CHAPTER VII

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The researcher has identified the following limitations for this research: The current study has a number of limitations. One limitation is the sample. The research was conducted in and around Coimbatore (South India) and therefore results may vary with regard to other countries. College students are an important group in terms of tobacco related issues and limiting the sample to college students created a more homogeneous sample, however, the use of this sample also limited the generalizability of the study results. Another limitation pertaining to the sample is the limited geographic area in which the research was conducted.

The survey utilized simple random sample of educated under graduate students in and around Coimbatore and they results may contain bias, therefore, caution should be used when applying these results to different population and samples. Although the effectiveness of the pictorial and text warnings has been assessed in depth, the direct impact of the effectiveness has not been studied relatively with other variables. Since the research has not extended to analyzing the effectiveness of pictorial and text warnings on other population groups such as adolescents and the people who are above 25 years, the utility of the research and its usefulness in improving the effectiveness would be under scanner.
The researcher had taken pictorial and text warnings which are printed in the year 2013. The researcher had taken fear, threat, tobacco kills, smoking kills and role of management the other independent variables such as humour, perceived manipulation etc could not be identified by the researcher. The study was mainly concentrated on undergraduate students. Therefore there might be a one sided approach on the actual results of the effectiveness of the pictorial and text warnings.

The majority of the interview respondents were from South India. There were difficulties due to communication barriers, not with respect to languages or vernacular, but, both in respondent’s understanding of the research and the researcher understanding of respondent’s views. The respondents were skill-oriented and did not fully comprehend the concept of effectiveness of pictorial and text warnings and the moderating effect of role of management and reference groups.

Future research should include more population groups. While college students are an important population, other groups are also important. Most of the tobacco users begin as adolescents so the ability of these warning labels to prevent them from starting should be studied. Aged people who are using tobacco products may want to quit so the ability of these warning labels to encourage them to quit should be studied. Tobacco users in rural areas may want to quit so the ability of these warning labels to motivate them to quit should also be studied.
Several future studies could be performed based on the results of this study: Tobacco problem in India is more complex than any other country in the world with a large consequential burden of tobacco related disease and death. According to WHO estimates, about 194 million men and 54 million women use tobacco in smoked or smokeless form in India. In India there more than 5500 young people initiating use of tobacco everyday (Reddy et al. 2008). Therefore, the research would be more relevant to analyse and improve effectiveness of pictorial and text warnings in India.

Research has indicated that about 63.19% have not recalled pictorial warning “mouth affected with cancer” on tobacco products (Gutkha & Khaini) and 56.6% not recalled “man showing his lungs affected with cancer” on cigarette packages. 53.9% have recalled text warning “tobacco kills” on tobacco products and 72% recalled “smoking kills” on cigarette packages. The future study should focus on pre and post testing of these warnings.

Fear and threat was used in the current study. Researchers need to widen beyond the socially desirable or socially undesirable messages and test emotions such as humour and anger.

It would be interesting to compare Indian pictorial warnings and text warnings against Singapore or Malaysian pictorial warnings. For example, labels such as those involving gory pictures. Indian pictorial warnings are mouth affected with cancer on
smokeless tobacco with text warning tobacco kills and lung affected with cancer on smoked tobacco with text warning smoking kills.

It would also be interesting to incorporate multiple research methods into one study. A qualitative study could describe the perceptions that were measured and a qualitative study could specifically ask why participants perceived influence as they did. The researcher would be able to tell if his or her reasons for what happened matched participants reasons for their perceptions.