CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH GAPS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 RESEARCH GAPS

1. Review of literature reveals that consumers perceive various sources of information differently due to the inherent characteristics of the source and this may influence the way consumers process messages and turn them into information. Extant literature shows that vested source of information (advertising) is generally perceived to be low in credibility as compared to non-vested sources (publicity and trial) which are perceived more credible and thus exert higher degree of persuasion (Bickart and Schindler, 2001). Previous studies have empirically tested to what extent the effectiveness of advertising, publicity and product trial differ from each other. Based on dual process theories, some of these studies also examined influence of moderators such as argument quality and product involvement on source credibility and persuasiveness of messages. Though, both practitioners and academicians have recognized the importance of Online Consumer Reviews in consumer decision making, there is need to empirically examine differences in persuasiveness exerted by Online Reviews in comparison to Advertisements under different exposure conditions.

2. Previous studies have examined consumer responses when advertising is presented in conjunction with other sources like publicity, WOM, trial etc. and found that exposure to multiple sources is more persuasive than exposure to single message source. There is need to assess whether persuasiveness differs when consumers integrate information from online reviews and other sources of information (trial, advertising, publicity etc.). Further, there is need to assess how these effects are influenced by various individual specific and message
specific factors, such as, sequence of exposure, type of message (varied and similar), product involvement etc.

3. Voorveld, Neijens and Smit (2011) found that two psychological mechanisms (priming and multiple source perception) were higher when subjects evaluated Website and TV commercials as compared to repeated exposure to these sources, whereas image transfer was lower for multiple source condition. There is need to examine if these or any other psychological mechanisms, such as persuasion knowledge bias, cause differences in persuasiveness exerted by Online Reviews and Print Advertisements as compared to repeated exposure to either Print Advertisements or Online Reviews.
3.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the research gaps identified, the following objectives have been developed for the dissertation:

1. To compare the extent of persuasiveness exerted by similar information contained in print Advertisement and Online Consumer Review. Further, to examine the role of argument quality and product involvement on persuasiveness exerted by these sources.

2. To examine whether information presented through Online Review and Print Advertisement is more persuasive than information presented through repeated exposure to either Print Advertisements or Online Consumer Reviews. Further, to examine whether the level of persuasion generated differs due to sequence of exposure and type of message.

3. To examine the role of persuasion knowledge bias and priming in consumers’ integration of information from same or different message sources.