

## **Perceived Humor and Purchase Intention: Mediating Role of Attitude towards the Advertisement and Brand**

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### **Abstract**

*In order to investigate the purchase intention of the customers, and its relationship with perceived humor, this research analyses different types of humor that have been used in advertising campaigns. In this regard, multi-mediation analysis has been applied keeping in mind the perspective of humor in advertising; moreover, attitudes towards the advertisement, and attitudes towards the brand are used as sequential mediators. In addition, self-monitoring and message arguments have also been included as moderators in order to estimate the interaction effect in the proposed model. The data has been gathered from 617 respondents after showing them relevant advertisements. After checking the normality of the data, the Confirmatory Factor Analysis was applied using AMOS. Also, Simple Linear Regression was used to test simple relationships; however, complex models have also been tested by using the hierarchal regression (to test moderation), and the bootstrapping (to test mediation) methods. A good fit between the data and the tested model was observed. As predicted, the purchase intentions were positively related to perceived humor, and evidence of full mediation effect was found. However, for the moderation of self-monitoring and message arguments, the findings were distinctive. In reality, this research can be used by mature brands which mostly require the use of persuasive advertising. As the results of different types of humor, collectively, are significant, it can be inferred that companies must use a mix method approach in terms of types of humor they might resort to in their advertisement campaigns. Findings are particularly noteworthy for national and multinational media agencies in Pakistan, as well in the other parts of the world.*

**Keywords:** Perceived humor, attitude towards the advertisement, attitude towards the brand, message arguments, self-monitoring, purchase intention.

**JEL Classification:** D12, L82, M31, M37.

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## **1. Introduction**

Hilarity/humor is a very extensively used tool in promotional activities (Elpers, Mukherje & Hoyer, 2004; Weinberger & Spots, 1989). This is evident from the fact that approximately 30% of the billions of dollars, spent on promotion on the nationwide medium each year, are concentrated on humorous advertisements (Kellaris & Cline, 2007). Partly due to the popularity of utilizing amusing promotional efforts, researchers have started concentrating on the impact of humorous commercials as well as on the effectiveness of advertisements (Chung & Zhao, 2003). Previous researches have shown that humor has a positive influence on the different approaches used for the product that is being advertised. These include various aspects such as call for advertisements (Cline & Kellaris, 1999), attention towards the advertisements, and understanding of the advertisements (Norris & Colman, 1996; Weinberger, Spotts, Campbell & Parsons, 1995). These approaches also include the advertisement persuasiveness (Geuens & Pelsmacker, 2002; Unger, 1995) and advertisement fondness (Cline & Kellaris, 1999; Cline, Altsech & Kellaris, 2003; Eisend, 2011).

The thought behind utilizing humor in an advertisement is that, funniness can impact the viewers, and modify their musings and convictions toward the product or service that is being advertised. This belief that humor can enhance promotion usefulness, has directed an exceptional attractiveness towards incorporating humor in the mass advertising. It has been assessed that the utilization of hilarity in advertisements has gone up to 50% (Weinberger, Gulas & Weinberger, 2015). Then again, the act of utilizing the comic side, as a persuading machine, is partly supported by the results of hilarity studies. Convincing confirmations exist to support the application of hilarity incorporated in advertisements. However, the literature is still prone to be questionable when it comes to the function of hilarity in the development of constructive reactions from viewers (Duhachek, 2005; Potter, LaTour, Braun-LaTour & Reichert, 2006; Weinberger & Campbell, 1991). The effectiveness of humor in advertising has been studied extensively in the context of China and USA (Zhang & Neelankavil, 1997). Moreover, various aspects of humor have also been studied individually in Pakistan as well (Hameed, Siddiqui & Husain, 2015; Hameed, Zainab & Shamim, 2018), but there is no

substantial work available that combines all the different types of humor together (Ivanov, Eisend, & Bayon, 2019).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between humor in television advertisement, and the product's potential customers' purchase intentions. When there is an interaction of the moderating variable, then what will be the effect of humor in television advertisements on the purchase intention, is a question that this study will also aim to answer. In this regard, self-monitoring as moderator is used in measuring whether a person is high or low in self-monitoring, and message arguments another moderator is used in advertisements. For this purpose, the items were summed up for each argument, in order to form an overall argument strength scale. The way humor in advertisements leads to certain attitudes of the potential consumers towards the advertisement (Mediating Variable measured as Favorable/Unfavorable), the following attitude they have towards the brand (mediating variable measured as favorable/unfavorable), and ultimately the purchase intention of the person who is exposed to the advertisement are that variables that are considered in this particular study.

## **2. Literature Review**

The rate at which hilarity shows up in advertisements, and the attention being paid by the different groups of people, is not always practical, as indicated by the experimental dimension of the results. It is believed that the crust of hilarity makes the communication more troublesome, especially when the physical and the emotional relations are inspected (Yoon & Tinkham, 2013). In many serious studies that are based on hilarity in advertisements, it has been observed that the nature of the products, the target population's factors, the communication aims, the nature of the message and the position of the message, all impact the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions of customers in the markets (Voss, 2009). When considering different perspectives as a whole, understanding humor on the basis of the existing literature just serves deficient answers for the researches based on the hilarity factor. Moreover, it is exceptionally hard to precisely characterize and classify what hilarity is, or what it is not.

A study by Tamburro, Gordon, D'Apolito and Howard (2004) has also showed that the individual understanding of hilarity is not always made-up of one factor; in fact, it is made up of many different factors. Whenever any of the advertisers use hilarity in advertising, it also shows that they are operating on four or five different factors, which are mentioned above in the list: that is to say, the capacity to identify lives irrationally, the recognition of one's self as hilarious, appreciation of hilarious people, and lastly, hilarious situations. In fact, the advertising hilarity refers to the capacity of the audiences to respond positively, especially when one or others of these advertisements are presented in a very good manner. In this regard, attention refers to the level to which the potential customers are always focused on the stimulus within their sensory field (Swani, Weinberger & Gulas, 2013).

