CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The present study explored photography as a means of visual communication, a medium for need gratification, a medium for representation of reality and as a compensatory mechanism. The purpose of the study was to find out underlying motivations for photography practices and explore the role of demographic and psychographic variables as predictors for the nature of photographs clicked.

Out of sample of 15 photographers there were only two female photographers. This indicates that photography is still a male dominated profession. One of the female photographers is from professional photographer category and the other is from the amateur category. There are no female photo-journalists in the sample. This shows that photo-journalism is largely a male bastion. It was observed that the nature of photographs clicked and the gender of the photographer are associated as female photographers choose feminine themes like self-portraiture, fine art, design and shape whereas males choose masculine themes like nature, landscape, architecture, products, news, travel, people, life etc.

A study of the association between age and nature of photographs reveals that photographers in the age group of 20-40 years prefer avant-garde themes like architecture, aesthetics, portraiture, self-portrait, fine art, shape, design, fashion and life style, whereas photographers in the age group of 40-55 years prefer mature themes like life, its truth, people and their work. Photographers in the age group of 55-70 years prefer conventional themes like news, nature, wildlife, travel etc.

An analysis of the level of education of photographers and the preference of themes reveals that photographers with low level of education(under-graduate) like nature, travel and news photography whereas photographers with a medium level of education (graduate) like clicking photographs of themes like architecture, aesthetics, landscape, portraiture, self-portrait, news, nature, fashion and life style photos, fine arts,
shape and design, life and people while photographers with a high level of education (post-graduate) like clicking photographs of art, nature, theatre, travel etc.

A study of the occupation and the nature of photos reveals that the occupation of the photographer influences their choice of subject. Professional photographers, choose and specialize in a particular genre of photography like art, product, conceptual art, self-portraiture and studio photography, whereas photo-journalists specialize in news photography. However, photo-journalists like other themes like nature, lifestyle, fashion, art and theatre but because of their profession they are compelled to click news photos, they do not enjoy the freedom to pursue the genre of photography they personally like due to financial constraints. Amateur photographers come from different professions but one thing that unites them is their passion for photography. They pursue it as a hobby and the choice of theme varies from one amateur photographer to another.

Examining the monthly household income and the nature of photographs reveals that the two are not associated, however it was found that socio-economic status of the photographers influences the nature of photographs they choose to click. A photographer’s socio-economic status determines what genre of photography he chooses to pursue. Photographers with a high socio-economic status can afford formal education photography and their families support their passion for photography despite of the fact that it is an expensive hobby. The professional photographers are not constrained by financial circumstances to choose their subject of photographs, they have the privilege of clicking photographs of themes they personally like. Professional photographers are not bothered whether their photographs sell or not as they can afford to sustain themselves because they are not entirely dependent on the photography for living, they have the financial support of their families. On the contrary the photo-journalists’ do not have the choice of choosing the genre of photography that they personally like because of their financial limitations and the risk involved due to financial insecurity. The photo-journalists come from middle class backgrounds and are weighed down with the task of supporting their families financially and in some cases they are the only bread winners of the family which makes it impossible for them to opt for an unconventional form of photography as there would no guarantee of a fixed income. The profession of photo-
journalism does not demand any formal education in photography and anyone can enter this profession to make a living. For amateur photographers, photography is a leisure activity that they indulge in for pleasure, their high-socio economic status helps them pursue this hobby without any financial woes.

The results of the multiple case study reveal that the marital status of the photographers and the nature of photographs they choose to click are associated, as married photographers prefer to click photos of conventional themes like nature, travel, people etc., whereas the unmarried / separated / divorced photographers prefer to experiment with new ideas and themes like portraits, product photography, architecture and aesthetic photography, conceptual art, self-portrait, shape, design, abstract and fine art photographs.

An analysis of the psychographic profiles of the photographers and nature of photographs they choose to click reveals that photographers with a medium to high sociability prefer to click photographs of themes that involve integration with society and people whereas photographers with low to medium sociability choose themes that are devoid of human element like photographs of products, photographs of ‘self’ etc. All photographers exhibit a high self-esteem but professional photographers exhibit exceptionally high self-esteem as compared to other photographers. The professional photographers have high confidence level and they do not shy away from choosing unconventional themes in photography. Photographers with high locus of control prefer to click photographs where they can control the elements involved whereas photographers with low locus of control just click what is out there, without trying to control the circumstances of capture. Photographers with high level of shyness prefer themes that have less interaction with the society like nature and travel photographs while photographers with low level of shyness click photographs of people centric themes like people, portraits, fashion, life style etc.

