

Mind Tricks & Ad Clicks

The Psychology of Advertisements

A great man once said, "We are dominated by the relatively small number of persons who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires which control the public mind" (AZ quotes). Often credited as 'the father of public relations', Edward Louis Bernays, was the pioneer of using psychology in his vast display of propaganda and public relations. His inherent use of psychology was one of the first examples in history to prove that understanding of the human mind can reach audiences far and beyond.

By diving into the depths of the human mind, one can hope to open the window into progressive and modern advertisement, that targets the very essence of human psychology. This study will explore the different ways psychology can be used in advertisements and the impact they can have on the target audience.

Good ol' ads: the age of vintage advertisement

The 19th century saw the popular uprising of printed advertisements, as society began to rely on them to make consumer choices. Most of these ads target a specific audience and surround their marketing campaign on factors that appeal to their chosen group. As such, ideas of hypermasculinity, sexuality, race and family become the focus of these ads – many of which society would deem unacceptable in today's world especially with the rise of feminism, equality, ideas of respect.

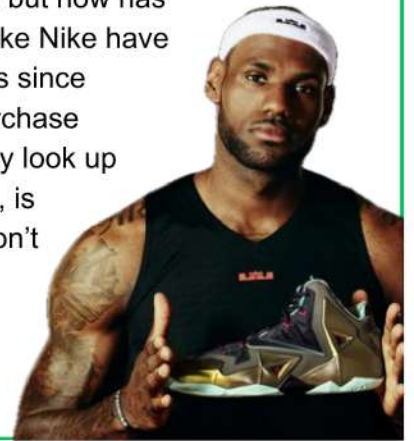
Looking at the two ads, it is clear to say why they would be unacceptable in today's world, however back in the late 1900s, these were in fact the main themes that dominated the world of advertisement. The first ad deals with ideas of gender and woman. At that time, hypermasculinity was a popular ideology, and remnants like watches were seen as a symbol of masculinity for men. Through this ad, the watch company was able to appeal to men's sense of masculinity, validating their gender by emphasizing their ideas of women at that time. The second ad focuses on a beer brand -Heineken- that advertised alcohol to babies. In 21st century, this ad would be proposterous and offensive, drawing attention from health centres and social wellbeing organizations, but these were infact the social norms in the old days.



Although unacceptable today, these ads did make a significant contribution in the way they impacting the way of advertising. By focusing on a specific idea or theme, using bright colours and big, centered pictures all contributed these advertisements ability to reach their target audience and persuade users to by their products. Due to this, company's gained an extensive view not only onto compels the consumer to buy products but also opened a window for modern day advertisement to acknowledge what advertisements to avoid, such as over-sexualized settings, ideas of race and the use of babies and children promoting demerit products.

Celebrity Endorsement: morden shifts in advertisement

As aforementioned, ads from the past have changed the history of advertisement but how has modern day marketing changed and developed the culture of behavior? Brands like Nike have been using celebrity endorsement to develop the credibility and trust in customers since the early days of their branding – and works. Consumers are more inclined to purchase products that are supported or encouraged by celebrities they follow because they look up to them and want to emulate their style. However, what most people don't realise, is that these celebrities get paid handsomely for their endorsements, and oftenly don't even use or like the product in reality, bringing the overall credibility of the product down. That being said, celebrity endorsement is one of the most common, effective and quick ways for a brand to be noticed and many successful businesses have built their marketing style on the concept.



The price of happiness: the impact of advertisements on self-esteem

Different brands target various stereotypes in the market as a way of reaching their audience, but these stereotypes are known to be offensive or insensitive to the people that receive them. The stereotypes include ideas of race, gender and age. While only promoting a product, ads like this can have a negative effect on society, encouraging ideas of racism, sexism and agism and even sometimes endorsing the notions. They can impact the way people feel about themselves and the media they surround themselves with. Subsequently, it is crucial for brands to be mindful of the messages they convey and strive to promote inclusivity and diversity in their marketing campaigns.



The Art of Deception: misleading ads

According to a study conducted by DOVE, "96% of women who said they felt models used in beauty ads were not realistic interpretation of women today." And that "over 40% said they felt less confident in their daily lives as a result" (qtd. In Edubirdie). These numbers are not particularly startling in today's world but instead reinforce and highlight how different advertisements can create lasting impacts on an individual's self-esteem. Although seen everywhere, some of these ads use techniques that are unethical and manipulate consumer choice.