Hilarity is naturally appealing, which draws in a large portion of the customers, since it is a vital component of our framework of cultural values. In most circumstances, it has been found that there exists a positive connection between hilarity and drawing in the customers' attention. This is suggested that in advertisements of different types, based on a wide range of products. Hilarity has been used in presentations of sales, in learning settings, in meetings of preparation, and in ceremonial dinner speeches. The commonly known capability of hilarity is to properly attract attention of customers so that it can safely be transitioned towards the product. Even though this might also hinder the advertisement efficiency, hilarity appears to be more capable in attracting the attention to the advertised products and services.

Stern (1996) brought up this particular aspect, and other multicultural changes that influence the quality of what is hilarious, in fact, it might just be in the impression of a person. Business understandings have developed various safeguards to guarantee that this sort of material does not divert one's understanding; experts recommend that for advertisements, insight ought to be utilized, rather than lead to the diversion in advertisements, which causes perplexity, and changes the message of a product or service.

Eisend (2011) stated that the theory of laughter given by Henri Bergson suggests that comedy has four different types. These are verbal, physical, romantic and satiric. Bergson's theory suggested the two varieties by recognizing the different humor types, one of which was first produced

in comedy drama, mostly in theatre, and now, more recently, the other one is incorporated in E-promotions. The first category includes both physical and verbal comedy, which mostly consumes the customary differences between the two types of humor.

Simons and Carey (2006) also suggested that the differences between the comics are fundamental for the electronic media and oral comics are used for radio channels. In the television sector, physical comedy is practiced more often. In fact, television has become the only medium of physical comedy. The second variety of humor uses the normal acute taxonomy in order to develop a field that is connected by romantic humor on one side, and satiric humor on the other side. This system comprises of the theories which help to differentiate between two types of viewer responses; that is laughter with the comic character, or laugh at the comic character – that is to say, "laugh with" versus "laugh at" comedy.

According to Schlosser (2005), humor cannot be displayed in physical terms unless an act is stressed upon or in other words exaggerated. Any procedure of events and act is considered to be comical when it provides us with an exaggerated impression of existence, and a separate impression of automated arrangement in a sole mixture. In this design, the physical comic develops when the act that is being performed shows the stubbornness of the character. The performative feature, that is the stiff performance of the actor, underlines the character's humor for viewers, and eventually shows the cheerfulness of the comic character.

With regards to vocal entertainment where speaking highlights the voiced stimulation, the essential segment is the use of language. Determination of the words, and the arrangement of sentences is structured around the particular dialect that is to be used. This puts stress on the gaps in the middle of the words, and shifts from medium to medium. In this case, it is the dialect itself that creates amusement in the particular situation that is portrayed in the advertisement. In this particular type, the sources of comedic possession (amusing verbiage) include gags, dryness and dual entendres. Frequently meant as, theater of mind, because of its electronic publicity, as well as its existence in the prose that is present in radio commercials (Robert, Chen & Yang, 2008).

Humor shifts from feelings of affection and friendliness to the satiric criticism of madness and hilarity, and this proves to be a counteractive strategy to encourage a positive connection with a target audience. The comedian can relate to a person in an instant perfection, and then this perfection becomes a cause of hilarity in that instance (Passyn & Sujana, 2006).

Nabi, Moyer-Guse' and Byrne (2007) explained that dreamy humor seeks out to convince the target audience, by stimulating the viewers' commitment towards the content by satisfying them with a good role play typeset. Similarly, the same happens when satiric humor attempts to convince the target audience by controlling the viewers' unresponsiveness.

McGraw and Warren (2010) showed that in order to conclude that there are distinctive types of humor which are utilized as a part of advertisements, the advertisements rely on the medium through which they communicated. They revealed that other than the medium, the advertisements additionally rely upon the producer who decides which sort of humor needs to be incorporated into the communication, according to the requirements of the brand. These authors gave another example in which they say, that when a channel utilizes distinctive sorts of humor, it is then ready to seize more attention from its viewers. Since lots of researches have been churned out over numerous years, yet, a specific type of humor has not been established, which can be accepted all around, on the grounds that distinctive groups of people have a diverse taste of humor that gets in through their societies. Then again, the present research has recognized that in ads, distinctive arrangements of amusement are effectively utilized. After reviewing the literature, it has been concluded that humor can be divided into classes that are hypothetical, tentatively based, technique oriented or practical practitioner leaning based (Hameed, Siddiqui & Husain, 2015; Ivanov, Eisend & Bayon, 2019).

The effects of all types of humor have been used together by combining the responses from three types of humor (i.e., Arousal Safety, Disparagement, and Incongruity Resolution). The resulting variable is the actual purchase intention, which is predicted through perceived humor (containing all types of humor). Moreover, in order to gain an even better understanding, a detailed analysis of several intervening variables has also

been done, and the following hypotheses have been proposed, which will be later revealed in the course of this study;

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

### *2.1.5 Humor and Purchase Intention*

Television commercials that bring a smile on one's face are considered to be the best type of commercials (Woltman, Josephine, Mukherjee & Hoyer, 2004). Substantial research has already been conducted on the same topic (Duncan & Nelson, 1985; Gelb & Zinkhan, 1986; Madden & Weinberger, 1982) and the results prove that humorous ads influence the audience comparatively more than other executions styles of advertising (Duncan, 1979; Speck, 1987).

The natural belief of marketers is that the humor in advertising tends to be influential (Madden & Weinberger, 1984). The methodological experiments delve instantly with the humorous appeal application in ads (Markiewicz, 1974), changing their focus towards their usefulness (Hameed, Siddiqui & Husain, 2016).

It has been observed in previous studies that discrepancies exist in the methodology, and deficiencies were found in the conceptual frame work which was adopted to study this particular topic (Duncan, 1979; Sternthal & Craig, 1973). Nowadays, the consumers have exposure to clutter in advertising. This clutter is creative, novel and bombarded on the consumer's mind (Dahl, Frankenberger & Manchanda, 2003), so as to take hold of their attention and keep the product, at the top of their minds. In this regard, the following hypothesis has been formulated to examine the positive relationship between perceived humor and purchase intention.

