Chapter 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION

&

RECOMMENDATIONS
5. Findings, Conclusion& Recommendations

The alchemists in their search for Gold discovered many other things of greater value.

Arthur Schopenhauer, German Philosopher

5.1 Introduction

Advergames as a phenomenon, its usefulness and impact, all have been studied as a part of this thesis. What started out as a curiosity towards a new online advertising technique is now a fully analysed and tested concept. During this study we analysed the Advergames as a phenomenon, searched for its sudden emergence and growth, studied its reasons for success, analysed what games are impactful and what customers are most susceptible to them. We also found that a good game can create an emotional connectivity with the customer and hence lead to loyalty and increased returns on investment. Through the course of this study we placed in our minds the following Research Objectives and successfully achieved those objectives too.

i. To identify and understand the various analytics/parameters of Advergames
ii. To develop an Advergaming consumers’ profile
iii. To analyze the impact of Advergames in building emotional connectivity / customer loyalty.
iv. To identify the parameters which are affecting the Marketing ROI in an online interactive advertising environment and propose a frame work for calculating the same viz a viz advergaming

While studying these research objectives we came across various intermittent relationships and results which were proved by the way of hypothesis. Table 5.1 presents the details of the hypotheses test results.
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A strong negative relationship exists between the engagement created by the game and the destroying cluster emotions towards the brand

High emotional customer loyalty has a strong positive relationship with respondents’ purchase intentions

Respondents showing favourable attitude towards brand also showed high purchase intention towards the product

5.2 Discussions

As we can see from Table 5.1 two hypothesis could not be statistically accepted while the rest of the hypothesis have all been statistically proven and accepted. These hypothesis were also broken across the four different objectives and each hypothesis contributed to compilation of a research objective.

Objective 1: To identify and understand the various analytics/parameters of Advergames

5.2.1. Through our first research objective we have been able to compile the factors which are important to create an engagement towards the game in terms of game attributes as well as individual’s attributes. While most of these construct are concurring individually with the existing literature (Byrne, 1989) (Adis & Jun, 2013) (Andrews Lynda, 2007) (Barr & Kellaris, 2000) (Berlyne, 1970) they come together to form a two complete constructs: Game related Attributes and Individual related Attributes which go ahead and impact the engagement which is created by the game. These parameters are:

Game related Attributes

- Type of Advergame
- Theme and Genre
- Content
- Technical platform
- Game product congruity
- Product placement proximity
- Game Repetition
• Self-Brand Congruity
• Intrusiveness of Game

**Individual related Attributes**

• Gender
• Level of maturity
• Game familiarity and past gaming experience
• Attitude towards advertising
• Entertainment
• Susceptibility to advertising

It is important to understand these attributes and to test their impact individually on game engagement as these relationships go further to analyse the requirements and expectations which an industry may have from the games as well as from the gamers. In an attempt to convert the Advergame from a simple entertaining game into a tool which can take a customer through various stages of the AIDA\(^7\) model. It is important to keep in mind that the while the purpose of advertising is to increase or promote the sales, every advertising tool is not built with the purpose of bringing about sale. Some advertising tools are required just for the purpose of information and awareness. We have seen several examples from the entertainment industry (Barnes B., 2012) (IANS, 2012) where the Advergame is launched before the launch of the movie/Television serial only with the objective in mind that it would create the necessary attention, attraction and interest in the product along with desire to watch the movie/television serial.

On the same lines, we can say that Advergames can and are providing a wonderful platform to e-commerce websites where achieving a certain target in the game can lead to discount coupons and hence attractiveness to buy or test the product immediately without comparing with competition. Yet, the main objective of the Advergame is to increase awareness, attractiveness and increase the desire to purchase.

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\(^7\) Attention, Interest, Desire Action Model
Objective 2: To develop an Advergaming consumers’ profile

5.2.2. We found that females are more likely to be emotionally connected through Advergames than men, even though men were more hooked or engaged to the game. Males were basically not able to convert their game engagement into emotional customer loyalty as much as women were. It was also revealed during this analysis that a large number of women now fall under the category of gamers and are regular users of internet on the smart phone as well PC.

5.2.3. The women which were involved in gaming belonged to two primary age groups: 30-44 years and 45-60 years. While a lot of work has already been done in the field of advergaming, it has been observed that most of the previous work was limited to experimentations on children under 12 years of age. Thus now marketers can target women between the age group 30-60 years to sell the products which are relevant to them using Advergames.

