

Chapter V

Summary of Major Findings and Conclusion

The present chapter discusses the major findings, conclusion, and suggestions.

5.1 Summary of Major Findings

With bombardment of subliminal ads all around and considering cultural factors that prevail within the society, this research was conducted with the help of case study on subliminal ads as video display of such ads was not found suitable. But the method of case study made it more interesting as people in class room setting participated freely in case discussion which was helpful in letting respondents know what the study was all about and the major conclusions of the present study are presented here.

The main objective of the study was to explore the impact of subliminal ads on consumer behaviour. The results of the study have reported mixed findings with some people showing positive differences in some of the components of consumer behaviour. When subjects under different age group were exposed to subliminal ads, they reported significant differences in cognition and affection. When comparison was drawn between cognition and affection (Fig.2) results revealed that most of the people show rational behaviour even after being exposed to subliminal ads. This illustrates that subliminal ads do not impose any dangerous impact as a result of age difference because most of the people claim that people of lower age groups are more susceptible to such ads.

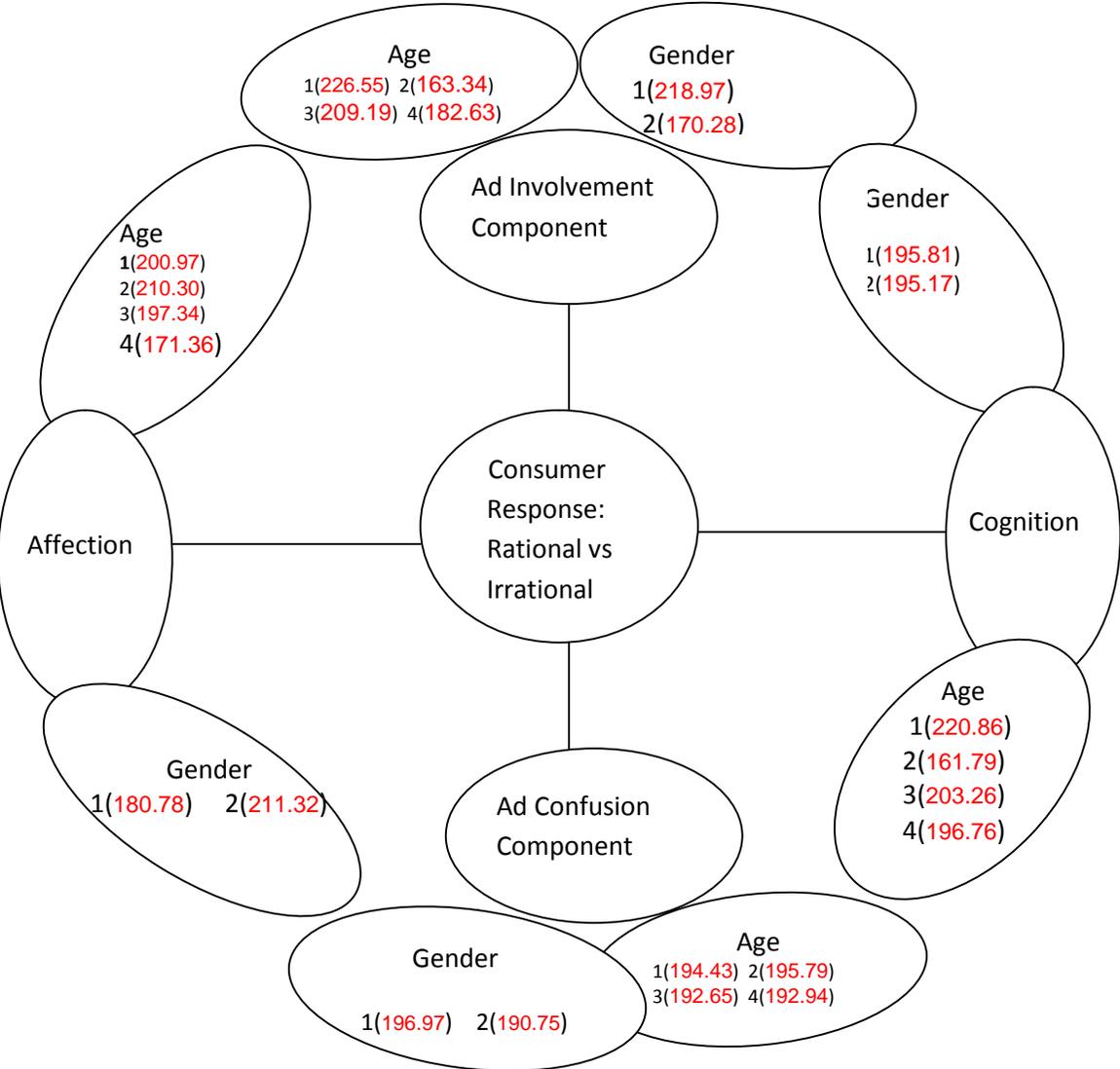
Gender differences are effective in case of feelings but not in case of cognition i.e to say male and female subjects exposed to subliminal ads report differences in affection but no such difference is reported in cognition. After the comparison between affection and cognition across gender, the results have revealed that females exposed to subliminal ads are most likely to show irrational behaviour as their cognition is on lower side. The involvement component also shows significant differences in possible emotional involvement as males report higher involvement than females thus indicating higher impact on males. This may be the reason that why most of the youth find themselves involved in anti social behaviour. Subjects from different areas are showing significant differences in purchase intentions. This shows that emotional stability and control of emotional desires do vary from region to region so does purchase intentions with people from south showing higher impact as their purchase intentions are on higher side than other two regions. But with some other components, consumers don't show any significant difference, as subjects under different age group exposed to subliminal ads report same feelings. Male and female subjects exposed to such subliminal ads do not show any significant difference in cognition , male and female subjects also report insignificance regarding ad confusion variable. These differences could possibly be because of the personality factor, perception, experience, income and many other exogenous factors. The exogenous factors could