*Hypothesis 1: Perceived humor has a positive relationship with purchase intention.*

### *2.1.2 Moderating Role of Self-Monitoring*

Personalities that are high self-monitoring, have a variety of response designs in view of the various circumstances that they exist in (Hameed, Siddiqui & Husain, 2015). People embrace and adopt the conduct from their environment and respond in like manner. Along these lines, Lammers et al. (1983) conceptualized that humor advertising impacts

those purchasers more who have high self-monitoring, as compared to those individuals who are low in self-monitoring. High self-monitored personalities receive, and acknowledge humor as a social way of life. They also gain from positive scenarios and social circumstances. Moreover, research shows that high self-monitoring men respond positively to humorous advertisements more as compared to low self-monitoring men. On the other hand, this reaction pattern is opposite when it comes to female target audiences. Theory tells us that this variation is due to the way in which humorous advertisements are executed and presented. Lammers et al. (1983) theorized that high self-monitoring ladies may have been battling with the generalization that women are effortlessly influenced by men. Regardless, this may be one of the reasons at the back end of this complex nature of humor research.

*Hypothesis 2: Self-monitoring moderates the positive relationship between perceived humor and purchase intention, such that a person high in self-monitoring is more inclined towards purchase intention.*

### 2.1.3 Mediating Role of Attitude towards the Advertisement

The strength of humor advertising is highly dependent upon the comprehensibility of the ad (Cline & Kellaris, 1999; Woltman et al., 2004). The sample of most of the prior researches on humor in advertising consisted of students mainly, and it was natural that students' reaction towards ATA was stronger, and highly appreciable when it comes to humor in advertising. A generally acknowledged clarification for the impact of funniness on behaviors depends on the possibility of the idea of affective mechanisms, for example, bringing out a positive influence that is associated with the brand (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989).

Such influence and speculation can be clarified by classical conditioning. That is to say that, positive responses towards the fun boost the unconditioned response, that is universal, onto the conditioned stimulus for the ads of the brands (Passyn & Sujana, 2006). Researchers have this farsightedness on the role of disposition of ads, and have investigated a lot of reactions that pertain to TVCs, which may be classified as favorable or unfavorable responses (Mitchell & Olson, 1981). Various analyses have testified the measure of such reactions as the determinants of stimulus (Edell & Bruke, 1987; Holbrook & Batra, 1987).

*Hypothesis 3: Perceived humor (containing all types of humor) has a positive relationship with attitude towards the advertisement.*

*Hypothesis 4: Attitude towards the advertisement has a positive relationship with the purchase intention.*

*Hypothesis 5: Attitude towards the advertisement mediates the positive relationship between perceived humor (containing all types of humor) and purchase intention.*

#### *2.1.4 Mediating Role of Attitude towards the Brand*

The combination of various researches is accessible in the analysis of Attitude towards Advertising (ATA), Attitude towards Brands (ATB) and consumer purchase intentions. Here, the main focus of researchers is inclined towards the study of the effect of advertising attitude towards the actual act of purchasing, as the prognosticator of the consumer behavior. Meanwhile, the purchase intentions and attitude towards brands are connected with each other, so the moderating variable should apply to both of the independent variables in a similar fashion (Eisend, 2011).

In this regard, the argument is more skewed towards the viability of humor advertising. As far as its liking, in contrast with its effectiveness, in concerned, the impact of humor on customer attitude, influence on ATA and ATB may differ (Woltman et al., 2004). The outcomes are different between the variables of promotion, and the brand related review & acknowledgment effects. Exuberance in advertisements prompts a positive impact, which eventually effects the response pattern and purchase intent. Hilarity in advertising, likewise, improves the attitude towards advertisements and attitude towards brands. Both effects can be considered quite significant, like it has been indicated in the arrangements by Cohen (1977).

It is a proven fact that the attitude towards ads, and brand belief are the successors of ATB. This relationship is crucial to our comprehension of how humor functions in advertising. It has been observed and experimented by Gelb and Pickett (1983) that ATA and ATB both may get influenced by the humor in advertising. Thus, ATA can impact ATB

through the proposed affect-transfer process (MacKenzie & Lutz 1989; Stuart, Shimp & Engle, 1987).

In this way, the impact of comedic action in advertisements on ATB can be intervened by ATA. That is, the impact of humor on ATB may become immaterial if the impact of humor on ATA is expelled. This interceding part of ATA, as a variable, that mediates between advertising substance and ATB has been recorded in quite a few reviews (Batra & Ray, 1985; Shimp, 2000).

A review by Muehling, Lacznia, and Stoltman (1991) revealed that there was support for the logical valuation exchange, which is hypothesized by Lutz (1985). At the point, the role of relevant components is generally high, however, the association with the promotion message is low. Moreover, commercial discernment is the predominant constraint driving ATA, and in fact, ATA is the prevailing variable molding the ATB. This assertion strengthens our proposed connection between funniness, ATA, and ATB. Hence, on the basis of above the discussion, the following hypothesis is postulated.

*Hypothesis 6: Perceived humor has a positive relationship with attitude towards the brand.*

*Hypothesis 7: Attitude towards the advertisement has a positive relationship with attitude towards the brand.*

*Hypothesis 8: Attitude towards the brand has a positive relationship with the purchase intention.*

*Hypothesis 9: Attitude towards the advertisement mediates the attitude towards the brand, and collectively they mediate the positive relationship between perceived humor and the purchase intention.*

#### 2.1.5 Moderating Role of Message Arguments

Company may deviate from the central message of the advertisement in order to make advertisement interesting. It is evident that the subjects in a test concentrate really prepared, what was intended to be a fringe signal, as an issue-applicable contention (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981).