Professional photographers specialize in a particular genre of photography like nature, landscape, architecture, product, portrait, conceptual art, self-portraiture, studio photography. The photo-journalists indulge in news photography whereas amateur photographers are open to clicking photographs of anything and everything that pleases
them. The choice of the decisive moment, size and colour of the photograph, is largely influenced by the category to which a photographer belongs. Professional photography has various forms and each form of photography follows a different logic in choosing the decisive moment. In nature, architecture and landscape photography the photographer chooses a decisive moment on the basis of instinct and intuition whereas in conceptual art photography a theme is conceptualized and dramatized with the help of actors and various elements are arranged to narrate a theme that the photographer wishes to communicate. Photo-journalists choose the decisive moment on the basis of the principles of news relevance, they attempt to capture the climax or the high point of the action that becomes the essence of the moment, recorded in the form of a photograph. Amateur photographers follow their heart when it comes to choosing the decisive moment, they just click photographs that please them. Professional photographers do not have fixed rules in choosing the size and colour of photographs, they believe it is a spontaneous decision that comes with experience and practice. The choice of size in photo-journalism is dictated by principles of news relevance and news value. These decisions are also taken by keeping in mind the readers of the newspapers and current trends in newspaper industry and the printing technology. Amateur photographer’s decision to choose the size and colour of photograph does not follow any logic, they like big and coloured photographs because this is what pleases them and they can also afford it.

Professional photographers believe in photograph’s capacity to depict reality, but they feel this is only possible when the photographer does not allow his subjectivity to interfere with photography. Photo-journalists consider it their duty to depict truth and caution that every photo-journalist should keep his personal biases and prejudices aside in order to click photographs that depict reality and act as a mirror of society. Amateur photographers think photography is capable of depicting reality only if the photographer consciously chooses to render an objective depiction of reality.

13 photographers derive high cognitive need gratification through photography, a professional photographer and an amateur photographer derive medium to high cognitive gratification. 14 photographers derive high affective need gratification through photography, except a photo-journalist who derives a medium to high need gratification.
through photography. Nine photographers (4 photo-journalists, 4 amateur photographers and a professional photographer) drive high personal integrative need gratification through photography. Four professional photographers, a photo-journalist and an amateur photographer derive medium to high personal integrative need gratification. Professional photographers do not use photography to feel more powerful or in control and as a means to deal with negativity and loss whereas amateur and photo-journalists use it for feeling more powerful and as a mean of compensation. All photo-journalists, three amateur photographers and a professional photographer derive high social integrative need gratification through photography. Four professional photographers and an amateur photographer derive medium to high social integrative need gratification. This shows that photo-journalists derive high social integrative need gratification whereas professional photographer derive a little less social integrative need gratification, this may be due to the difference in their nature of photography. Photo-journalists click photos to reach out to the masses whereas professional photographers do not use photography to connect socially, while amateur photographers use photography to build up relationships with the society and the photographer community. 11 photographers (four photo-journalists, four amateur photographers and three professional photographers) derive high escapist need gratification through photography. Two professional photographers and an amateur photographer derive medium to high escapist need gratification and a photo-journalist derives low to medium escapist need gratification through photography. Professional photographers use photography as a vacuum to fill the emptiness of their lives, the photo-journalists use photography as a mechanism to overcome the feeling of loss of something and someone and amateur photographers use photography to release stress and as a means of distraction from tensions and problems of everyday life.

