CHAPTER III

3. CONCEPT OF ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS

In this section an attempt is made to identify important concepts included in the theories reviewed in relation with the topic ‘Influence of Media Advertisements on Consumer Behaviour.’ The inter relationship between these concepts in the light of the study undertaken is presented in this chapter. An analytical model of the communication effect of advertisement on the consumer decision making process is explained in this section.

Advertising Communication Process

Advertising is one of the important tools of marketing promotion. Even when the right product is produced if the message does not reach the target consumers, the marketer would be undertaking great risk. Hence for effective marketing one needs good product and good communication. The term ‘Advertising’ is derived from a Latin word meaning ‘to turn’ the attention. Every advertisement is intended to turn the attention of the readers, viewers, listeners or the onlookers towards the advertised brand. Advertising can be defined as any form of non personal, paid announcements by an identified sponsor for promotion of ideas, goods or services. The process of advertising may be expressed in the form of a triangle. The important elements in the process are advertiser, audience and the media. The advertiser’s objective is to communicate with the audience in order to obtain the desired results arising from the responses of the audiences.
The triangle of communication consists of advertisers who are trying to convey advertising messages to their target audience through media which are independent of advertisers (Mohan, 1997)

**Fig. 3.1 Triangle of communication**

The success of the advertising campaign depends to a great extent on the reach of the media, the appeal of the message to the target audience, overall attitude of the audience towards advertisement in general and the amount of various distractions inherent in the process of advertising communication. Generally advertisement expenditure becomes wasted expenditure when the advertisers do not advertise the benefits consumers seek, the advertisement frequency is not up to the required level, the media selection and planning has gone wrong or the message sent is inconsistent, confusing, contradictory and misleading.
Evaluating Advertising Effectiveness

Realistic measurements of advertising effectiveness must be related to an understanding of the functions of advertising. It is helpful to think in terms of a model where advertising is like a force which, if successful, moves people up a series of steps towards purchase (Lavidge and Steiner 1961). Measurements of the effectiveness of the advertising provide measurements of changes at all levels on these sequential steps – not just at the levels of the development of product awareness and the stimulation of actual purchase. Important concepts, variables studied and their inter relationship are explained here.

John Wanamaker, an American retailer and known as the father of modern advertising once said to his assistant that half the money he spent on advertising was wasted, but did not know which half was wasted (Duncan, 2005). The evaluation of advertising effectiveness include the measures of advertising's sales effect and advertising's communication effect. Sales are influenced by many factors such as price, features, availability and competitors action. Though measurement of sales effect is easiest in direct marketing situations, it is very hard and unreliable in brand image building advertisements. Most advertisers try to measure the communication effect of an ad. Under this method the potential effect of an advertisement on awareness, knowledge or preference is measured.

Communication Objectives of Advertising

The impact of advertising is to be measured in terms of the objectives of the advertising programs. An effective advertising program is one that meets its objectives. According to Mindak (1955) the objective of any commercial
advertisement is to bring about a change in the state of mind towards the purchase of a product. Any commercial that aims at the ultimate objective of sale must carry a prospect though different levels of understanding i.e., awareness, comprehension, conviction and understanding. As explained by Mindak any effective advertisement must:

- Get attention and interest of prospective customers
- Register or communicate an idea, theme or message
- Bring about a more favourable attitude or disposition to buy.

The above three levels of effectiveness explain that getting the attention and interest of prospective customers and proving their recall or recognition of the advertisement alone may not ensure effectiveness of an advertisement. To ensure effectiveness the advertisement must be able to create a favourable attitude or disposition to buy.

According to Duncan (2005), the important communication objectives of advertising are to increase one or more of the following:

- The brand awareness and brand image (awareness).
- The understanding and recall of brand information (knowledge)
- The creation of attitude change and preference (persuasion)
- Trial and repeat buying (Behaviour)
- Customer acquisition, retention and growth (relationship building).
Measurement and Evaluation Methods

Number of different methods are used to evaluate the communication effectiveness of advertisements. Some of the important methods include:

- Respondents’ media exposure
- Exposure to advertisements,
- Concept testing and pre and post copy testing.
- Persuasion testing

*Exposure to advertisement media*

Media are channels that connect companies with customers. Advertising media are many and varied. Most of the marketing communication messages are carried by traditional media like TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, internet, mail and outdoor boards. Traditional media are usually considered as mass media though these are also being used to connect small group of people. New media such as internet, cellular phones have made marketing and communication programs more challenging. If the advertisement message is not properly seen, read or noted by the consumers it is difficult to influence the consumers. The intensity of media exposure can be measured by readership survey in the case of print advertising, viewership survey in the case of television advertisements. Monitoring services can track the performance of the media in delivering the message to the consumers.