These techniques include:

Bait and Switch: A technique that lures customers into stores with high discounts and bargains only to be 'unavailable' and then offered a similar, more expensive item.

Exploitations of fears: Ads that prey on customers fears and misgiving, often involving topics like money loss, family and children.

Subliminal advertising: Ads that use hidden visual or audio elements that subconsciously affect the consumer.

Overstated claims: exaggerated truths to enhance the appeal.



These are just a few examples of unethical adverts, that uses deceptive techniques to persuade the customer to make purchases. Despite the fact that all of these may seem dangerous and negative, they are actually quite common in the brands you see everyday and are usually not directly harmful; notwithstanding the higher prices and exploitations, techniques like subliminal advertising don't necessarily have a detrimental impact and are just used to add a bit of interesting detail such as the arrow in Fedex, that is nearly impossible to unsee once noticed.



Consumer Therapy: the psychology of ads

As explored before, the psychology of ads have always played an integral role in convincing consumers to buy a product, believe in a cause or agree with a portrayed point of view. As producers, company's have to make sure that consumers go through the 7 steps of consumer information, and use their knowledge of persuasion to ensure this. These steps include:

1. **Exposure to Information** – A consumer is surrounded by information and introduced to the product or idea.
2. **Selective attention** – Keeping the consumer attracted to the product by using various techniques, where some companies even use some of the deceptive techniques mentioned above.
3. **Comprehension** - Making sure the consumer understands what the product is selling.
4. **Agreement** – The consumer needs to understand why the product is essential to their lifestyle.
5. **Retention and Retrieval** – Making sure the advert leaves enough of an impact that when the consumer thinks of a certain product, they are able to retrieve their memory of the product, whose advert they have retained.
6. **Decision Making** – Helping consumers make a decision by ensuing some kind of call to action.
7. **Action** - The final of any company - to make the consumer purchase the product.

Now these 7 steps are crucial to persuade a consumer to buy the product, but companies have to use various techniques to ensure that these steps are effective and truly reach the final goal. While there are many ways to succeed in the art of persuasion, most company's use the 3 most basic ideologies of convincing – after all, as Occam's Razor states, "the simplest solution is almost always the best" (Soegaard).

Pathos: This technique appeals to the emotions of the audience by creating a connection between the product and their feelings. It often uses imagery, storytelling, and music to evoke a desired emotional response. For example, an advertisement for a luxury car might use images of beautiful scenery and happy families to create a sense of aspiration and desire.



