

Assessing the Efficacy of Emotive and Wellness Claims

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Introduction:

The beauty industry has become a major player in the wellness revolution as self-care has become part of physical, mental, and emotional health routine. Consumers are developing a holistic approach to health and beauty, with a growing realisation that to look good on the outside you must feel good on the inside. As such, brands making advertising claims that are based on emotion and wellbeing are more and more appealing to the current cosmetic audience. But how can brands ensure that these subjective claims have substance and do not mislead consumers? Brand owners are faced with a complex set of advertising rules and regulations, according to the markets in which they advertise and retail and face the need to meet up with regulations such as:

1. Marketing communications must not imply that expressions of opinion are objective claims. [3]
2. Marketers must hold documentary evidence to prove claims that consumers are likely to regard as objective and that are capable of objective substantiation. The ASA may regard claims as misleading in the absence of adequate substantiation. [3]
3. Marketers must hold documentary evidence that a testimonial or endorsement used in a marketing communication is genuine, unless it is obviously fictitious, and hold contact details for the person who, or organisation that, gives it. [3]
4. Ensure that cosmetic product claims are not misleading, the benefits provided by the product must correspond to the reasonable expectations of consumers, as created by the claims. The assessment of claims' acceptability must be based on the perception of the average end-user of a cosmetic product, who is reasonably well-informed and reasonably observant and circumspect, taking into account social, cultural and linguistic factors on the market in question. [4]

Ayton Global Research, as consumer research specialists for claim substantiation, are at the forefront of perception claims and consumer insights. They have conducted a survey to investigate what consumers want to see in advertising for products which advertise emotive and wellness claims. They have reviewed how brands can communicate this in their marketing whilst being compliant with global advertising regulations. As well as presenting the findings from this survey, the methodology and results of some typical examples of studies which provide the necessary evidence for emotive and wellness claims are included in this presentation.

Materials & Methods:

A market research study was conducted in January 2022 in the form of an online survey in the UK. The study protocol was developed and executed in accordance with Good Clinical Practice (GCP) [1], and Market Research Society (MRS) code of conduct for ethical market research practices. [2] Volunteers for the study were recruited through search engine optimisation of Ayton's software, and direct referrals from existing Panelists. Panelists completed an online survey and the results were processed via Ayton System Software to produce a statistically significant report. The In-Home User Trials exemplified in this presentation had a similar recruitment method. But in addition, Panel criteria was developed to suit the research requirements of each SKU, and included criteria such as age range, skin type, ethnicity, language, country of residence, etc. Panel selection was sensitive to the clients' requirements, the nature of the product and the target markets. Volunteers were selected based on matching the profile criteria at the time of recruitment. The studies comprised questionnaires relevant to the advertising claims that required substantiation. All data was reported, through Ayton System Software, and again included full statistical analysis. All the volunteers included in the studies were taken into account as long as they submitted a questionnaire following study directions. Questions were answered online. A 95% confidence interval was applied to all the report statistics. Single and multiple answered questions are analysed through Chi-Squared Test. Free text answers were interpreted by the Study Manager to find trends. Analysis was carried out in accordance with the procedures of the Ayton Global Research Quality Management System, ISO 9001 quality standard, ISO 27001 Information Security Standard, ESOMAR, MRS and/or MRC principles and guidelines or any other applicable standards associated with the study carried out.

Results & Discussion:

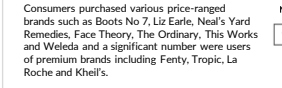


Our Client wanted to get a better understanding of the motivation behind using cosmetics. Not surprisingly, the key reason is the improvement of skin clarity and beauty (91% of respondents) which is closely followed by anti-ageing (84%).

However, almost two thirds of the respondents (63%) state that the improvement of mental health is a key motivation for using cosmetics. They clearly see the connection between mental health and your outer appearance. More than a quarter of all respondents (27%) even see this reflected in their physical health.

We have found that 77% of the participants purchased cosmetics that promote self-care or wellness. This clearly shows that this factor is dominating the market of the respondents

Ayton Global Research has undertaken a UK study in 2022 on wellness claims. It asked "Which brands do you use for wellness cosmetics?" Total respondents = 491



AGR will re-run this study in 2023 to evidence whether luxury brands are increasing or decreasing their market share, as a result of the cost of living crisis. Sign up at www.aytonresearch.com for further details.



The results show just how important it is for brands to highlight the efficacy of a product in promoting wellbeing. Within the wellness sector it is equally important to substantiate the claims, as it is for any physical improvement. Customer reviews are insufficient evidence for claims substantiation, owing to their subjective nature. Testimonials are also featuring very highly but in order to use the testimonial it must reflect the results of the overall report. AGR always ensures its volunteers have given permission to use the testimonial in advertising prior to signing up to the study. (Figure 7)

Results & Discussion:

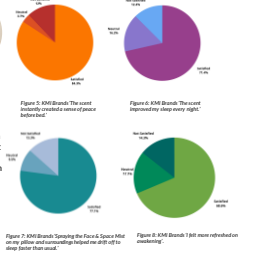
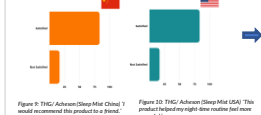


Temple Spa are a luxury brand that seek to establish emotive and wellness claims in line with their general marketing strategy. Their challenge was to substantiate the claims "The product soothes the skin", "The product brings comfort to stressed out skin" and "The product instantly relieves aches and pains". In order to enable the participants to assess the product the panel criteria included people who are prone to muscle aches and pains, e.g. regularly exercise. The usual exclusions of medical conditions, pregnancy, allergies, eczema, etc also applied, since this product was not aimed at these conditions. The study took place over a four week period to allow sufficient opportunity for participants to use the product in a variety of circumstances with an opportunity to rate the product on first application as well as at the end of the study period. The product achieved some excellent results which are transferable to other global markets with similar conditions.