*Exposure to advertisements*

One of the primary ways in which brands are built is through media exposure, which refers to the number of people who see, read, or hear a medium. Media
exposure, however, does not guarantee message exposure (Duncan, 2005). Even when the most cost-effective media exposure is chose by the media planner, it is up to the individual brand message to attract attention, change attitudes and motivate behaviour. According to Duncan, most of the brand messages generate a response from only a small percentage of those who are exposed to the message. The challenge then is to find that media whose audience are most likely to respond and thus narrow the difference between the number exposed and the number who respond.

Marketing communication over the years have been subjected to changes on account of media fragmentation and proliferation. It is a mixed blessing that the marketers have more choices to reach the consumers, but at the same time it is difficult to catch the spreading attention of the customers. Media clutter is a severe problem faced by the marketer as well as the consumer. So many brand messages are made by many brand message delivery systems that it is too difficult to grab the attention of the consumer and to hold their interest to elicit action.

**Advertisement Concept testing**

If the advertising messages are not properly communicated to the target consumers, the money spent on the same would be wasted. Hence advertising concepts and strategies are tested for its communication effectiveness and persuasiveness. Qualitative research involving focus group survey and discussion is often used to identify the most striking advertisement message.
**Advertisement Copy Testing**

The communication effectiveness of an advertisement can be measured by copy testing and it can be done before an advertisement is put into media (pre test) or after it is printed or broadcast (post test). Though the pre testing of an advertisement copy is very common measure of effectiveness, ads that test well may not necessarily perform well in the market place. Many advertisers use post tests to assess overall impact of an advertisement campaign. Copy testing can be used to measure different aspects of communication effectiveness of advertisements such as: Attention, Brand awareness, Emotional responses and Physiological responses.

Attention: The attention getting power of an advertisement can be measured with the help of mechanical devices. Survey method is also used commonly for the purpose. ‘Seen, read and noted the ad’ are some of the expressions used in the interview schedule to check attention catching power of the advertisement.

Brand awareness and knowledge: ‘Recognition’ and ‘Recall’ are two common measures of brand awareness and knowledge. Recognition is the act of identifying the brand and remembering that one has seen or heard of it earlier. It is like identifying a person in a crowd. Mere recognition does not mean that the person’s name could be recalled. Recall or unaided awareness measure is the process of bringing the brand name back from memory. Researchers measure recall by asking respondents to name all the brands of a particular product category which they can think of. The respondents may not be able to recall all the brand names. Then the brand names may be given to the respondents and they may be asked whether they have heard of these brands. The process is
called aided awareness or recognition. Recognition (aided awareness) scores will be higher than recall (unaided awareness) scores.

‘Advertisement Recall’ and ‘Advertisement Recognition’ can be done in the same manner as ‘Brand Recall’ and ‘Brand Recognition.’ A measure of magazine ad recall is used by Galllup & Robinson’s Impact Test (Duncan, 2005). In ad recall test, the respondents are asked to recall as many advertisements as they remember about a product in a product category. For the ads that are recalled, the respondents are asked to recall the claims made, elements of ad message, illustrations, theme, characters etc. Those respondents who could not recall a specific advertisement being studied, may then be asked whether they remember an advertisement for the brand being measured. This is known as aided ad recall or ad recognition. In both the cases of brand awareness and advertisement awareness, the measurements may be done as pre tests or post tests. Pre tests are done before the campaign, and post tests are done after the advertisement campaign.

Emotional Responses: The respondents’ emotional responses to advertisements are difficult to be measured. Dozens of photographs of individuals with various emotional expressions are used in advanced studies to measure the feelings of individuals after seeing an advertisement. The respondents are asked to select from these individual-expression photos, the one that best illustrate how the advertisement messages made them feel.

