Chapter 3 : Research Design

3.1 Methodology

This study looked at contemporary Indian advertising in terms of the cultural dimensions, by undertaking a content study of representative samples of large advertisers. Expert opinion were also taken to study the views of professionals. Finally, a consumer perceptual and opinion study will be undertaken to gauge the cultural dimensions of advertising.

The purpose of this study is to help advertisers realize the dimensions of culture that consumers see in advertising and also assess how positive or negative are the cultural stimuli in the advertising. The findings of the study will help advertisers develop campaigns that are not only more sensitive to the Indian consumers’ cultural values, but also be more effective in terms of message and visual delivery.

The research was conducted in Delhi/NCR cover the following:

Literature Review: Study of books and journals dealing with consumer involvement in products, culture in advertising, how advertising works, the cultural aspects of brands and the status of contemporary Indian advertising. Selection of representative advertising campaigns in Press & TV of large advertisers in products belonging to categories of high involved/rational, high involved/emotional, low involvement/rational and low involvement/emotional.

Content Study: Pollay’s 42 advertising appeals was studied in 200 advertisements (50 for each type of product classification) and these were matched to the cultural dimensions of Hofstede. Detailed interview outline for exploratory study from expert opinion was framed.

Expert Opinion: Exploratory study on expert views for each Dimension of Cultural Values reflected in Contemporary Indian Advertising was conducted. Finalization of sample size and questionnaire for the survey was determined.

Consumer Survey: Field work and testing of research hypothesis, to arrive at the conclusions of the research. An exploratory study was also conducted to validate the findings in terms of its
contemporary value. This was followed by Report Writing Analysis and Recommendations from findings emerging from the thesis.

The findings from all the 3 phases of research was conducted over a period of time. These were:


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Each phase of the research has been presented in international conferences and two papers have been published in reputed refereed journals. The papers are:


A third paper titled, A Study on the Dimensions of Cultural Values in Contemporary Indian Advertising. A Consumer Perspective has also been presented in an international conference.

3.2 Analysis of Data

The thesis covered three phases of research. Each phase has used different data analysis techniques.

Content Study

The first phase of the study was the Content Study. 6 pairs of coders were trained to assess the appeal assigned to each element of the advertisement and then asked to give an importance of 1-5 for each appeal, assessing the impact of the appeal in the advertisement. Two experts together gave weightage to each of the elements. The score was multiplied by the weight age and the
score for the appeal was calculated. Data was fed into SPSS and coded accordingly. The tests used were as follows:

1. A Binomial Test of significance was conducted to test whether the two groups with scores equal to or more than 3 and those less than 3 differ was conducted for the results of the advertising of the four groups: high involvement rational, high involvement emotional, low involvement rational and low involvement emotional product advertising.

2. An independent samples T test was conducted to check if the appeals were significantly different for each pair of product categories: high involvement rational and emotional product advertising, and low involvement rational and emotional product advertising.

3. A coder Reliability test was also conducted. In points of differentiation, coders met to review and come to an agreement regarding their differences. Reliability was measured using Cronbach Alpha measure of reliability and was found to be satisfactory (>0.60).

Practitioners Study

Indepth interviews were conducted with the help of a structured questionnaire with many open-ended questions. In-depth elite interviews were conducted with very senior practitioners – Vice President and above. The interview protocol was developed in consultation with a total of five professors belonging to marketing, behavioral sciences and communication fields. It was pre-tested with three advertising agency executives. The interview style was highly personal and introspective. The interviews were recorded. The interview recordings were studied in detail and coded according to different themes. This was done a number of times so that the data selected was refined.

Consumer Survey

A questionnaire was administered. The data was collected from 150 respondents. Respondents were first asked to fill a questionnaire on their perceptions of advertising in general. Respondents were then shown both print and television advertising for products of high involvement rational and emotional and low involvement rational and emotional decision making. After exposure to each stimulus, the questionnaires were collected so that no bias
happens due to past filling in of the questionnaires. The data was tabulated and fed into SPSS. The hypothesis of the study was tested using the following statistical tools:

- Statement number 4, 8, 13 and 16 in all 5 categories i.e. General, High Involvement Rational Products (HIR), High Involvement Emotional Products (HIE), Low Involvement Rational Products (LIR) and Low Involvement Emotional Products (LIE) were reversed. This was done to make sure that all items in the composite variables are coded in the same direction.
- One sample T-test was performed for testing the mean value of the distribution. The test value was taken as 3.
- Factor Analysis was performed taking the suppress value as 0.4. Rotated Component Matrix shows the different dimensions of culture based on the responses.
- Transform function was used to combine Rational and Emotional aspects and get two variables- High Involvement (HI) and Low Involvement (LI).
- Paired T-test was performed on High Involvement (HI) and Low Involvement (LI) to understand the variation of responses depending on the level of involvement of the product.

3.3 Field Experience

The main observation of the research experience was that everybody considers themselves as an expert in advertising. That is because advertising is one of the facets of everybody’s life. The researcher’s 25 years market experience and 10 years educational experience in advertising was of great value in giving an orientation to the coders of the content study and the respondents of the consumer survey. Conducting the research in the venue of a business school, FORE School of Management, New Delhi, was convenient in terms of class-room and infrastructure availability and the aptitude of the coders and respondents.

The practitioners study needed a personal touch to the interview because of the nature of the subject and the seniority of the practitioners. The need to keep the focus on advertising rather than life in general from a cultural perspective was a challenge, and practitioners needed to be guided to focus on the topic. Because of the researcher’s extensive corporate experience, this was possible.