lead to differences because of many reasons, like difference in evaluating ads does occur in a young and old age person as both can be focussing on two different things, young man could be found looking for products and female characters but at the same time an old man could be found describing and explaining the message contained in an advertisement. Apart from this, compulsive buying varies from males to females as females have reported higher compulsive buying than males. So, possibly females exposed to subliminal ads will show higher irrationality than that of male subjects. The overall findings revealed mixed consumer behaviour after subjects were exposed to subliminal ads and have been concluded below.

All the hypothesis except 8 and 7 supported main hypothesis that consumers exposed to subliminal ads in TV advertisements do tend to create differences in their behaviour. This indicates that these advertisements do affect consumer behaviour in different ways such as males and females showing differences in their feelings and cognition components, compulsive buying as well. Residents from different areas have also reported significant differences in purchase intentions, customers of different age group have reported differences in ad involvement, ad understanding and so does the consumers across different gender groups. The summary of findings is further concluded in Fig.2 where the comparison has been drawn between various

psychological components of a consumer and demographics after respondents were exposed to external stimuli.

Fig. 2: Consumer Response: Rational vs Irrational



5.2 Consumer Response: Rational vs Irrational

As stated earlier, the degree of cognition and affection determines the type of buying and the type of buying can irrational or rational. Figure 2

shows consumers with different demographics and their response on cognition and affection after being exposed to subliminal ads. This also includes response on two other components including ad confusion and ad involvement and their comparison with two demographic variables i.e. age and gender. The degree of confusion and involvement also determines type of behaviour and more the involvement and confusion higher would be irrational behaviour. The component wise commentary of figure is discussed below.

5.2.1 Affection and Cognition:

Mean value of cognition across males and females is significantly different with males reporting higher cognition than that of females and also females cognition is lesser than their affection. As affection is on higher side this indicates female consumers will probably show higher irrationality than that of males and same is the story with consumers under different age group but with one exception as consumers under age group 2[21-23] report higher value of cognition than that of affection.

5.2.2 Ad Confusion Component:

From fig.2, though little difference but males are showing higher confusion than that of females which as per Valance Packard(2007) means that males will be affected by subliminal ads to greater extent and

will show higher irrational behaviour than that of females. Under the same variable, subjects of different age group report almost same figures related to Ad confusion with slight variation but as per hypothesis verification this difference is insignificant. This means age difference does not affect ad evaluation and hence all subjects under different age group will report same behaviour.

5.2.3 Ad Involvement Component:

Ad involvement is the factor that advertising agencies always trigger to involve consumers into irrational behaviour. It is the degree to which consumers feel doing what is shown in ads and its value tends to be on higher side when it is the case of half sexual ads. As per Davie lakhani (2008), people don't need to build strong defence mechanism but a very simple strategy that is corrupt the mind of youth by involving them in vulgar behaviour and for this subliminal ads are highly effective. From fig.2, it's clear that males are showing higher involvement than females which means they will show higher irrational behaviour and vulgarity than females and this difference is significant as well. And same is the case with age difference as subjects under different age group report different mean values.