An important emotional measure is likeability of advertisement. When an advertisement is liked by a respondent, it is expected that this liking would be transferred to the brand advertised. In the studies conducted by the Advertising
Research Foundation (ARF), likeability of the advertisement was found to be a powerful predictor of sales success. Likeability, recall and message understanding are used simultaneously to get a better knowledge of the communication effectiveness of advertisements. Likeability can be measured on a rating scale ranging from 1 to 5 representing ‘Strongly disagree’ to ‘Strongly agree.’ The respondents choose a number from the scale which best expresses their feeling. The related factors considered while measuring likeability are:

- Relevance (meaningful)
- Believability, credibility (convincing and true to life)
- Interest (fascinating, engaging)
- Enjoyment (entertaining, warm)
- Familiarity (comfortable)
- Surprise (Pleasantly surprising)

The attitude of the respondents towards the specific advertisement and the overall attitude towards advertisement in general can be measured in the same manner on a rating scale.

Physiological responses: Some of the emotional responses would be affecting individual, knowingly or unknowingly. In order to measure the physiological responses the galvanic skin response test is used. The test uses a galvanometer as is used in lie detectors to measure minute electric current when the respondent is aroused or stimulated while exposed to variety advertisements. Pupil dilation and eye tracking are other tests used to measure the physiological
responses. The test is highly expensive and the findings are difficult to be interpreted.

**Persuasion testing**

Persuasion measures include ‘intend to buy’ scores, ‘willingness to recommend’ score etc. But these measures lack reliability when used independently as there would be little correlation between what people say they will do and what they actually do. Test marketing, forced purchases after showing of a brand message in a theatre, observation or scanner tests for tracking household purchases are some of the measures adopted for testing the persuasiveness of the advertisement.

**Tracking Studies**

Consumer tracking studies are used frequently by companies to measure the long term impact of advertisements on the consumer behaviour. Tracking studies are periodic surveys that measure brand awareness, trial, repeat purchase intention and consumer satisfaction. Tracking studies can be done by using telephone facilities or by conducting survey. Although, this study is ideal for measuring the long term impact of the advertising campaign of the company, it may also be used to understand the merits or demerits of a specific advertising program.

Some of the important factors covered in a tracking study are as follows:

- Top-of-mind (TOM) awareness
- Unaided recall
- Aided recall
The biggest problem with tracking studies is that reporting of the findings of the study takes long time. This can be overcome to a great extent by adopting real-time tracking. Internet can be used to collect online feedback from customers which can be used for monitoring the advertising programs and immediate changes strategies can be affected if necessary. Online surveys can be used to replace or complement mail and phone surveys.

The greatest advantage of tracking studies is that the study can cover a wide range of consumer aspects such as, awareness, message, comprehension, persuasiveness, emotions, feelings, attitude and behavioural responses to advertisements. The present study of influence of advertisements has used the consumer tracking method to understand the consumer behaviour and also to examine the impact of advertisements on their behaviour. Consumer Decision Process model by Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2001) describes that the influence of advertisements can be explained in terms of the communication effectiveness of advertisement and the consequent behavioural responses of the consumers at different stages of the decision making process.

**Consumer Decision Making (CDM) Process**

Consumers typically go through seven major stages when making decisions (Blackwell, Miniard, Engel, 2001). It has been long proposed that the
problem/need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, use/consumption, post purchase evaluation and disposition are important stages in the consumer decision making process and consumers pass through these stages as they repeatedly deal with household durables. All these stages are not equally important among all the consumers. But clearly the buying process starts long before the actual purchase and has consequences long afterward. The components of the decision process can be broadly grouped into pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase phase.

1st Stage: Need recognition

The buying process starts as soon as the buyer recognizes a consumption need or problem. Formally defined, problem recognition is the perceived difference between an ideal (desired) state and an actual state. Many marketing efforts are attempts to influence the desired state of the consumers so that marketers can stimulate the decision process and lead them to acquisition and consumption. Advertising may help the consumers to recognize an imbalance between present status and preferred one.