5.2.4. Maximum number of women in the above given age group belong to non-technical graduates and were girls that belonged to the working category. Most of them were self-employed and a large number was also working salaried professionals. This not only reflects on the increased comfort zone of the working women with gaming technology, it also highlights the fact that they are more exposed to technology than their other counterparts. Such women have easy access to internet technology, whether at home or workplace.

5.2.5. Further it was found that these respondents had the playfulness of their personality alive even at the age of 30-60 years as most of them has one or two children. We even had respondents of the age of 59 years who felt engaged with the game and were able to answer most of the questions of the questionnaire. Hence we can conclude that the women of the age group 30-60 years which are working and were graduates in non-technical background and have 1-2 children are the ones which are most susceptible to Advergames. Industries which cater to such demographic profiles such as Women’s Apparel, Footwear, Personal Hygiene and also food delivery are the ones that are likely to benefit from the use of Advergames.
Objective 3: To analyse the impact of Advergames in building emotional connectivity / customer loyalty.

5.2.6. While analysing our third research objective, we were also able to tabulate and conclude through various correlation tools that the Game Engagement had a positive impact on Emotional Customer Loyalty as well as Positive Brand Attitude.

These were represented through regression lines and equations mentioned in figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2

![Figure 5.1: Regression line representing the impact of Game engagement on Emotional Customer Loyalty (ECL)](image)

This is summarised as \( F(1,349) = 19.577, \ p < 0.001 \) at \( R^2 = 0.255 \). It has also been computed in the form of equation 5.1

\[
ECL = 24.305 + 1.330 \times \text{Game Engagement} + \text{Error} \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \text{Equation (5.1)}
\]
Figure 5.2: Regression line representing the impact of Game engagement on Brand Attitude

The regression line in Figure 5.2 has been summarized as $F(1,349) = 785.016$, $p<0.001$ at $R^2 = 0.695$. This can also be represented in the form of equation 5.2

\[
\text{Brand\_Attitude} = 0.513 + 0.030[\text{Game\_Engagement}] + \text{error} \quad \text{Equation (5.2)}
\]

Objective 4: To identify the parameters which are affecting the Marketing ROI in an online interactive advertising environment and propose a framework for calculating the same viz a viz advergaming

5.2.7. We further go ahead to test the impact of game engagement in building emotional Customer Loyalty, a positive brand attitude and eventually the impact of all three of them on Marketing returns on Investment. The model for the same has been depicted in Figure 5.3 below followed by the Structural Equation Modelling results of the path analysis done on the model.
Figure 5.3: Structural Equation Model for Impact of Game Engagement on Emotional Customer Loyalty, Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention

\[ \chi^2 = 1470.5, \text{ df}=217, \text{ p}<0.001, \text{ CMIN/df} = 6.777; \text{ GFI} = 0.686; \text{ NFI} = 0.895; \text{ CFI} = 0.909; \text{ RMSEA} = 0.128 \]

The above relationships are further reiterated through the regression line and equation represented in Figure 5.4 and Equation 5.4

Figure 5.4: Representation of Purchase Intention in terms of Emotional Customer Loyalty and Brand Attitude

\[ (F(1,349) = 455.568, \text{ p}<0.001) \text{ at } R^2 = 0.724. \text{ This can also be represented in the form of equation 5.3 below.} \]

Purchase Intention = 0.113[ECL]+0.791[Brand Attitude]+ error…….Equation 5.3
Thus we can conclude a heavy, positive and significant impact of the game in creating not only a positive attitude towards the brand but also a positive emotional connectivity. And this would eventually lead to purchase intention thus increasing the returns on investment. This proposed model has been represented in the Figure 5.5.

5.3 Managerial Implications
The purpose of this study would lie defeated if it cannot be made useful to marketers of tomorrow. The concept behind this entire study was to understand the Advergame as a tool and find out which respondents would turn out to be its true potential customers. The potential customers would be the ones who would play the game, feel engaged while playing the game, understand the brand and product while playing the game and eventually be compelled to buy the product which was being advertised using Advergames.