5.3 Conclusion

The information provided by the present study can be used by the marketing practitioners or marketing strategists as well as by the consumer welfare advocates and public policy makers. It is important to note here, that that the findings obtained in this study could be used to gain market share and have competitive advantage over others because the differences in cognition created by ads means difference in self control and consumers with less control will probably purchase more than those having more control on emotions or affection component .This is what advertising agencies have been doing over decades and are highly successful in achieving their goals but it is only what marketing practioners or marketing strategist would like and definitely use it and have been found using it. For consumer welfare advocates it is matter of greater concern because at the end of the day it is consumer and society that is affected. Most of the people would argue that vulgar behavior among youth is because of TV and now it includes internet as well .But it is not Television or internet itself, rather it is about advertisements that are shown on TV and Internet. And as reported in this study, people show significant differences in cognition and affection after being exposed to subliminal ads, so will be their behavior which is what needs to be given due consideration.

Also male and female respondents have reported significant difference in ad involvement component with male (218.97) on higher side than females (170.28). That's why most of the ads include female characters as this has significant effect in arousing sexual desires among male respondents mostly among youth. This has greater and serious implications and benefits as well both from consumers and companies point of view respectively. With male showing higher involvement means they will be more prompted towards irrational behaviour than female respondents, which is the concern for society but on the other hand it has become a technique for companies to involve consumers in compulsive buying. In case of age, youth under (18-20) age group have shown highest involvement but with exception under age group (21-23) which is on lower side than next two age groups. The respondents with higher mean values will show higher irrational buying and it has implications on other demographics as well because if one need such as sexual desire does not get fulfilled then the consumer exposed to subliminal ads always look for alternative options in order to satisfy himself/herself. That is why young college girls and boys are seen using drugs in colleges because they have been affected by exposure to subliminal ads, wherein they find themselves highly involved or in other words they want to perform same what is shown in ads but not having scope to do the same they find themselves involved in number of anti

social activities such as masturbation ,drugs and undesirable sexual relationships. One example of such subliminal advertisement as already discussed in previous sections is, “TRY OUR HARD PACK”, where a young woman is shown aggressively embracing towards a young man. It was also mentioned there that apart from the couple embracing towards each other, there in the left side of the picture is cigarette packet of Benson and Hedges as well. The advertisement message goes like this , “if you don’t get satisfied try our hard pack”,that is if people don’t get satisfied when they don’t have any sexual intercourse then they can leverage this desire by use of hard pack which is cigarettes in this case and that is why most of youth get involved in drugs because their desire for sexual intercourse activated by subliminal ads does not get fulfilled which ultimately leaves them in no mans land and hence they get involved into irrational buying of drugs and they also find themselves involved in other social evils.

Subliminal ads be it through subconscious mechanism or indirect advertising as reported in this study and also in many other studies do effect consumer behaviour. The authors like Dave Lakhani(2008) and Vallance Pakard (2007), in their books go deeper while saying that subliminal ads are used as a technique not only to increase sales but are also used to divert youth and involve them in such type of behaviour which is only hazardous to the them. Advertisements are good source of

information for consumers that too at cheap rates and it is because of these advertisements that one has to pay only a little amount on newspapers ,not only this business organizations use advertisements for generating sales which is their legitimate goal and can do it as per Standards of Advertising Councils but restrictions have been imposed by such bodies against number of messages that used to be part of advertisements and no moral society would bear representation of products, messages, actions ,celebrities in such a manner as is shown in the case study of this research proposal (**Appendix A**). Advertisements have to be there but regulations such as described in the ASCI (Advertising Standard Council of India) needed to be followed not only for the legal purposes but for societal concerns as well . Every one is talking about sustainable development but the important aspect of such development is what the next generations are going to have and so does the consumer, but the subliminal exposure is only going to ruin the consumer which needs to be given a deeper thought.

The market in today's world is all hyper competitive and in this high competition, companies are very much focused to use the strategies that can be very helpful in capturing market share but the limit of such strategies cannot be declared and not even anticipated. When it is business then it is all about making money and to achieve this objective they can use any strategy and subliminal advertising being one of those strategies. Different media organizations are bombarded with subliminal

ads with print and TV being on top rankings. Very early in the morning, when people receive an information source called newspaper, the very first page of Greater Kashmir (the Jammu and Kashmir newspaper) contains subliminal ads with sexy women promoting hair removal cream (VI-JOHN). Now a days it also contains metaphor type of ads, the example being new advertisement for Honda active in which one young boy who is driving Honda active is carrying behind his girl friend and few young boys on other side of the road are stunned after watching all this, that is subliminal persuasion through metaphor. Different newspapers like Times of India, The Hindu are mostly flooded with these kind of subliminal ads. So this is the story of information source called newspaper which nowadays is also used to induce people through the means of subliminal persuasion.