The appeal of a model's hair may really fill in as a demonstration of the nature of a cleanser, on the grounds that the hair specifically identifies with the nature of the item. Contentions are data contained in correspondence that is tangible to a man's subjective assurance of the genuine benefits of an endorsed position of a product (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

As the needs may be, with the end goal for cleverness to fill in as an issue-significant message contention, it ought to give data that is fundamental to the benefits of the state of mind protest. At the end of the day, the item or administration that amusement offers in a notice ought to have the nature of being funny. In such a case, amusement fills in as a declaration to the nature of the publicized item. Cases of such items incorporate entertainers, clever network shows, amusing motion pictures, comic books, toon characters, and other aspects that carry the nature of this specific type of intelligence.

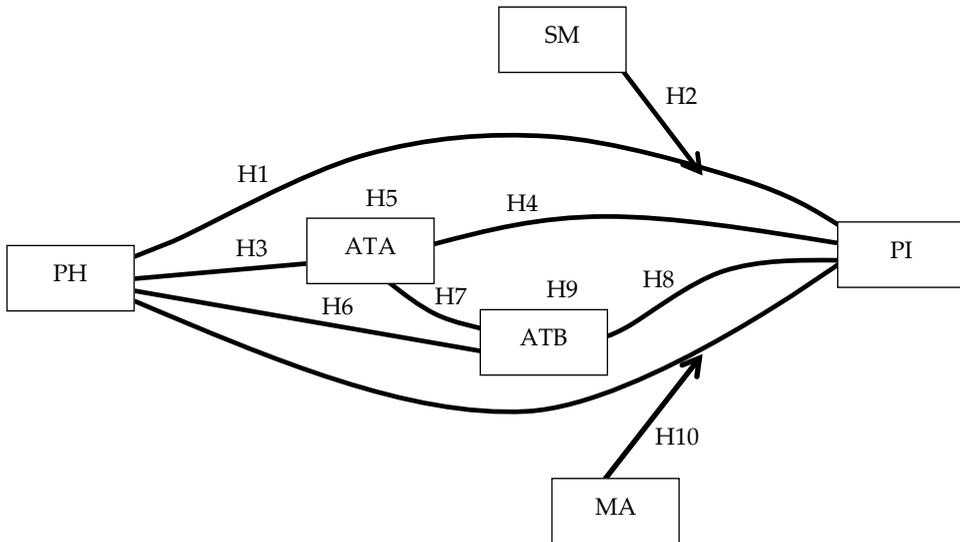
Subsequently, when issue-important amusement is handled midway, as a rule under high contribution, the nature of the contention, reflected by the level of diversion, is basic to the contribution of the change in demeanor. The more entertaining and applicable the humor, the more probable it is to bring about a changes in the attitude towards the message given by the hilarious idea. Weaker and less pertinent amusement, yet again, will ignite counterarguments discouraging to the advertisement, and negative to the arrangement of the inspirational attitude. This line of argument is, obviously, propositioned on the beneficiary's inspiration and capacity to prepare the message.

Products or services that have an attention grabbing aspect to themselves, which can be related to amusement, are lesser connected to it. This is in comparison to those products or services which have a much stronger connection with the factor of amusement, yet, these have little to do with the comical side. In this study, we have concentrated on the part of funniness, as a fringe gadget, that has discovered its most persistent use in publicizing. Due to this the following hypothesis has been developed.

*Hypothesis 10: Message arguments moderate the positive relationship between perceived humor and purchase intention, such that stronger message arguments persuade the target to make stronger purchase intention.*

## Hypothesized Model

**Figure 1: Hypothesized Model**



Predictor Perceived Humor (PH) has three sub constructs namely, arousal safety (A-S), disparagement (D-P) and incongruity resolution (I-R). Attitude towards advertising (ATA) and attitude towards brand (ATB) has been used as mediating variables. Whereas, self-monitoring (SM) and message arguments (MA) are acting as moderators. Purchase intention (PI) is playing the role of dependent variable as shown in Figure 1.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Method of Data Collection

A self-administered questionnaire had been utilized to gather data from the targeted representatives of the population. The questionnaire was given to respondents in a setting where the environment could be controlled, keeping in mind the end goal to get to know their observation about particular advertisements. Six distinct advertisements were precisely chosen, ensuring that there was a part of hilarity in them. At that point, it was ensured that the chosen advertisements had a part that contained humor by demonstrating it to three diverse members of the departments of a college in various settings. Selected advertisements were

promoting convenience and shopping products, and advertisements for specialty and unsought products have not been used. Convenience and shopping products advertisements have been used because of their very nature and characteristics (e.g., price, frequency of purchase and availability). The questionnaire was created keeping in mind various factors (dependent, independent, moderating and mediating). Effectively created and distributed scales were also utilized after a couple of minor changes in sizes of estimations were made. Moreover, already developed and published scales were also used, after a few minor modifications in scales of measurements were made. Once the selection of advertisements was complete, the questions for the involved variables were developed. The major step, however, was the selection of the sample. The respondents were students of a university (Iqra University) located in Karachi (biggest city of Pakistan).

### ***3.2 Sampling Technique and Sample size***

The sample selection was, in fact, the most difficult part of the study. This was due to the fact that the nature of the study required that only that population could be selected who would give their responses after reading and observing. The advertisements used for this research were based upon the Urdu language. Close ended questions were used and the language that the questionnaire was conducted in was English. The advertisements were shown to the respondents and later one questionnaire was distributed to gauge their responses. Students of the graduate and under graduate level were targeted during their classes. Many different sections were targeted so that there would be a mix of all categories and levels of students. The non-probability based sampling technique was used to select the required elements. The questionnaire was distributed amongst 1000 individuals, and in total 617 (with response rate 61.7%) valid responses were obtained and used further for the purpose of this study.

### ***3.3 Instrument of Data Collection***

Considering the deductive approach using quantitative methods, a self-administered close ended questionnaire based on scale of the Rensis Likert (also known as Likert scale), and the Semantic differential scaling was used to gather the required data. The moderating variable - self-monitoring - was based on the Likert scale, and the questions of all other

variables were based on semantic differential scaling. All of the questions were based on the 7-point scale in order to avoid confusion, where 1 being Strongly Disagree, and 7 stands for Strongly Agree.