KMI BRANDS

KMI Brands own a number of brands which are marketed across a number of global territories. Their challenge was to ensure that any emotive and wellness claims conform to their chosen markets. This study was conducted in the UK and had 101 responses. If the market for this product achieved a growth in organic sales in any particular country, the client may need to run a study in that region to conform with local laws, and may aggregate the data with the original cohort, to form more robust evidence. Although not legally necessary to duplicate studies for emotive and wellness claims, it is always advisable to conduct local studies, for reliable sales and marketing data. Colloquialisms relating to the findings would benefit from locally sourced panels and may be preferable to literal translations of claims. Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8 are examples of the emotive and wellness questions from this report, which substantiate advertising claims successfully.

THG / LABS

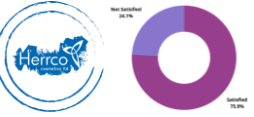


Testimonial was supported by objective evidence: "I will typically work night shifts and do not sleep well. This product helps to create a nice ambience and helped to create a nice environment to get as much sleep as I could with my sleeping issues. I think it's a good product." 我通常会上夜班, 睡得不好的。该产品有助于营造良好的氛围, 并帮助于营造良好的环境, 让我可能更多地解决睡眠问题。我认为这是一个好的产品"

Figure 11: THG/Acheson Sleep Mint 'What, if anything, did you like most about this product?'

The challenge faced by THG Labs/Acheson was to substantiate the claim "This product helped my night-time routine feel more peaceful" whilst legally being able to use certain testimonials collected during the study. They also wanted to ensure that expanding the market to China would have a good chance of success.

Ayton Global Research undertook to conduct an in-home UT in USA to establish legally compliant efficacy claims, which could be used globally, and also conduct a market research study regarding the consumer acceptability of the product in a new market by asking the question "I would recommend this product to a friend" with the option to score 1-4 on a 4-point scale with the answer groups 1 Disagree completely, 2 disagree, 3 agree and 4 agree completely. The Chi-Squared test was applied and a mean average of 2.93 was scored with a standard deviation of 0.84, providing valuable marketing data. Aside of the quantitative data other aspects of the report also allowed the client to use raw testimonial in native Chinese. The report represented the overall flavour of the report.



The challenge faced by HerraCos was how to establish evidence about a self-perceived benefit. In this case "energised". An overwhelming majority of respondents agreed with the statement "The fragrance makes me feel more energized" and the results were analysed using Chi-Square test. The mean average was 4.19 with a standard deviation of 1.29 on a scale of 1-5, where 5 was positive. This was more than sufficient to substantiate the claim. This claim is transferable to other global territories where panel criteria could be argued to be similar e.g. a similar backdrop of social, cultural and linguistic factors, as deemed necessary under the Commission Regulation (EU) No. 655/2013. [4]

Conclusions:

Ayton Global research provides the necessary evidence to be able to legally substantiate emotive and wellness claims using empirical data from in-home consumer studies, which is processed via Ayton System Software, to include appropriate statistical analysis to ensure that if a study was to be repeated it would produce the same result to a 95% level of confidence. Furthermore, by selecting appropriate panels from various parts of the globe and matching them to the likely consumer it is possible to use the reports to predict the likely acceptability of a product in various markets. For skincare and haircare products it is essential to construct panels which contain biological inclusion criteria, such as skin and hair type. But for emotive and wellness claims the efficacy can be established with other panel requirements such as lifestyle and shopping preferences, as well as exclusion criteria such as recent illness or pregnancy. When using testimonials it is important that they are supported by statistical evidence which shows that they represent the overall findings of the study. At all times it is essential that the evidence presented emanates from an independent research establishment which is neither partly or wholly owned by the client whose product is under investigation, in order to comply with global advertising regulations.

We conclude that Ayton System Software incorporates all necessary processes to ensure that claims emanating from its use comply with all global advertising regulations and specifically with that of COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 655/2013 of 10 July 2013. 3.3. Evidence Support which states "Where studies are being used as evidence, they shall be relevant to the product and to the benefits claimed, shall follow well-designed, well-validated methodologies (valid, reliable and reproducible) and shall respect ethical considerations."

When seeking such a supplier of research, it is important to ensure that they are affiliated with the appropriate authorities, such as are necessary for the geographical territories in which the product is to be advertised or sold and that they adhere to laws and regulatory codes of practice for conducting such studies. These may include, but are not limited to advertising standards authorities, data protection laws and market research standards. It is also highly advisable to ensure that the research company carried product liability insurance for such studies.

Acknowledgements:

Thomas Marquardt, Managing Partner, AGR Deutschland GmbH & Co. KG
International Study Managers: Kirsty Guymer, Nathan Hadland, Emma Smith & Veronica Foley

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