The results of the cross sectional descriptive analytical survey show that there is an association between the gender and the nature of photographs clicked by respondents (p = .000). More than half of the males (56.2%) prefer to click photographs of ‘Nature’ whereas ‘Family’ (37.3%) and ‘Friends’ (32%) are the most preferred category of photographs clicked by females. The reason for the preference of females for photographing family could be the fact that parents, especially mothers are assigned the task of taking care of family bonds (Tinkler, 2008). ‘Friends’ is the second most
preferred category of photographs chosen by females. Previous researches suggest that friends are an important subject in the photography practices of young females (Cullen, 2006; Tinkler, 2008). Friends are important part of the photographic activities of young females and they use photographic resources for friendship work (Cullen, 2006). Young females feel more responsible for the bonds of friendship (Tinkler, 2008). Another area of photography which is characteristic of females is photographs of ‘Self’. Only females reported taking photographs of ‘Self’, none of the males reported this practice. This finding coincides with Cullen’s (2006) observation that, ‘young females use the camera phone like a mirror, to check on how they look. Photographic technologies are used to explore and perform ‘wished for’ gendered and aged identities’ by young females (Cullen, 2006; Bloustein 2003 as cited in Tinkler, 2008). Males (2.2%) clicked more photographs in the ‘Other’ category (photos related to practical and functional tasks) as compared to females (0.4%). Similar trend was reported by Kindberg et al (2004), in their study of intentions for cameraphone use, in which they reported that males captured significantly more images in the personal task category (images used to support future task) than females.

An association was found between the age and the nature of photographs clicked (p = .000). Most preferred category of photographs clicked by the 15-30 year age group were of ‘Nature’ (39.1%) followed by photographs of ‘Friends’ (31%) and ‘Family’ (23%). Sharples et al. (2003) report that family photographing declined with age and was almost absent amongst 15-year-old and friends became increasingly important with age and were the principal focus of photographs for 15-year olds. Mendelson and Papacharissi (2011) in their study of college students’ Facebook galleries found that there were no images of parents and images without friends (Mendelson and Papacharissi, 2011:267). The results of the present study resonate with the findings of previous research as there is a clear indication of preference of photographs of friends over family by respondents in the age-group of 15-30 years. Respondents in the age group of 15 to 30 years were the only ones, who report clicking photographs of ‘Self’ (1.3%), this confirms the use of photography by the youth for the purpose of identification with self (Tinkler, 2008). For the 30-45 year olds the most preferred category is ‘Family’ (56.4%), followed by photographs of ‘Nature’ (40%). The purpose of photographs of family clicked by
adults has been to record the present for the purpose of the future to contribute to the production of memory and history (Hirsch, 1997). This reason can be attributed to the preference of the age group from 30-45 years for photographs of family. Respondents in the age group of 45-60 years (48%) click less photographs of ‘Family’ as compared to the age group of 30-45 years (56.4%). They attribute this shift of preference to the fact that the need to record the lives of their children decreases over a period of time as their children grow up. An increase in the photographs of family is noticed in the photography of respondents in the age group of 60-75 years, these respondents report clicking photos of their grandchildren. There was only one person in the age group of 75-90 years who clicks photographs, and these are of ‘Nature’ and not ‘Family’ or ‘Friends’. Chalfen (1987) lists the general stages of a life when snaps are produced: 1.) Beginnings (the birth of a baby is often the impetus to buy a camera and to take snapshots) 2.) From Infancy to Toddlerhood (the ‘firsts’ of everything: first birthday, Christmas, etc.) 3.) Childhood and Adolescence (from the first day at school to the graduation photograph) 4.) Early Adulthood (including relationships, which may eventually include marriage) 5.) Married Life (many of the snaps taken at this time, Chalfen points out, are made on holiday) 6.) Parenthood (returning the subject of the snapshot back to its beginnings, as the child and their own ‘firsts’ become the central subject) 7.) The Later Years (snapshots become infrequent, but there may be a desire to record the ‘lasts’: the final significant events in a life) 8.) Images of Life’s End (death is a subject that is seldom documented) (Chalfen 1987: 70–99, as cited in Bull, 2010:85-87). The results of the present study point towards a similar trend in the photography practices of the people, there is a tendency to click photographs of friends among the youth, as people enter married life clicking photographs of family takes priority, this interest seems to fade away as couples get old, but is renewed with arrival of their grandchildren and as one approaches life’s end there is a disinterest towards photography.

There is an association between the level of education and the nature of photographs clicked (p =.045) and occupation and the nature of photographs clicked (p =.000). Students prefer taking photographs of ‘Nature’ (39.4%) followed by photographs of ‘Friends’ (35.5%) and ‘Family’ (19.9%). Taking photographs of friends takes priority over photographs of family for students. Similar trend was reported by Mendelson and
Papacharissi (2011) in their study of college students’ Facebook galleries. The vast majority of the photos were of pairings or groups of friends (Mendelson and Papacharissi, 2011:259). Most of the students displayed no images of themselves with family members (Mendelson and Papacharissi, 2011: 261). A significant trend was noticed with regard to homemakers, all of them report clicking photographs of ‘Family’ (100%). This may be because mothers are the traditional custodians of family history (Holland 2001; Chambers 2003; Rose 2003); they are ‘the guardians of family memory, electing and preserving the family archive’ (Holland, 2001: 9) and also because the task of archiving family photos often falls to the wife or mother in the families (Frohlich et al. 2002).

