shooting angle and Tesla’s bright colours, combined with musical appeal, an inspiring melody which is a herald of a futuristic and revolutionary point of view. A symbiosis of these equally important factors makes Tesla commercial the perfect advertisement for people with a vision and desire for progress.

7.3. Asian Car Industry

7.3.1. Hyundai



Image 6: Hyundai Tucson Commercial

This Hyundai Tucson commercial represents an average family of 3 members that successfully and with a smile on its face faces all daily challenges and tasks. It is the embodiment of hard work and perseverance, too.

Hyundai producers crave to stress the importance of hard work, which results in a happy and fulfilled life. During the commercial there is a background sound, i.e. a song whose lyrics are repetitive, and the most important word is the word *lucky*. Through musical appeal authors of the commercial want to emphasize that hard work brings luck, especially after taking into consideration that the commercial depicts a hardworking and dynamic family. Except for musical appeal, there is a personal appeal that is strongly emphasized as well. Its use is easily noticeable since everyone is individually told to be diligent. The final words of the commercial (*Isn't it funny that the harder you work the luckier you get?*) again strongly support the main thesis, and that is that hard work pays off. Furthermore, actors in the commercial drive Hyundai everywhere, starting from the urban environment all the way to driving by the sea, which is a call to action, i.e. adventure appeal. At the very end, it is noted that the warranty is valid for 5 years, which is a sign of rational appeal and reliability.

Members of the family do not talk with each other, but there is an old man at the very end of the commercial who looks at the father and says: "That's one lucky guy."

7.3.2. Toyota

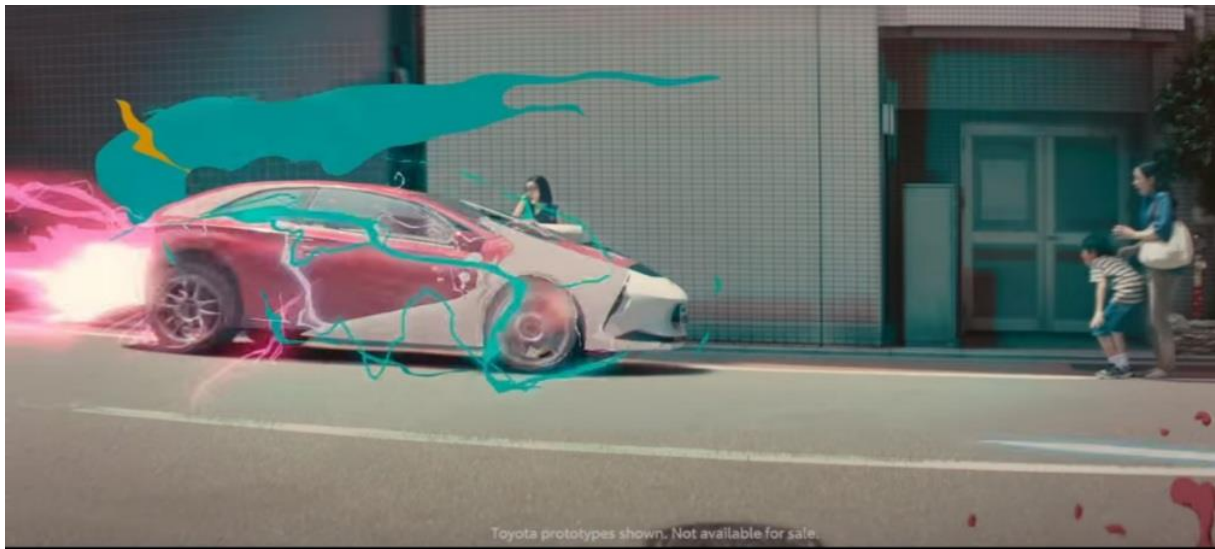


Image 7: Toyota Commercial

The final commercial, a Japanese car, Toyota, will conclude this analysis. In this commercial, partially dedicated to the 2020 Olympics, which were unfortunately postponed, observers can see a young boy who has an ability to revamp and improve everything he touches. Firstly, he transforms his old car toy into a new car toy. Secondly, he changes an old car into a nice Toyota family car. Thirdly, he transforms the box with equipment and tools into a modern robot. In the continuation of the advertisement he is using his abilities to improve the city and he is doing good deeds as well. All these things are impossible, but the motto *Start your impossible* strongly exhorts an idea of improvement of technology in the future. That is why potential appeal plays an important role in this commercial; it emphasizes the vision of progress, i.e. Toyota's vision. A few Toyota logos can be seen, as well as the Olympic logo, which indicates the spread of popularity, resulting in popularity appeal. Entertaining and appropriate melody, same as in some previous examples, indicates already well-known musical appeal.

Taking everything into consideration, it is logical to state that both potential appeal and rational appeal are of crucial importance because Toyota advertisement creators really believe in progress, reliability, and a better world.

8. Discussion and Conclusion

It is reasonable to claim that advertisements have become part and parcel of our lives, whether we want to admit it or not. There are many creative and productive techniques that are used in everyday advertising and advertising appeals surely belong into that group. These appeals are used in advertising in many industries around the world and the car industry is, as proven, no exception.

This brief discussion and conclusion are based on the analyzed examples and they do not, of course, necessarily represent the whole European, American or Asian advertising system, but rather a fraction of it.

While comparing European, American, and Asian car industry and their advertising appeal approaches, some similarities are obvious. For example, all three continents use rational appeal in general because they want to represent their merchandise as reliable, desirable, and worthy. In order to attract people, it is necessary to have a cheerful and enthusiastic spirit. For that reason, advertisements on all three continents contain amusing appeals such as humour appeal or musical appeal tailored to their respective cultures and intended audiences. It is also impossible to see a commercial without logos and features of certain product, which is evident in all the commercials as they display the logo of their cars. In addition, they all have managed to connect the plot of the commercial with totally, or at least partially, realistic and vivid scenarios, which helps in the creation of a desirable atmosphere. Basically, all advertisements are of high quality and they consistently represent the main ideas of car companies.