In order to measure Perceived humor, the scale has been adopted from the study of Zhang (1996) with  $\alpha = .91$ . This scale was adopted because this has been used by many of the leading researchers (e.g., Cline & Kellaris, 1999; Flaherty, Weinberger, & Gulas, 2004). Some of the researchers use other types of scales but those scales were only related to one particular aspect of advertisements, like entertainment. Self-monitoring has been measured by using the scale modified by Lennox & Wolfe, (1984). Purchase intention can be measured in number of ways; some of the constructs were available in the context of this study; the most famous one was about the purchase intention in online webs. That, although, was not much related to purchase in physical aspect after watching the advertisement. An established scale created by Zhang (1996) has been used with  $\alpha = .89$ . Different scales have been used to measure the attitudes towards the brand, but the commonly used one, in this research, has been with  $\alpha = 0.84$  (Batra & Ray, 1985). Attitude towards the advertisement items were calculated to indicate the Attitude towards the advertisement score with  $\alpha = .87$ . Advertisements are designed after considering many aspects, and the most important aspect out of them is the arguments used in the particular advertisements. In some cases, after watching the advertisement people are unable to understand the product that the advertisement is promoting. Therefore, the selection of the words and the arguments is important. They are also measured in this research by using a scale of 6-items with  $\alpha = .85$ , measured on scale of 7 ranging from  $-3$  to  $+3$ , 0 being the central point (Neutral) (Andrews & Shimp, 1990).

### ***3.4 Data Analysis***

Various preliminary tests were applied to clean the data. Initially, the missing values were calculated and replaced by the mean. Secondly, aberrant values were calculated through the box plot. The third step was to check the normality of the data by applying the test of normality, using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk. Then the CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) was applied by using SEM in AMOS 18. Then, after having completed the initial clean-up of the data hypotheses, these findings were tested using the SPSS. Simple Linear Regression was used to

test the simple relationships; however, complex models were tested by using using the hierarchal regression (to test moderation), and bootstrapping (to test mediation).

**Table 1-A: Demographic Information**

|           | Particulars  | Respondents | Frequency % |
|-----------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Gender    | Male         | 333         | 54          |
|           | Female       | 284         | 46          |
| Age       | Less than 20 | 99          | 16          |
|           | 21 - 30      | 253         | 41          |
|           | 31 - 40      | 130         | 21          |
|           | 41 - 50      | 80          | 13          |
|           | Above 50     | 55          | 9           |
| Education | Intermediate | 99          | 16          |
|           | Bachelors    | 265         | 43          |
|           | Masters      | 228         | 37          |
|           | PhDs         | 25          | 4           |
| Total     |              | 617         | 100         |

### 3.5 Reliability Analysis

The reliability of all the constructs was measured through the Cronbach Alpha. The results of which are provided below.

**Table 1-B: Reliability Analysis**

| No. | Variable | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-----|----------|------------------|
| 1   | SM       | 0.679            |
| 2   | MA       | 0.840            |
| 3   | PH       | 0.815            |
| 4   | PI       | 0.778            |
| 5   | ATB      | 0.826            |
| 6   | ATA      | 0.833            |

All the constructs had reliability values above the minimum threshold value of 0.7, except Self-Monitoring which had a value of 0.679 (Table 1-B).

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Data Screening

Initial data screening was performed, which included the missing value analysis, detection of aberrant values, and assessing the normality of data. There was a maximum of 08 missing values, which is not a huge percentage keeping in view the sample size of 617 respondents. So the missing values were also computed. No aberrant values were detected and the data met the assumption of quasi normality.

### 4.2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

The correlation of all the variables is presented in the table below.

**Table 2: Correlation Coefficients**

|                    |                     | SM      | MA      | PH      | PI      | ATB     | ATA     |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| SM                 |                     | 1       |         |         |         |         |         |
| MA                 | Pearson Correlation | .152**  | 1       |         |         |         |         |
|                    | Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0.000   |         |         |         |         |         |
| PH                 | Pearson Correlation | .126**  | .318**  | 1       |         |         |         |
|                    | Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0.002   | 0.000   |         |         |         |         |
| PI                 | Pearson Correlation | 0.066   | .606**  | .386**  | 1       |         |         |
|                    | Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0.102   | 0.000   | 0.000   |         |         |         |
| ATB                | Pearson Correlation | .132**  | .611**  | .342**  | .608**  | 1       |         |
|                    | Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0.001   | 0.000   | 0.000   | 0.000   |         |         |
| ATA                | Pearson Correlation | .156**  | .732**  | .487**  | .573**  | .708**  | 1       |
|                    | Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0.000   | 0.000   | 0.000   | 0.000   | 0.000   |         |
| Std. Error of Mean |                     | 0.03012 | 0.04102 | 0.04191 | 0.04666 | 0.04622 | 0.04291 |
| Variance           |                     | 0.56    | 1.038   | 1.084   | 1.344   | 1.318   | 1.136   |

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The detailed review of the above table revealed that all the studied variables have significant correlation with each other except SM, which exhibited an insignificant relationship with purchase intention (Table 2). Table 3 shows that the minimum and maximum values lie within the given range (i.e., between 1 and 7). The mean and standard deviation values are also presented in order to get a further insight in to the data.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics**

|                     | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------|-----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| SM                  | 617 | 2.2     | 7       | 5.4102 | 0.74828        |
| MA                  | 617 | 1       | 7       | 5.0387 | 1.0188         |
| PH                  | 617 | 1       | 7       | 5.59   | 1.04115        |
| PI                  | 617 | 1       | 7       | 5.331  | 1.1591         |
| ATB                 | 617 | 1       | 7       | 5.3353 | 1.14811        |
| ATA                 | 617 | 1.14    | 7       | 5.1604 | 1.06593        |
| Valid N (list wise) | 617 |         |         |        |                |

#### 4.2.1 Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The coefficient is .386, which shows that there is a moderate relationship between perceived humor and purchase intention. The coefficient of determination (R square) is 0.149, which shows that 14.9% of model is being explained by the independent variable, and the remaining by unknown variables (Model I; Table 4). The sig value is .000, which is less than .05, which shows that the regression fits the data (i.e., predicts the purchase intention) (Model I; Table 5). The sig value is .000 which is less than .05, which shows that the null hypothesis has been rejected and the research hypothesis perceived humor has a positive impact on the purchase intention has been accepted (Model I; Table 6).