No association was found between income and the nature of photographs clicked (p =0.37). However, there is an association between the socio-economic status and the nature of photographs clicked (p =.03*). The most preferred category of photographs for the respondents with low socioeconomic status is of ‘Friends’, while for respondents with a medium socio economic status, ‘Nature’ is the most preferred category. Respondents with high socioeconomic status preferred clicking photographs of ‘Family’. These findings replicate the results of Bourdieu (1965, 1990) study of the photography practices of the French people, as he found that photography practices are influenced by the social class or group to which a person belongs.

There is a significant association between the marital status and the nature of photographs clicked (p =0.002**). Unmarried people like to click photographs of ‘Nature’ (40.5%), ‘Friends’ (33%) and ‘Family’ (21.1%) respectively. For the unmarried people clicking photographs of friends takes priority over clicking photographs of family. Whereas more than half (55.8%) of the married people prefer clicking photographs of ‘Family’. This finding corroborates with Bourdieu’s claim that photographic practice exists and subsists by virtue of its family function (Bourdieu,1990:19). According to Bourdieu (1990) “photography practices are closely linked to the presence of children in the household because the arrival of children reinforces the untegeration of the family group” (Bourdieu,1990:26). The second preference of the married respondents is for photographs of ‘Nature’ (35.6%), photographs of ‘Friends’ (2.9%) takes a back seat in the life of the married respondents. The separated/divorced (60%) and widowed (66.7%) preferred clicking photographs of ‘Nature’.
The present study explored association between psychographic variables like sociability, self-esteem, locus of control and shyness and the nature of photographs clicked by people. No association was found between sociability and the nature of photographs clicked (p=.156), self-esteem and the nature of photographs clicked (p=.210), locus of control and the nature of photographs clicked (p=.619). However an association was found between shyness and the nature of photographs clicked (p=.046).

A Chi square test of homogeneity to test the distribution of respondents in accordance to their views on photography as the depiction of reality or a subjective interpretation reveals that there is no homogeneous distribution (chi 117.95 p < 0.0001). Nearly three fourth of the respondents (67.5%) display Q2 score and a little less than one third of the respondents (29.8%) display a Q3 score on the Photography and Reality scale. The results of the present study indicate that photography is still considered to be representation of reality.

More than half of the respondents (51%) reported that photography helps them in dealing with negativity and coping with the feeling of loss and a little less than one third of the respondents (31.5%) gave an ambivalent response as they were not sure whether photography acts as a compensatory mechanism or not. A small percentage of respondents (17.2%) think that photography does not act as a means of compensation. The results of the study suggest that photography is viewed as means of compensation.

The current research examined the relationship between need gratification and photography. A one-way ANOVA to test the level of variance between the nature of photographs clicked and the nature of need gratification shows a significant variance between cognitive, affective personal and social need gratification and the nature of photographs clicked (F (3.322) = .006 p <.05), (F (3.228) p=.007) < .05), (F (5.248) = .000 p <.05) and (F (2.513) p=.029), <.05. However no significant variance was found between escapist need gratification and the nature of photographs clicked (F (2.073) p=.068) > .05). The association between the frequency of photographs taken and degree of need gratification was tested using a one tailed Pearson correlation, the results show that there is a negative correlation between the frequency of photographs clicked and the degree of need gratification. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).
frequency of photography increases the degree of need gratification decreases. Respondents who click fewer photographs derive more need gratification than respondents who click more photographs.

Cameraphones are the most common photographic equipment used for photographic communication as nearly half of the respondents (48.42%) communicate through cameraphone photographs. These figures are not surprising in the background of the facts that, “in the first half of 2003, camera phones outsold digital cameras worldwide and it was predicted that within the next decade camera phones may become the predominant consumer imaging device” (Van House et al., 2004b: 2 as cited in Villi, 2007:50). According to Villi (2007), “built-in camera functions are now a popular and accepted add-on to the mobile phone” (Villi, 2007:50).