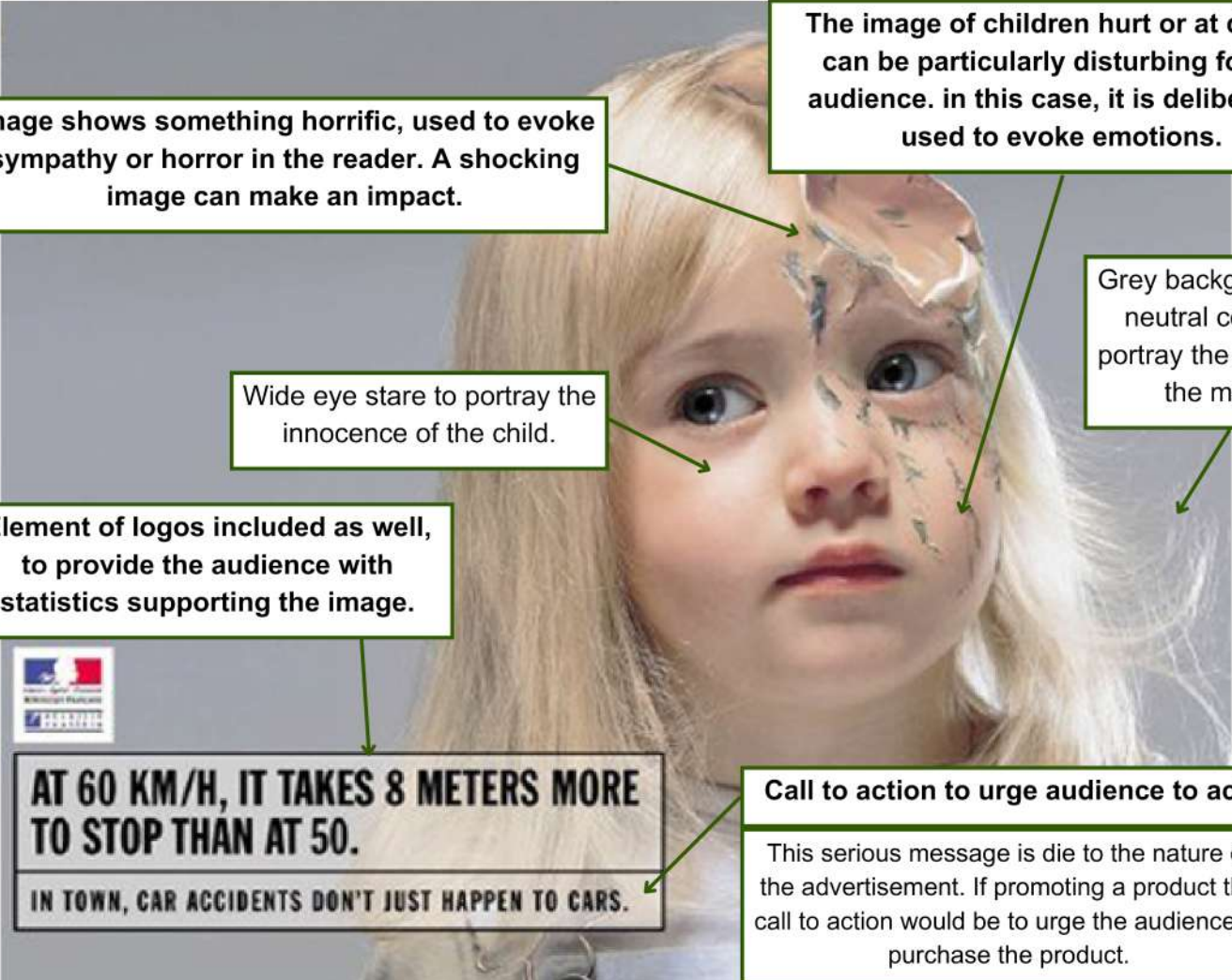
Logos: This technique appeals to the logical side of the audience by providing facts, statistics, and other evidence to support the claims made about the product. It often uses testimonials from experts or satisfied customers to build credibility and trust. For example, an advertisement for a new type of pain reliever might include clinical studies showing its effectiveness in reducing pain.

Ethos: This technique appeals to the credibility and trustworthiness of the source of the message. It often uses endorsements from celebrities, experts, or other respected figures to build trust and confidence in the product. For example, an advertisement for a new type of toothpaste might feature a dentist recommending it for its cavity-fighting properties.



Here how different advertisements can use the basic principles of ethos, pathos and logos to hook customers:

Pathos



The image shows something horrific, used to evoke sympathy or horror in the reader. A shocking image can make an impact.

The image of children hurt or at danger can be particularly disturbing for the audience. In this case, it is deliberately used to evoke emotions.

Grey background and neutral colours to portray the severity of the matter.

Wide eye stare to portray the innocence of the child.

Element of logos included as well, to provide the audience with statistics supporting the image.

AT 60 KM/H, IT TAKES 8 METERS MORE TO STOP THAN AT 50.

IN TOWN, CAR ACCIDENTS DON'T JUST HAPPEN TO CARS.

Call to action to urge audience to act.

This serious message is due to the nature of the advertisement. If promoting a product the call to action would be to urge the audience to purchase the product.

Pathos in ads appeals to an audience or reader's ethics, and are a very effective way to leave an impact. In fact, "The success rate of emotional marketing campaigns is 31", claims big marketing companies. (Neurosciencemarketing).

This ad uses pathos because it aims to evoke a strong emotional response in the viewer. The main focus of the image is the girl, showcasing a large dent in her head. While this picture is somewhat gruesome, it is specifically chosen to portray something that will have a lasting impact on the viewer, leaving them with emotions such as concern, fear and empathy. When ads invoke these emotions in the viewer, they use the feeling to drive across the point they are trying to make, in this case, drive slower.

Additionally, the use of statistics in the caption, also implies that the advertisement uses a bit of logos to provide the audience with a sense of credibility and produces evidence to heed their warning of the dangers of speeding.