**Table 4: Model Summary**

| Model | Relation     | R                 | R-squared | Adjusted R-squared | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|--------------|-------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| I     | PH ---> PI   | .386 <sup>a</sup> | 0.149     | 0.147              | 1.07037                    |
| II    | PH ---> ATA  | .487 <sup>a</sup> | 0.237     | 0.236              | 0.93187                    |
| III   | PH ---> ATB  | .342 <sup>a</sup> | 0.117     | 0.116              | 1.07977                    |
| IV    | ATA ---> PI  | .573 <sup>a</sup> | 0.328     | 0.327              | 0.95093                    |
| V     | ATA ---> ATB | .708 <sup>a</sup> | 0.501     | 0.5                | 0.81189                    |
| VI    | ATB ---> PI  | .608 <sup>a</sup> | 0.369     | 0.368              | 0.92138                    |

Hypothesis 3: The coefficient is .487, which shows that there is a moderate relationship between perceived humor and attitude towards the Advertisement. The coefficient of determination (R square) is 0.237, which shows that 23.7% of the model is being explained by the independent variable and the remaining by unknown variables (Model II; Table 4). The sig value is .000, which is less than .05, which shows that the regression fits

the data (i.e., predicts the attitude towards the advertisement) (Model II; Table 5). The sig value is .000, which is less than .05, which shows that the null hypothesis has been rejected and the research hypothesis perceived humor leads to favorable attitude towards the advertisement has been accepted (Model II; Table 6).

**Table 5: Results of ANOVA**

| Model | Relation     |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F       | Sig.              |
|-------|--------------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| I     | PH ---> PI   | Regression | 123.008        | 1   | 123.008     | 107.366 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       |              | Residual   | 704.598        | 615 | 1.146       |         |                   |
|       |              | Total      | 827.605        | 616 |             |         |                   |
| II    | PH ---> ATA  | Regression | 165.845        | 1   | 165.845     | 190.98  | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       |              | Residual   | 534.06         | 615 | 0.868       |         |                   |
|       |              | Total      | 699.905        | 616 |             |         |                   |
| III   | PH ---> ATB  | Regression | 94.959         | 1   | 94.959      | 81.448  | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       |              | Residual   | 717.025        | 615 | 1.166       |         |                   |
|       |              | Total      | 811.985        | 616 |             |         |                   |
| IV    | ATA ---> PI  | Regression | 271.481        | 1   | 271.481     | 300.221 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       |              | Residual   | 556.125        | 615 | 0.904       |         |                   |
|       |              | Total      | 827.605        | 616 |             |         |                   |
| V     | ATA ---> ATB | Regression | 406.603        | 1   | 406.603     | 616.853 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       |              | Residual   | 405.382        | 615 | 0.659       |         |                   |
|       |              | Total      | 811.985        | 616 |             |         |                   |
| VI    | ATB ---> PI  | Regression | 305.501        | 1   | 305.501     | 359.858 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       |              | Residual   | 522.104        | 615 | 0.849       |         |                   |
|       |              | Total      | 827.605        | 616 |             |         |                   |

Hypothesis 6: The coefficient (R) is .342 which shows that there is a weak relationship between perceived humor and attitude towards the brand. The coefficient of determination (R square) is 0.117, which shows that 11.7% of model is being explained by the independent variable, and the remaining by unknown variables (Model III; Table 4). The sig value is .000, which is less than .05. This shows that the regression fits the data (i.e., predicts the attitude towards the brand) (Model III; Table 5). The sig value is .000, which is less than .05, which shows that the null hypothesis has been rejected and the research hypothesis perceived humor leads to a favorable attitude towards the brand has been accepted (Model III; Table 6).

**Table 6: Coefficients Values**

| Model | Relation     |            | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig.  |
|-------|--------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
|       |              |            | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |       |
| I     | PH ---> PI   | (Constant) | 2.932                       | 0.236      |                           | 12.448 | 0.000 |
|       |              | PH         | 0.429                       | 0.041      | 0.386                     | 10.362 | 0.000 |
| II    | PH ---> ATA  | (Constant) | 2.375                       | 0.205      |                           | 11.58  | 0.000 |
|       |              | PH         | 0.498                       | 0.036      | 0.487                     | 13.82  | 0.000 |
| III   | PH ---> ATB  | (Constant) | 3.227                       | 0.238      |                           | 13.584 | 0.000 |
|       |              | PH         | 0.377                       | 0.042      | 0.342                     | 9.025  | 0.000 |
| IV    | ATA ---> PI  | (Constant) | 2.117                       | 0.189      |                           | 11.178 | 0.000 |
|       |              | ATA        | 0.623                       | 0.036      | 0.573                     | 17.327 | 0.000 |
| V     | ATA ---> ATB | (Constant) | 1.402                       | 0.162      |                           | 8.671  | 0.000 |
|       |              | ATA        | 0.762                       | 0.031      | 0.708                     | 24.837 | 0.000 |
| VI    | ATB ---> PI  | (Constant) | 2.058                       | 0.176      |                           | 11.665 | 0.000 |
|       |              | ATB        | 0.613                       | 0.032      | 0.608                     | 18.97  | 0.000 |

Hypothesis 4: The coefficient (R) is .573 which shows that there is a strong relationship between attitude towards the advertisement, and the purchase intention. The coefficient of determination (R square) is 0.328, which shows that 32.8% of model is being explained by the independent variable, and the remaining by unknown variables (Model IV; Table 4). The sig value is .000, which is less than .05, which shows that the regression fits the data (i.e., predicts the purchase intention) (Model IV; Table 5). The sig value is .000, which is less than .05, shows that the null hypothesis has been rejected. Keeping these revelations in mind, the research hypothesis attitude towards the advertisement has a positive impact on the purchase intention, which has been accepted (Model IV; Table 6).

