Chapter 8

Research methodology
Aim of any kind of study, whether scientific or otherwise is to acquire knowledge, to know the truth and reality behind the phenomenon. Karl Pearson, a noted statistician says, “there is no shortcut to truth: no way to gain the knowledge of universe except through the gateway of scientific method”. Thus, research refers to systematic acquisition of knowledge. The thirst for knowledge has been responsible for vast variety of research work. P. V. Young says, “The primary goal of research immediate or distant – is to understand social life and thereby gain a greater measure of control over social behavior.”

V.P. Michael has rightly put research as “a process of a systematic and in-depth study or search of any particular topic, subject or area of investigation backed by the collection, compilation, presentation and interpretation of relevant detail or data. It is a careful search or inquiry into any subject or subject matter, which is an endeavour to discover or find out valuable facts which would be useful for further application or utilizations.

OBJECTIVES AND NATURE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

According to V. P. Micheal, “research in management is basically meant for a specific purpose, and that is why management researches are, by and large, result oriented.” The research endeavour under study has primary academic objective to acquire in-depth the knowledge of changing advertising patterns with the changes in time, our social structure, our preferences, and lifestyle. Beside, it has utility oriented objectives also, as it is aimed at highlighting the important facets that should invite the attention of prospective advertisers to serve there respective causes by way of deduction, that is, a way of making a particular interference from a generalization. Thus the researcher has tried to investigate primarily the ever changing mind set of the consumers, with their changing social status and consequent life style; also secondarily the functioning, practices, strategies and research activities of ad agency and to establish relationship, particularly casual, between different variables and to arrive at some valuable
generalization and conclusions from the two questionnaires designed for the consumers and advertising agencies respectively.

Thus judged by its nature the research work is primarily conceptual and theoretical in nature, and secondarily empirical, in so far as we have concerned ourselves to develop principles and arrive at generalizations, regarding changing advertising patterns of consumer durables along with changes in time, on one hand, and an aid to problem solving, on the other, thereby improving knowledge and understanding as well as decision making skill and ability.

THE UNIVERSE

The universe in this research study primarily comprises of the consumers of various age groups, who view the advertisements for various consumer durables and are the decision makers; also secondarily the selected advertising agencies.

SURVEY POPULATION

As mentioned, the survey population for this research study comprises of the select group of consumers of various age groups in Lucknow, Delhi, and Kanpur. Also comprising the survey population are some advertising agencies from Lucknow and Delhi.

SOURCES AND METHODS EMPLOYED FOR DATA COLLECTION

This study has been completed with the help of both secondary and primary data. The main sources from which we have collected secondary data include:

(i) Advertisements released by advertising agencies.

(ii) Brochures, leaflets and pamphlets issued by advertising agencies.

(iii) Press and Advertisers Hand Books published by Indian Newspapers Society, New Delhi.

(v) Newspapers, particularly The Hindustan Times, Times of India, Economic Times, Financial Express, Indian Express.


(vii) The important work of western and Indian researchers.

Some of the gaps observed in the secondary information were filled in through establishing personal contacts with consumers of various age groups, and from different strata of society, also contact was established with various executives of advertising agencies.

The secondary data has been supplemented by the primary information gathered through mailing distinct structured questionnaires covering the course of both close ended and open ended questions concerned with all the aspects of the research study. The two parts of our survey population were approached differently for gathering primary data. The consumers were primarily approached in person for gathering first hand and meaningful information about changing advertising patterns. Some questionnaires were also mailed to friends and relatives. Some advertising agencies in Lucknow were approached personally with relevant questionnaires, while some questionnaires were mailed.

The response rate accomplished thus from 250 consumers and 25 advertising agencies finally, be deemed satisfactory for two reasons. One, due care was taken by the researcher while approaching the respondents so as to ensure that they should not impair their character of truly representing the respective universe, survey population, proposed to be covered. Two, for protecting the authenticity of the information, the questionnaires were actually filled/ got recorded by the respondents in the questionnaire through performing the exercise of editing them then and there as also, recording some additional
information on the basis of personal interviews/observations. Hence the primary information thus secured amply helped me in not only undertaking a critical resume of my findings, but also in confidently venturing upon making appropriate recommendations on vital issues concerning the subject matter under examination.

The Annexure I and Annexure II are the two questionnaires structured for consumers and advertising agencies respectively.

**PATTERN OF ANALYSIS UNDERTAKEN AND STATISTICAL TOOLS EMPLOYED**

Research and analysis of problems would result in certain conclusions by means of logical analysis. Information thus collected was edited and tables were prepared on the basis of cogent classification with footnotes wherever it was deemed necessary. Use of calculator was also made to facilitate calculations and also to speed up the process of analysis. The whole analysis has been shaped directly to fit the logical needs of our objectives. We have merely reckoned as to the number, their percentage and, average variation of the concerned variables in order to reach conclusive results.

A vast multitude of information relating to changing consumer preferences, changing consumer profiles, attractive points of advertisements noticed by consumers, profiles of advertising agencies, working and functioning of agencies, etc., have been thoroughly investigated, so as to unearth the changing patterns of advertising to devise successful marketing strategy in case of consumer durables. Employing the tools of common statistics like number, averages, percentages and ranks, we have analysed on different basis. The gamut of inescapable conclusions drawn on the basis of diversified in depth analysis have been used to examine the validity found in our hypotheses on one hand, and for drawing logical conclusion on the broader issues raised in this work, on the other.
RESEARCH DESIGN

Judged by the style the research design of this study is primarily descriptive-cum-diagnostic. It is descriptive in so far as we have concerned ourselves with the portrayal of various opinions of consumers regarding changing advertising patterns with changing times; and it assumes diagnostic character when we link ad agency executives opinions about changing patterns and consumer preferences with the responses received from consumers, to arrive useful conclusions regarding change in advertising patterns, especially in case of consumer durables.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The main limitation with this research work is time restrictions. Therefore, from the point of view of the economy of time, resources and manpower, to base this study on a restricted number of questionnaires i.e. 150 from consumers and 25 from advertising agencies. Further the non response on some aspects like financial data, employees strength, strategies, etc. augmented the researcher's dependence on secondary data sources.

Therefore the in built demerits associated with secondary data sources, like biasedness, unreliability etc. on the part of the original researcher's knowledge and the applied methodological tools may have possibly affected the findings/conclusions of this research study. However inorder to reasonably overcome the negative effects of using secondary data, the researcher has tried to collect sufficient primary data, through mailed questionnaires and personal interviews.

Some other limitations observed during this research work were:

- Nature of responses obtained and information collected is not found appropriate and adequate to apply a suitable statistical technique to approbate the hypotheses.
VP Michael has pointed out the general limitations of management research which also hold true with this study. He says: "Any managerial decision or executive action is related to human beings one way or the other. Management research, too, is related to human beings who are subject to changes. Hence conclusions, suggestions and observations, too are bound to be subject to changes. Certain variables may be important from the point of view of theoretical treatment, which may not be of much use in management practice.

Again the inherent limitations associated with surveys like non-response, periphery level information collected, permissible sample errors, personal inhibitions, indifference, ignorance or bias may have, also possible affected the findings/ conclusions of this study.

In a nutshell, as no research study can be free from the above mentioned limitations, so the same happened with this research study also. However every effort has been made to minimize the effects of these limitations on the findings and conclusions of this study.