Besides news paper , the dangerous and highly influential source used for subliminal subjugation is none other than internet. Yahoo, Youtube , Facebook are all used for this purpose. How many times people see ads with pornographic pictures, half sexual actions and images on facebook? Even user may try to block such content but next day he/she again encounters same ads posted on his/her facebook homepage. When a user logs on to www.yahoo.com, “the life line of internet users”, the result is the bombardment of subliminal ads and even internet has over shadowed the older source of subliminal advertisements i.e TV. The internet and subliminal ads provide large scope for research because

advertising agencies feel free to use any kind of advertisement on the internet which is known to everybody and everyone is shouting today that internet has totally corrupted youth and there are no other reasons but certainly the subliminal messages, actions and others as well.

TV has always been the important source of subliminal ads for all the categories be it pornography, metaphors and Celebrity endorsement.

There is greater scope to further develop the technique of subliminal persuasion through this medium. Some of the subliminal ads that run on cable television like that of Amul Macho, Axe etc strike an individual's affective dimension to greater extent and induce the viewer towards undesirable sexual relations. Product placement and idea implementation through movies is important source for advertising agency. The basic question that should be answered by advertising agency is what is it that forces these agencies to use such images, messages and role models in ads? Why to use half sexual actions, pornographic images and celebrities when the advertisement of the product could have been simple as well? Why is the rate of pornography and half sexual actions in ads increasing day by day? And answer is

simple corrupt youth ,corrupt the affective dimensions of an individual and he/she will be part of aggressive and unplanned buying behaviour which is what experts wanted consumer to get engaged in after world war II . Not only this, such techniques are used to corrupt youth and divert them from their religion as well (Davie Lakhani, 2008).As Davie Lakhani has written in his book that people were thinking to create a technique that will help win wars without using any weapons and that technique is none other but the subliminal persuasion.

5.4 Suggestions

1. The degree of nudity in TV advertisements needs to be limited to the extent as much as possible. Nudity largely affects the degree of affection and influences the anti social behaviour among youth.
2. The guidelines formulated by ASCI (Advertising Standard Council of India) needed to be followed not only for the legal purposes but for societal concerns as well. The regulations of the council should become operationalized and all advertising agencies should be forced to adhere to the formulated guidelines.
3. The all important ASCI codes including fairness in advertising, advertising with conscience, honesty and responsibility in

advertising and more importantly the decency in advertising should form the base line for advertisers.

4. There should not be indiscriminate use of advertising in situations or of the promotion of products which are regarded as hazardous or harmful to society or to individuals, particularly minors, to a degree or of a type which is unacceptable to society at large.
5. No advertising agency should be permitted to advertise products, messages in such a way that tends to incite people to crime or to promote disorder and violence or intolerance.
6. Advertisement should contain nothing indecent, vulgar, especially in depiction of women, or nothing repulsive which is likely, in the light of generally prevailing standards of decency and propriety, to cause grave or widespread offence”.
7. The Metaphor strategy in advertisements should be restricted as it puts youth in a vicious state wherein they find themselves involved in irrational and anti-social behaviour.
8. Parents ought to be highly vigilant about different activities that their children carry throughout the day. They should enquire spending and particularly type of purchase pattern within their children.
9. The religious scholars from different communities need to rope in and counsel the youth about the reality of life and help understand

youth, “that life is just not about watching nude pictures or leveraging through masturbation and drugs”.

10. The use of internet should be limited as well and it again needs vigilance of parents and other elder family members at home. This is because internet over the years has brought unrecognized changes in the behaviour of youth.
11. Parents must make sure what their wards are watching on television and their rate of watching TV should be limited.
12. The educated youth spends major portion of his/her life in the educational institutes. So universities, colleges should come up with different programmes highlighting the consequences of subliminal advertising. These educational institutes can also start programs to imbibe values among youth where in they can find ways to control their affection and generate higher cognition. “Spiritual classes can be a better option”.
13. The advertising agencies have social and moral obligation towards youth who they want to corrupt through subliminal exposure. Therefore, they must recognize the need to safe guard the youth who are considered to be future heroes of the nation.
14. The advertising agencies need to reinstate the strategies with reference to subliminal ads. They ought to focus on adding the value to the consumer likings and not to distort youth through such exposure.