Hypothesis 5: The value of beta is 0.2735 which shows that with one unit change in attitude towards the advertisement, purchase intention will likely to increase by 27.35 percent. The confidence interval of bootstrapping has both the positive values; lower value being 0.2015 and the upper value 0.3545, which clearly shows that zero does not lie in the confidence interval, so we can say that it is a purely mediated model and the attitude towards the advertisement mediates the positive relationship between perceived humor and the purchase intention (Table 7).

**Table 7: Indirect Effect of Perceived Humor on Purchase Intention**

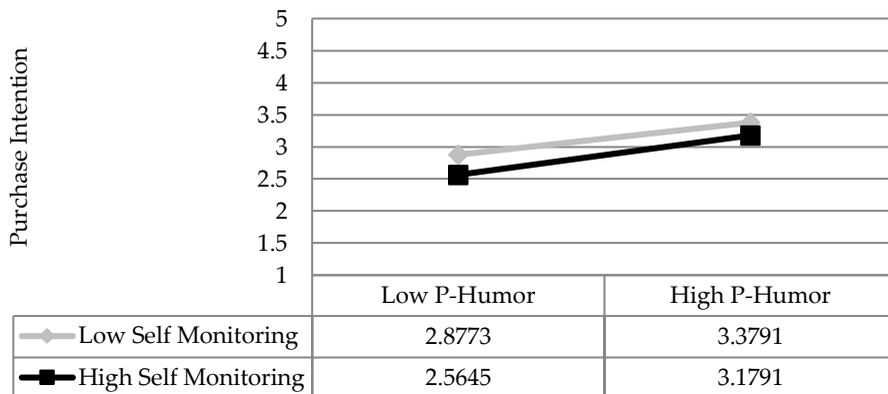
|     | Effect | Boot SE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
|-----|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| ATA | 0.2735 | 0.0389  | 0.2015   | 0.3545   |

Partially standardized indirect effect of X on Y

Hypothesis 2: Since the significant value of interaction effect is 0.5675, so self-monitoring does not act as a moderator between perceived humor and the purchase intention, instead it can be used as a focal predictor (Table 8). Self-Monitoring strengthens the positive relationship between perceived humor and purchase intention (Figure 2).

**Table 8: Moderation Effects**

|               | Coefficient | SE     | t       | p      | LLCI    | ULCI   |
|---------------|-------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| Constant      | 3.6101      | 1.4686 | 2.4582  | 0.0142 | 0.7260  | 6.4942 |
| SM            | -0.1282     | 0.2783 | -0.4608 | 0.6451 | -0.6747 | 0.4183 |
| PH            | 0.2791      | 0.2614 | 1.0679  | 0.2860 | -0.2342 | 0.7924 |
| Int_1         | 0.0282      | 0.0492 | 0.5720  | 0.5675 | -0.0685 | 0.1248 |
| Interactions: |             |        |         |        |         |        |
| Int_1 PH X MA |             |        |         |        |         |        |

**Figure 2: Moderation Effects**

Hypothesis 7: The coefficient (R) is .708, which shows that there is a strong relationship between attitude towards the advertisement, and the attitude towards the brand. The coefficient of determination (R square) is 0.501, which shows that 50.1% of the model is being explained by the independent variable, and the remaining by unknown variables (Model V;

Table 4). The sig value is .000, which is less than .05, which shows that the regression fits the data (i.e., predicts the attitude towards the brand) (Model V; Table 5). The sig value is .000, which is less than .05 which shows that the null hypothesis has been rejected, and the research hypothesis that signifies the favorable attitude towards the advertisement leads to a favorable attitude towards the brand, has in fact been accepted (Model V; Table 6).

Hypothesis 8: The coefficient is 0.608, which shows that there is a strong relationship between attitude towards the brand, and the purchase intention. The coefficient of determination (R square) is 0.369, which shows that 36.9% of the model is being explained by the independent variable, and the remaining by unknown variables (Model VI; Table 4). The sig value is .000, which is less than .05, which shows that the regression fits the data (i.e., predicts the purchase intention) (Model VI; Table 5). The sig value is .000, which is less than .05, which shows that the null hypothesis has been rejected, and the research hypothesis that signifies that the attitude towards the brand has a positive impact on purchase intention, has been accepted (Model VI; Table 6).

Hypothesis 9: The value of beta is 0.156, which shows that with one unit change in the attitude towards the brand, following the route of attitude towards the advertisement, the purchase intention will likely to increase by 15.6 percent. The confidence interval of bootstrapping has both the positive values, lower value being 0.1006, and the upper value 0.2249, which clearly shows that the zero doesn't lie in the confidence interval. As a result, we can say that it is a purely mediated model, and the attitude towards the advertisement mediates the attitude towards the brand. Collectively they develop positive relationship between perceived humor and purchase intention (Table 9).