There are certain differences, too. For example, characters in the analysed European commercials (Škoda and Volkswagen) do not use dialogues and verbalization. Everything is clear and transparent without a spoken word. American commercials (Chevrolet and Tesla), on the other hand, use dialogues and monologues which are quite entertaining as well. Asian commercials (Hyundai and Toyota) use dialogues, but quite rarely, only to compose the scene even better. Asian labour ethic and diligence has always been well-known and popular. That could be the reason they did not use humour appeal, but rather discipline, sophistication, and progress.

To conclude, it is easy to agree that modern commercials toy with our imagination and desires. Modern technology and the ability to bombard potential buyers with advertisements

have made it simpler and more practical for any industry. Authors of the advertisements pay attention to details, so each commercial is almost perfect, psychologically intriguing, and slightly provoking. However, in the end it is up to the individual whether (s)he will be influenced by advertisements or not.

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Commercials:

Chevrolet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-WbGh6UjCM>

Volkswagen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SrPu-xGrKrk>

Škoda: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUORdCI-6Is>

Tesla: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkVouc84MRg>

Hyundai: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0ws5OVy2bg>

Toyota: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asTFtXaX1BQ>

10. Appendix

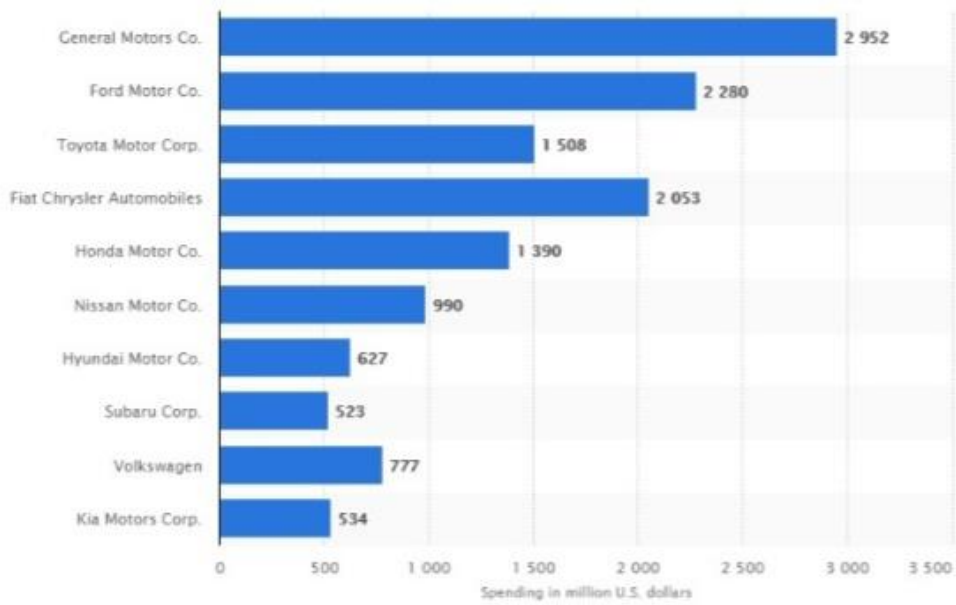


Figure 1



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5

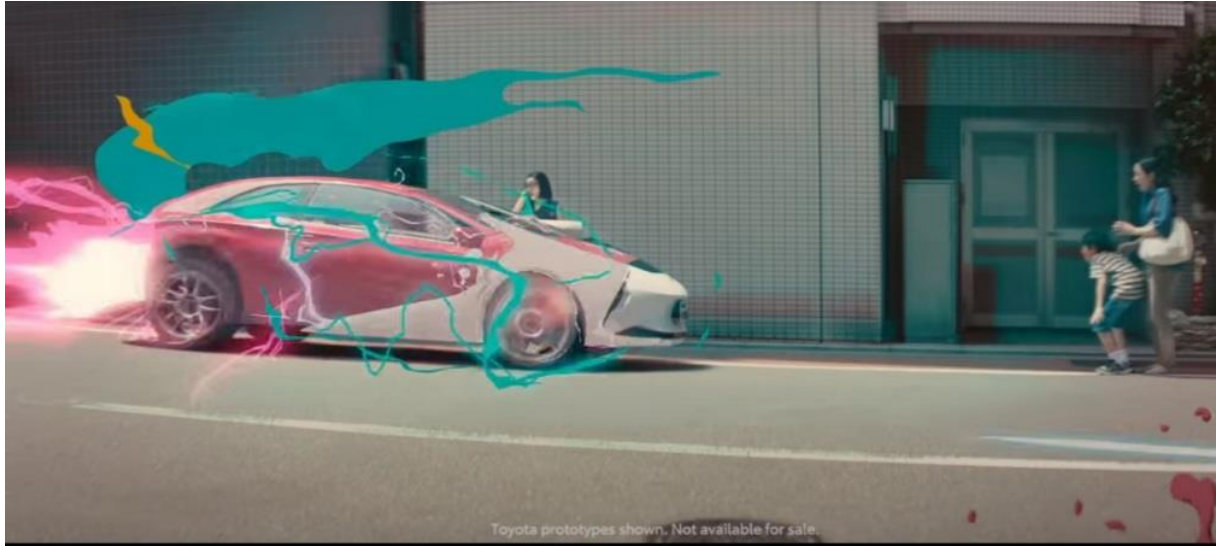


Image 6