To do so we sought various attributes of the games which would make them attractive to any audience. Hence this study identified the popular choices of gamers. (Mráček & Mucha, 2011) (Svahn, 2005) classified the Advergames into three categories: Demonstrative, Illustrative and Associative out of which, it was found that illustrative games bring about the maximum brand recall (Huang & Dinu.,, 2010). Further, the respondents confirmed that the games which have no download requirement or any charges are most liked by gamers. The gamers of toady do not want to sit down and dedicate time to game playing. These are mostly people on the go which is the reason why there was also an increased trend of playing games on smartphones on the go rather than on a desktop or laptop. With a smartphone, the gamers can be engaged even while traveling in a metro, or sitting in a movie hall. With respect to the two situations mentioned the cost of advertising through Advergames is far inexpensive than putting up hoardings on metro station, buying billboard space on a metro station or buying airtime in a cinema hall where the advertisement for a few second would be played for a few weeks only.

It was an obvious next question to find out which is the most loved type of Advergame. The respondents of the study pointed out that games with movie theme /character were the most popular along with car racing games. This goes on to indicate that movie and television industry are the ones which are most benefitting from the use of Advergames.
and as movie stars and characters are able to build emotional connect with their fans these games only enhance the emotional customer loyalty.

Further, we used this study to look for the ideal demographic profile of gamers which would be best engaged using Advergames. While checking the response towards the game viz-a-viz gender it was observed that with the growing presence of IT in everyday lives males and females both were found to be equally engaged through the Advergames, though the genetic makeup of females led them to be far more emotionally engaged and loyal towards the brand than men. It was also observed that the most susceptible group of respondents for advergaming were people of the age group of 30-45 years. This shows that gaming is the new way of entertainment for people who are working and have constant access to the internet.

Games which had out of the box themes, were found to be entertaining and hence more engaging. This also opens up the markets for gaming and game designing into a full fledged profession which requires creativity and also a keen interest in marketing. It was found that the respondents which were generally more believing in sanctity of advertising were the ones which were more engaged in the games and had a better brand recall. These were also the respondents which were familiar with the concept of gaming and were regular gamers were more engaged in the game.

Thus keeping the model in Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 in mind we can easily conclude that gamers engaged in the process of the Advergames were potential customers for whom we can convert into emotionally engaged and loyal customers that would have high brand recall and purchase intention.

5.4 Theoretical Implications

A large number of concepts of this study have been derived from fragments of previous literature. Gaming for the purpose of advertising in no new concept but it was previously restricted to children as the potential age group. Large number of experimental studies have been conducted which focus on behaviour of children towards Advergames. (Brucks, Armstrong , & Goldberg, 1988) (Hernandez, Determinants of children’s attitudes towards “advergames”: the case of Mexico, 2008) (Panic, Cauberghe, & Pelsmacker, 2013) (Snider, 2002) (Nairn & Hang , Advergames: It’s not child’s play , 2012). In an attempt to study this concept from a different view point, this study was conducted in the form of a survey where respondents of a different
age group were required to play the game in the day to day natural settings so that it would bring in more natural responses of pleasure/displeasure towards the game. Attributes of various theories including engagement theory (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998), Narrative transportation model (Deighton, Romer, & McQueen, 1989), Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad & Wright, 1994) were combined to understand the attributes contributing to game engagement. These were further connected to increment in emotional customer loyalty. Emotional customer loyalty has been individually explained in various contexts but not explored at all in the context of advergaming. The concept of customer loyalty and its importance has been explored by (Day, 1969) (Dick & Basu, 1994) (Magneto) (Oliver, 1999) (Russel - Bennett, McColl-Kennedy, & Coote, 2007) through their researches and they same has been adopted for this study. The concept of emotion in the perspective of customers was explored and implemented in this study to achieve emotional customer loyalty.

All these concepts were implemented together in a proposed model and the framework was tested against the data collected by the respondents. Thus the tested model adds to the concepts further in a specific perspective and add to the theories present regarding Advergames and their contribution in building Emotional Customer Loyalty.