Overall, these advertising effectively uses pathos to to gain an emotional response and make the audience more receptive to the message and more likely to remember it due to the emotional impact it leaves.

However, it's important to note that using such graphic images can also be controversial and may be seen as exploiting tragedy for the sake of advertising, especially when it involves children, such as this ad.

Logos

Main statistic bold, big and colorful so it draws the attention of the viewer as the main focus.

Healthcare professional included to create trust and reliability. The image also helps add humanity to the advertisement.

Name of health care professional and title also stated, to add reliability and allow the audience to re-check the information they are receiving.

Pleasant and neutral background to not draw attention away from the main information and data.

Additional information and statistics provided at the bottom. Comparison to the national standard allows audience to have a benchmark and proves capability and competency of the company.

Company details provided for contact.

Additional details to specific members inside the company for customer contact, showing reliability.

91%

percent

of our **CORONARY ARTERY BYPASS SURGERIES** are performed using minimally invasive techniques — beating heart, off-pump (without a heart-lung machine). This procedure is better for patients, and occurs **four times** more often at Cooper than the national average.

CooperHealth.org/numbers
1.800.8.COOPER

Cooper
Heart Institute

George E. Horvath, III
Chairman

Jean S. Davis
Vice Chairman

John R. Sherrin, Jr.
President and CEO

Michael Roembloom, MD

According to Harvard Business School, Professor Gerald Zaltman says that “95 percent of our purchase decision making takes place in the subconscious mind” (Harvard Business School). When humans receive and process information subconsciously, they do it through the left side of the brain, responsible for logical reasoning.

This ad uses logos because it provides the viewer with statistics and evidence to back up its claims. Logos is clearly depicted in the way it uses statistics to appeal to the logic and reasoning of the viewer, highlighting that 91% of their surgeries are performed using minimally invasive techniques. Furthermore, the ad reinforces the effectiveness of their approach by stating that this procedure is better for patients by saying it occurs four times more often at Cooper than the national average.

Although it provides the reader with multiple facts to promote the reliability of the product, the ad's use of the large and bold “91%” is eye-catching, drawing the viewer's attention to the key message of the ad. The use of red for the numbers and the company's logo also serves to evoke a connection with the heart and blood. Additionally, the use of a healthcare professional in the image further humanises the message, implying a personal connection.

Overall, this ad uses the rhetoric of logos effectively to communicate the reliability of the product and provides the viewer with concrete statistics -even comparing the care to national standards – to bring about a sense of trust and authenticity in the ad's product.

Ethos

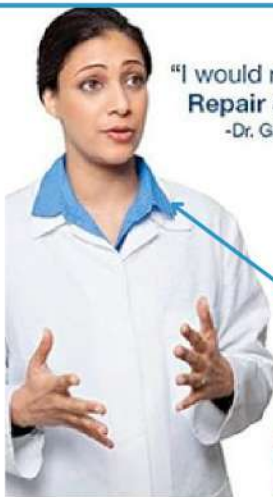
Scientific claim implies the product is effective based on scientific evidence.

Scientific sounding terminology also appeals to the audience sense of logic.

Use of large infographic featuring the scientific aspects of the ad, appealing to the viewers logic.

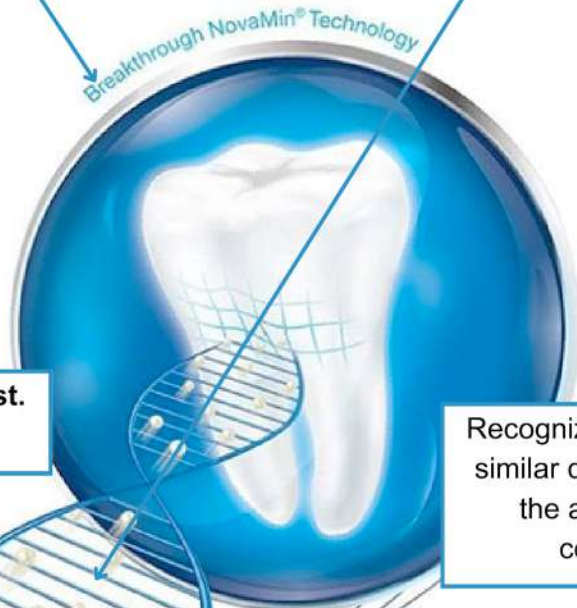
TOOTHPASTE THAT CAN ACTUALLY
REPAIR
SENSITIVE TEETH*

"Expert Testimony" from a doctor to validate trust.
Doctor credentials listed as well.