2nd Stage: Information search

The process of pre purchase information seeking is explained by Howard (1963), in his explanation of buying behaviour. Information search is an important aspect of consumer decision making process as explained by Howard and Sheth (1969), Howard (1963) and Bettman (1979). Before making a purchase, the consumers actively seek information from variety of personal and impersonal sources. Information search may be either internal or external. In internal search, variety
of information, feelings and past experiences etc, stored up in memory are recalled to make decision. During extended problem solving as in the case of major purchases like Television and computer, stored up information might be insufficient. Then the consumers try to acquire additional information through an external search from published sources, advertisements, dealers, trusted friends and relatives. In the consumer buying literature, attention has been given to what is purchased and why buyers search for information. Howard and Sheth (1969) in the theory of buyer behaviour have suggested factors leading to ‘overt search.’ Awareness of the pre purchase search variables are of strategic importance to marketers.

3rd Stage: Pre-purchase evaluation of alternatives

At this stage consumers compare and contrast different brands in terms of their attributes, feature or benefits. They form preferences and evaluative criteria to evaluate each option. Evaluative criteria are various features or benefits which consumers look for in response to a particular type of problem (Hawkins, Best and Coney, 1998). They are product judging standards that have been stored in permanent memory. The advertisers attempt to change the thinking of the respondents with regard to specific product attributes, characteristics or features.

4th Stage: Purchase decision

The brand evaluation process leads to an intention to make a purchase of the most favourably evaluated brand. This is the most important stage of the consumer decision process where the consumer interacts directly with the interests of the marketer. Three important considerations at this stage are the place of purchase, the terms and conditions of payment and the availability. A
person will make the purchase if all the three elements are satisfactory. Otherwise the purchase will be delayed or cancelled. At this stage the advertiser can take care of the above considerations and influence the decision of the consumer.

5th Stage: Consumption

Once the product is purchased the consumption can occur either immediately or on a later date. At this point the consumer begins to use the product and evaluation continues by comparing the performance with expectations (Loudon and Bitta, 2002). The rate at which people use or consume a product is one important basis of behavioural segmentation. A frequently used categorization of usage rate is: non user, light user, medium user and heavy user. Normally a company is most interested in the heavy users of its product. A good product may fail to give the expected satisfaction to the consumer due to lack of technical knowledge in using it. Descriptive advertisements, demonstration and after sales service etc., are generally used by marketers to ensure proper consumption and repurchase of the product.

6th Stage: Post Consumption Evaluation

After purchase and consumption of the product, a person may engage in re-evaluation of the purchase. They compare the actual performance of the product with the level of performance that was expected prior to purchase. If actual performance is found to be better than the expected, consumers feel satisfied about the product. If the actual performance is worse than expected, consumers get dissatisfied with the product. In this process the consumers experience an inner tension (cognitive dissonance) which can be explained as an inconsistency
between the expected satisfaction and the actual state. Satisfied consumers may make repurchase or communicate positively with friends and relatives interested in the purchase. But dissatisfaction may lead to negative communication and brand switching.

Marketers follow up the post-purchase actions of the consumers. Generally as expectations increase, satisfaction level decreases. In most of the cases products may not come up to the consumers' high expectations. Many advertisements are made to build confidence in the recent purchasers of consumer durables and to confirm the wisdom of their choice. Follow up calls, positive advertisement and after sales service offers etc tends to reduce the post-purchase dissatisfaction in the consumers.

7th Stage: Divestment

Once the product is finished using, it has to be disposed off some how. They can be remarke ted, exchanged for a better offer, donated it or scrap it. Replacement or disposal issues are getting increasing attention of the marketers of consumer durables. As the purchase of durables is costly and the frequency of purchase is low, the replacement decisions are very important. Advertising strategies can be developed to take care of various problems related to replacement or disposal of the durables. Many advertisements carry attractive exchange offers and extended uses for the existing product of the consumers.

The consumer decision process model makes certain assumptions:

- Consumer is rational
- There are different types of decisions to be made
• Consumers can collect more information
• Information can be processed in a simple and sequential manner.