**Table 9: Indirect Effect(s) of X on Y**

|                            | Effect  | Boot SE | BootLLCI | BootULCI  |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|----------|-----------|
| Total:                     | 0.272   | 0.0405  | 0.1952   | 0.3571    |
| Ind1 :                     | 0.1175  | 0.0382  | 0.0523   | 0.201     |
| Ind2 :                     | 0.156   | 0.0313  | 0.1006   | 0.2249    |
| Ind3 :                     | -0.0015 | 0.0168  | -0.0371  | 0.0294    |
| <b>Indirect Effect Key</b> |         |         |          |           |
| Ind1 : PH                  | ->      | ATA     | ->       | PI        |
| Ind2 : PH                  | ->      | ATA     | ->       | ATB -> PI |
| Ind3 : PH                  | ->      | ATB     | ->       | PI        |

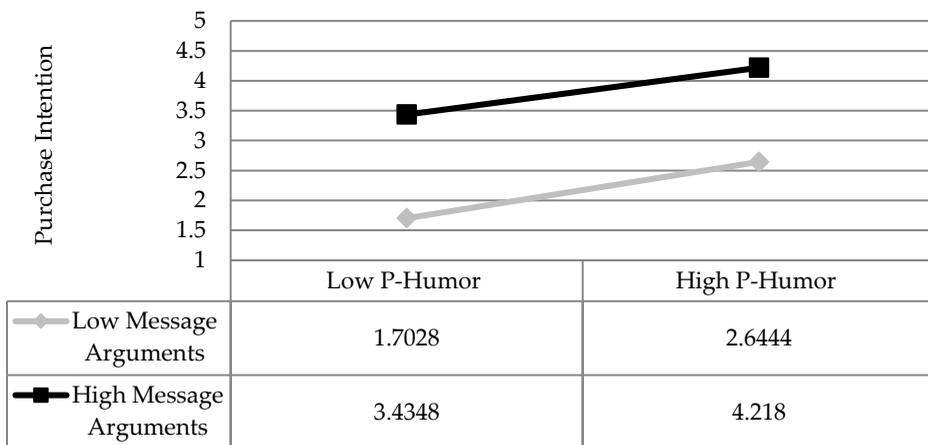
Hypothesis 10: The significant value is 0.1418, which is greater than 0.05. This shows that the message argument does not act as a moderator in between the relationship of perceived humor and the purchase intention (Table 10). The message arguments dampen the positive relationship between the perceived humor and the purchase intention (Figure 3).

**Table 10: Moderation Effects**

|          | Coefficient | SE    | t      | p      | LLCI   | ULCI  |
|----------|-------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Constant | -0.115      | 0.739 | -0.156 | 0.877  | -1.565 | 1.335 |
| MA       | 0.8264      | 0.151 | 5.4736 | 0.0000 | 0.5299 | 1.123 |
| PH       | 0.4312      | 0.136 | 3.1754 | 0.002  | 0.1645 | 0.698 |
| Int_1    | -0.04       | 0.027 | -1.471 | 0.142  | -0.093 | 0.013 |

Interactions:  
int\_1 PH X MA

**Figure 3: Moderation Effects**



## 5. Discussion

The independent variable (Perceived Humor) has been tested against the dependent variable (Purchase Intention). The examination of the assembled information demonstrated effectively that if there is Perceived Humor in the advertisement, then the targeted individuals are convinced towards the purchase of particular product. The purchase intention is a measure of the positive attitude of a person towards the product or service, and at last aims to lead towards impulsive purchasing. This implies that there is a direct relationship between humor and the purchase intention.

Self-monitoring has been utilized as a moderating variable, with an end goal that self-monitoring must be between humor and the purchase intention. For this purpose, self-monitoring, a psychographic variable of identity, has been used. At the point when self-monitoring is high in the individual, and the advertisement is humorous, then a person is more inclined towards the purchase of this specific item.

The attitude towards the advertisement has been used as the mediating variable. Now, in this way, the purchase intention will be more as the attitude towards the advertisement is positive favorable. These findings are in line with the findings of Zhang and Zinkhan (2006), as the attitude towards the advertisement will be favorable, then the person will be going ahead with the purchase, which is expressed as the purchase intention of the person.

The ninth hypothesis used the multi-mediation mediation model, where the attitude towards the brand, and the purchase intention has been mediated by the attitude towards the advertisement. When humor is in the advertisement, then the individual develops a positive attitude towards the advertisement. This which leads to a positive attitude towards the brand, as the attitude towards the advertisement, and the attitude towards the brand are profoundly related. The attitude towards the advertisement leads to the development of a person's attitude towards the brand. Favorable attitude towards the brand would have no use if it doesn't have a link with the purchase intention. Hence, the attitude towards the brand has been tested in relation to the purchase intention and it has been demonstrated successfully that it is a fully multi-mediated model. The findings are consistent with the existing studies (Weinberger, Swani & Gulas, 2017).

The last hypothesis pertains to Perceived Humor that is related with the purchase intention, and moderated by the message arguments. It states that the arguments used in the advertisements to persuade the purchaser also play a vital role in their purchase intention. The convincing arguments can influence the response of the person. Unlike what is revealed in the existing studies (e.g., Zhang, 1996), the outcomes demonstrate that there is no significant link between the message argument and the purchase intention.

## **6. Limitations and Future Research Directions**

Research is a never ending process; and it is evident that the research cycle keeps on evolving in any case. Hence, none of the research can be written down as the final word in a particular field. Obviously the findings of this research can be used further as basis for further researches in this particular area of study, and even the vision and scope can be broadened. For the purpose of this research specifically, the focus was primarily on self-monitoring as a moderating variable since the need for cognition has been extensively used in research, and in some cases self-monitoring has also been used. This research can be extended towards the use of the third psychographic variable i.e., political ideology. Political ideology has never been used before in any of the research related to humor. People with high a political ideology can be considered as individuals with a high sense of critical thinking, and taking out meanings, and be able to relate interrelated sequence of activities. It can be tested that the people who have high sense of political ideology will give a response towards purchase intention when exposed to a humorous advertisement.

This research was based on video advertisements, so research was strictly focused on the medium of television. Moreover, those Medias where people can watch video of the advertisement and also are able to hear the voice of it were mainly consulted for this purpose. This research can be extended by redirecting the center of focus to print advertisements, especially those given in newspapers. The advertisements which are displayed on sign boards and bill boards are also needed to be pondered upon. In order to make print advertisements more effective, they need to be researched on the basis of their different types, and also by incorporating the moderating and mediating variables. Findings will provide media agencies with an insight into the audiences' emotional consequences when exposed to humor in advertisements. These findings are particularly salient for national and multinational media agencies in Pakistan, as well as those in the other parts of the world.

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