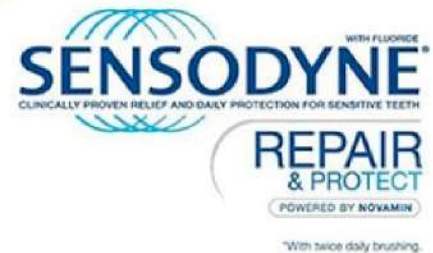


"I would recommend Sensodyne Repair & Protect Toothpaste."
-Dr. Gauri Mohile, Dentist practicing in the UK.

The use of an expert/professional in the field (in this case a doctor) to maximize credibility.



Recognizable brand and similar design to rest of the ad to ensure continuity.



According to Tom Stockham, CEO of Expertvoice, "Consumers clearly value advertisements with credible, trustworthy people much more than traditional advertisements" (ExpertVoice Business). The importance of ethos in an ad is greatly underappreciated, but crucial to building trust and a loyal consumer base.

This advertisement for Sensodyne toothpaste primarily uses ethos to persuade viewers. The ad features a recommendation from a dentist, appealing to the audience's sense of authority and trust in a dental expert. Additionally, the ad makes scientific claims about the product's effectiveness, and improve sense of ethos through claims of clinical evidence. However, the ad also uses other advertising techniques, such as effective visuals, to appeal to viewers' emotions and capture their attention. Additionally, the ad uses the color blue and brand recognition to create a sense of trust and security.

Nevertheless, is important to note, that the claim about repairing sensitive teeth is followed up with an asterisk and a disclaimer. This suggests that the evidence supporting this claim may be limited or not entirely unbiased. To some extent this could be seen as an example of deceptive or manipulative advertising, as discussed earlier. The ad also does not mention any potential side effects of using the product.

All these features help build a relationship of trust with the audience, from the use of professional's the consumers trust, and scientific terminology to sell and set the pitch. Overall, the ad attempts to persuade viewers through a combination of rational and emotional appeals, installing credibility to the highest possible standard.

Personal Statement

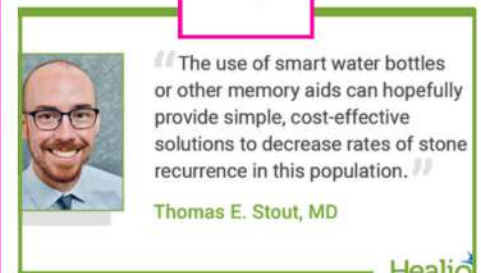
Just like any consumers in today's world, I encounter countless products on a daily basis, bombarded with messages urging me to buy products I need, want, desire and even products I don't! While my decisions are influenced by many various factors, I believe, that just like any consumer going through the purchasing process, I am too, swayed by the likes of ethos, pathos, and logos used in the advertisements and branding I consume. Before I dive deep into my personal preferences, let me take a look at how each of these techniques impact my day-to-day consumer decisions.

Firstly, **pathos** plays a part, if not a huge one, in the way I consume products. While I recognize the emotional influence of advertising, I want to make informed decisions beyond the initial emotional feelings. To avoid falling for or succumbing under the various deception tactics discussed earlier, I tend to look at pathos advertisement with open eyes, while still being cautious about the goods I purchase. However, I do acknowledge that in some cases, where the advertisement is promoting a cause or a warning, pathos may sway the way I perceive the messages more than logos.

Ethos also plays a crucial role in the products I consume. I prioritize brands with a strong reputation for ethical practices, environmental responsibility, and honesty with their customers because I feel like it builds a bond of trust between me and my chosen brand. Celebrity endorsements, for example, aren't incredibly high on my credibility list. While celebrities may possess fame and influence, their association with a product doesn't automatically translate to the product's value. Instead, I try to focus on the expertise and credibility of the individual promoting the product. For example, I might be more inclined to trust a product recommendation from a renowned scientist or expert in the relevant field due to their established knowledge and experience compared to a celebrity with no relevant expertise. Although it may seem a bit too critical, when I purchase products, I want to ensure that my trust is not misplaced, and that the authenticity is prevalent on factual information rather than solely relying on celebrity endorsements or superficial marketing tactics.