![Proposed model connecting game engagement to MROI](image)

**Figure 5.5:** Proposed model connecting game engagement to MROI
5.5 Limitations of Study

Every study suffers from certain limitations. The limitations of this study have been classified into the following categories:

a) Technological Limitations: The game which was shared with the respondents was running on a set technical configuration. There were instances where respondents gave feedback that they were not able to play the game due to incompatibility with the configuration of the game, or due to unavailability of internet or poor connectivity to the internet. These barriers were real time issues which would disengage a person from the game and also from the brand.

b) Sampling Limitations: The sample which had to be selected was of game playing audience thus it was not possible to bring about complete randomness to the sample. Although, the judgement of the sampler was there while selecting the sample care was taken to ensure as much heterogeneity as possible in the demographic profile of the sample. While some attempts were made to incorporate greater amount of data nationally, most of the sample respondents were belonging to Delhi NCR and other metropolitan and tier I cities of the country.

c) Type of Advergames: The game used in this research was limited to a particular industry and game type. We had used Lipton Ice-Tea as the product and one of the games of Lipton Ice-Tea called Better BBQ Challenge. There is also a possibility that in the Indian context some of the audience may or may not feel completely comfortable with the concept of barbeque where different vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian products were used virtually to barbeque them.

d) Role of Gender: In the Indian context itself, from one corner to the other of the country there is a huge change of mind sets, social norms, culture and society. A cooking game may have a different impact on different genders. While the game did not display any tools/figures which were specific to gender, peer pressure may sometimes act as a deterrent amongst males to be part of a cooking challenge. Even though the Indian society is opening up and these orthodox tendencies are not prevalent in Delhi-NCR and Tier I
cities, there is a possibility of a small impact of the same on the mind-set of the respondents while answering the questionnaire.

5.6 Future scope of Research

This study extensively studies the demographic profile of the potential customers and respondents of Advergames as well as looks into the features of the games which attract a gamer more towards the game and brings him/her closer to choosing the given product. While care was taken to cover all possible aspects of the theme there are still some areas which future researchers may be intrigued into studying and analysing. This study did not break down the impact of games for different industries such as food, apparel, services, banking etc. It is possible to extend this study to analyse the games industry-wise where the impact on MROI of the game in different industries can be studied. This would lead to a more concentrated and industry specific output which would be further more useful to the industry as a whole.

Advergames in this study were focussed on Indian respondents and that too the sample was confined to Delhi-NCR and Tier I cities. The impact of Advergames may change if this study is extended to the tier II cities where the penetration of internet has recently increased after the launch of 4G services in India. In today’s date the latest values of internet penetration in the country is close to 38 percent and there has been a growth of nearly 49 percent (Nair, 2015) since the last year. This also shows the rapid change in the market and the fact that customer needs are changing. Hence by slight change in the sample size the study may produce different results.

Indian customers are highly diverse and are bound by several social norms and religious beliefs. While these terms may act like restriction in some cases, a study to compare and contrast the proposed model in different ethnicities may produce wonderful and useful insights from which the new age global marketers may benefit extremely.

While this study picked up the best possible example of an illustrative game which was freely available on the internet further research is possible to test the same model against different type of games. The study reveals the love and emotional engagement which the respondents have towards games that are specific to entertainment industry and hence the impact of games before the release of the relevant movie/TV serial and/or the best time to launch a game as a part of an advertising campaign can be rather useful to the industry and would take the concept of Advergames to an all new level.
5.7 Conclusion

Every research is a learning process where some perceptions backed by literature are confronted with real time truths. Some of these perceptions get statistically accepted which others get completely rejected. In the whole process, at the end we come across various truths which are statistically verified. At the end, it is only justified to re-look at the entire journey from start to end and see how many miles we have covered.

This journey started from a small news clipping which mentioned the success of a video game in building large fan-base even before the release of a movie. The curious mind made us investigate if this was the first of its kind event or if there were other such examples happening. Were these happening in all industries? Was this a known phenomenon in India? Does it impact everyone equally? All these questions were converted into research objectives and this entire concept was studied all the way from its history and first documented instances. In this process I have personally played and analysed 28 different Advergames from various industries, countries and target groups. It brought me across experts who had coined the term, who use these Advergames for a living and also who are avid gamers and consumers of this concept. All these people pointed to the fact that this is the technology of tomorrow and has a very high potential customer base. This technique is still left un-tapped in many sectors and is treated casually. On the contrary our study, strongly suggests that it is an extremely cost effective advertising technique which has very low investment and can immediately convert users attraction and attention into on the spot on-line sale.

It would only be just to conclude this study with the hope that this technique of tomorrow would change the marketing landscape and our study would add to the literature and findings which would be substantially useful across many industries.

Once we know something, we find it hard to imagine what it was like not to know it.

Chip & Dan Heath, Authors of Made to Stick, Switch