When an internal or external stimuli is received a realization occurs to the consumer that there existed gap between the current state and the desired state of affairs. Once a need is recognized, it may motivate a potential consumer to take the next step in the direction of resolving it. Then the individual looks for more information depending either on one’s own memory (internal search) or external sources of information. Generally more information is required when the decision making is complex. After collecting necessary information the brands are evaluated from the need satisfying perspective. The consumer tends to purchase the most preferred one and lastly post consumption evaluation will be made against original purchase criteria. At the end of the decision process the consumer may be feeling satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

**Advertising and consumer behaviour**

The extent to which the process of advertising affects the consumer behaviour and gets translated into sales is subjected to continuous debate and discussion. The change in attitudes and behaviour are outcomes of various factors involving cultural, economic, social and psychological differences. Understanding the factors influencing consumer behaviour is very important to any one desirous of evaluating advertising effectiveness. The factors influencing consumer behaviour may be broadly classified as external influence factors and internal influence factors.
Factors influencing consumer behaviour

Understanding of the factors influencing consumer behaviour will be of great use while developing and reviewing advertising strategies. The external factors influencing consumers include cultural differences, social class differences, group influences and household influences. Culture symbolizes the heritage of the society and reflects a set of values, goal, attitudes, life styles and ideas which shape human behaviour. Sub cultures are classes within classes and people belong to sub culture will have their own life style, attitudes, food habits and rituals. Social classes are distinct groups in the society having similar values, interests and behaviour. Social classes are decided by income, education, wealth, occupation etc. Social classes are generally divided as upper class, middle class and lower class. Group influences also decide the consumer behaviour. The reference groups and family members will also have impact on the decisions made by the individuals.

Internal factors motivating the consumers include needs, motivations, perceptions, personality factors, experience etc. Needs and motivations are having strong influences on consumer behaviour. Needs ranging from physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, self esteem needs to self actualization needs are motivations or driving forces inducing consumers to buy. Generally unsatisfied needs form motives or urges to buy. Hence each need recognition shall be considered as a purchase opportunity and hence are of strategic importance. Perception is another important factor of influence. Perception may be defined as the manner in which a person gathers, processes and interprets the information. The consumers’ perception of the message is very
important in evaluating the impact of advertisement. The level of exposure to advertisements, comprehension of the message and communication effectiveness of the message decide the influence of advertisements and hence the consumer behaviour. Personality traits of the consumer and the learning from experience by using or trying the product are other important factors of influence.

Consumer behaviour tends to change in accordance with changes in internal and external factors. Hence the influence of advertisements can be learnt best by understanding the influence of ads on each stage of the consumer decision process. Generally, an advertisement that can influence the various stages of the consumer decision making process is said to have succeeded in its effectiveness. Kotler (2003) explains how one can learn about the stages in the buying decision process of the consumers by retrospective method. In this method, a small number of recent purchasers are interviewed and asked to recall the events leading to their purchase. The present study has used this method to understand the decision making process.

For the purpose of analysis, the decision variables were grouped into three broad categories: pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase. Seven dependent variables studied were grouped under these three broad categories. This classification was used to provide the frame work for this study. The three decision phases and the key dependent and independent variables studied are presented in Table 3.1
Table 3.1 Dependent and Independent Variables

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<th>Independent variables</th>
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<td>Communication effectiveness of advertisement</td>
<td>Consumer responses at different stages of decision process</td>
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<td>Liking for the ad</td>
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<td>Attitude towards the ad</td>
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<td>Pre-purchase phase</td>
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**Overall attitude towards the advertisements**

The consumer's general attitude towards advertising, either favourable or unfavourable would influence how he or she would respond to any single advertisement. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), attitude is a function of one’s salient beliefs at a given point in time. As attitude is determined by as set of salient beliefs, changes in attitudes must be mediated by changes in those beliefs. Overall attitude towards advertising in general can be defined as “a learned predisposition to respond in the consistently favourable or unfavourable manner to advertising in general” (Lutz, 1985). Overall attitudes are likely to affect
other aspects of advertising communications like, recall, recognition, information seeking, persuasion, liking for the specific ad, intention to purchase etc.

**Level of involvement in decision making**

High-and-Low involvement product purchase decisions are important in shaping the perceptions and attitudes of the consumers toward advertisements. Products may be classified on the basis of likely involvement of the decision makers. Vaughn (1980) points out that in the case of decisions requiring high involvement for products such as a car, house, and new products, the information search may be predominant. For low involvement products like newspaper and stationary items informative input may be lesser. This approach may be useful for advertising planning and media selection.

Vaughn (1986) developed a new model combining high-low involvement and left-right brain specialization. It was suggested that communication response would certainly be different for high versus low involvement products and those which require predominantly thinking (left brain ) or feeling (right brain ) information processing.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