VS



Finally, **logos** forms the foundation of my decision-making. Being a student that values science and evidence, I believe that I prioritize informed choices and factual information when making purchasing choices. I do this by comparing products objectively based on their features and specifications, not being swayed by emotional appeals in the ads. Additionally, I need to see the ad at least proved credible 3 times for me to consider buying a good by its advertisement solely. Most credible brands these days do in fact have their research and development squared away for consumer viewing, because with the evolving world of modern technology and the increasing number of fake and untrue claims circling the internet, most companies, I hope, recognize the changing consumer distrust.

However, my emphasis on logos doesn't diminish the importance of ethos and pathos. My liking for ethos-based ads, contribute to my belief in scientific and factual decision making. Furthermore, I completely understand that my some of my decisions are definitely influenced by emotional appeal especially when choosing a gift or supporting a cause, and the use of pathos in these advertisements are not at all to be discounted for.

In conclusion, for an effective selling a product or service, companies need to have the knowledge of all three and the usage of said techniques in their advertisement.

My Reflection

When exploring the intricate relationship between psychology and advertising in my report, I looked at the persuasive techniques that shape consumer behavior. Analyzing shifts in advertising in the past and the current and progressive strategies today, I was able to unpack the ethical and social considerations surrounding them. I wrote this report in hopes to provide a comprehensive analysis of how advertisements influence the human mind and the effect on consumer decisions.

The essay successfully delves into a broad range of topics within the realm on the use of psychology in advertising. I was also able to use diverse examples to demonstrate the evolution of advertising strategies throughout time, highlighting the shift from vintage marketing tactics to contemporary approaches that hinge on emotional appeals and celebrity endorsements, especially with the rising popularity and sue of social media platforms as a network for advertisements. This chronological structure allowed me to create a timeline of correct order of events and help the reader understand the evolution of advertising. |

Additionally, my report was able to effectively delve into a broad range of topics within the realm of advertising psychology, drawing upon various sources and evidence to support my claims. I was able to employ various articles from academic databases like The Harvard Business School. I also explored the historical evolution of advertising strategies. Additionally, I incorporated real-world examples, such as the vintage advertisements showcasing outdated gender portrayals, and critically analyzed their impact on audiences. By integrating these sources and evidence, I was able to back up all my points with evidence and support my claims.



Furthermore, I was capable you carefully analyzing and utilizing ethos, pathos, and logos. While looking at the different techniques, I was able to carefully select 3 different examples of ads using the rhetoric from the internet, choosing only the adverts form reliable sources, and analyze the effect on each. While exploring the pathos ad, I highlighted its use of a powerful image evoke a strong emotional response. When I further discussed the inclusion of statistics in the caption, I demonstrated my attempt to analyze how the ad utilizes both emotional appeal and a semblance of symbols to persuade viewers. Whilst analyzing the ethos ad, I was able to understand the importance of building trust with customers and applying a sense of credibility. When analyzing the logos ad, I focused on its use of statistics to appeal to the audience's logic and reasoning, and linked this to my personal preference, when successfully providing the reader with a detailed explanation of the factors that influence my own consumer choices.

However, focusing on such a vast scope might have limited the depth of analysis in specific areas. While my report touches upon various themes, delving deeper into a specific aspect of advertising psychology, such as the social impact of gender portrayal in advertisements, could have produced a more refined and impactful analysis. This focused approach would've allowed me more time for the exploration of a specific theme, potentially leading to a stronger and more opinionated report.

Moreover, I believe my writing style could benefit from adopting a more formal tone. While the current approach is high clarity and coherence, incorporating stronger vocabulary, eliminating contractions, and adopting a more objective perspective would heighten the reports merit. This would help me refine would align the tone with the essay's intended purpose, showcasing a more professional and analytical approach to the subject matter.

Despite these areas for improvement, this report serves as a valuable learning experience. It has provided an opportunity for me to explore the psychology of advertisement, and apply critical thinking skills to delve into the persuasive power of advertising By focusing on a narrower theme, and adopting a more formal tone, I hopefully aim to create future reports that are not only comprehensive but also wellll researched and professionally written.