More than three fourth respondents (73.15%) respondents claim that their mood influences the frequency of taking photographs. Location also emerged as another important factor that influences the frequency of photography as three fourth of the respondents (70%) reveal that a picturesque location serves as a temptation to click photographs. According to Bourdieu (1990) the intensification of photographic practice is linked to holidays and tourism and holiday photographs transform “places and moments into monuments to leisure, certifying one has leisure and the leisure to photograph it” (Bourdieu, 1990: 34-36). A little less than three fourth respondents claim (67.98%) that important occasions like, birthdays, anniversaries, weddings also dictates the frequency of taking photographs. These results correspond to the views of Bourdieu (1990), who says that, “photographs of major ceremonies are possible because – and only because – they capture behaviour that is socially approved and socially regulated, that is behaviour that is already solemnized. Nothing may be photographed apart from that which must be photographed” (Bourdieu, 1990: 23-24). The reason for mood being the most dominant factor in influencing the frequency of photographs could be attributed to the always at hand nature of cameraphones that facilitates the capturing and viewing of photographs anytime, anywhere (Kindberg et al.2005). Occasion emerged as the least dominant factor that influences the frequency of photography. This may be because cameraphones encourage clicking photographs of mundane, banal, routine activities, due to its ubiquity (Okabe and Ito (2006); Koskinen, 2005). In its earlier days, only things that fell outside
the daily routine were photographed, but cameraphones have resulted in a shift in this trend by popularizing clicking photographs of everyday activities.

‘Nature’ emerged as the most preferred theme of photography (39.7%) because respondents love nature and its beauty and want to preserve and share it with others in the form of photographs and also because it has a calming effect on them, is a source of joy and happiness, helps them satiate their creativity and also acts as a means to connect to God. ‘Family’ (30%) and ‘Friends’ (24.6%) were preferred as the most photographed theme because of love and closeness to them and spending most of the time with them. Respondents who rated ‘Friends’ as the most preferred subject for photography disclose that clicking photographs of friends is full of fun and makes them happy and joyful. ‘Strangers’ as a preferred theme for photography was reported by a small number of respondents (3.4%) because of their interest in observing strangers. Few respondents (1%) reveal that they enjoy clicking photographs of ‘Self’ because of their love for self. A very small percentage of respondents (1.2%) preferred clicking photographs in the ‘Other’ category as a part of their job or as a hobby.

A significantly large number of respondents (80.3%) use photography for the purpose of communication, resonating the results of previous studies that confirm that cameraphones photographs are being increasingly used for communication (Makela et al. 2000; Lehtonen et al. 2002; Kindberg et al. 2004; Rivere, 2005; Scifo, 2005; Van House et al. 2005; Rantavuo, 2007; Djick, 2008; Villi, 2010). A small but significant number of respondents (19.7%) reveal that they use photography for personal collection and not for the purpose of communication. Okabe and Ito (2006) identified personal archiving function of cameraphone photos as they found that cameraphone photographs serve as a visual archive for individuals and these photos are rarely shared with others, they are meant for personal memory only. Kindberg et al. (2004) also found that cameraphone photographs are used for individual reflection or reminiscing. Scifo (2005) suggests that cameraphone photos act as mobile archives of memories. Rivière (2005) confirms that, “cameraphones photos are used to carry loved ones and keep them present symbolically” (Rivière, 2005:182). These findings explain the practice of clicking photographs and not sharing or using them to communicate with others. These photographs act as a visual archive of memories, meant for personal recollection. Villi (2010) points out, that in the
past one camera was shared by the entire family but today every member has his own cameraphone, thus it is used to record personal events and acts like a visual diary rather than being used to create a collective memory (Villi, 2010:73). Cooley (2005) also observes that cameraphone photography is characterized by an autobiographical and self-documentary impulse. Camera phone photographs perform a tracking function, a self-record of one’s life. Camera phone photographs reinforce the user’s individuality rather than their ties to other groups (Gye, 2007: 284).

A significantly large number of respondents (81%) claim that they succeed in communicating what they intend to communicate through their photographs sometimes. A small number of respondents (9.4%) declare that they are able to communicate what they want through their photographs almost every time. There were a few respondents (6.9%) who confess that they do not know whether they succeeded in communicating through their photographs or not, due to the absence of feedback. They never get to know whether their photographic communication is successful or not. Schramm considers feedback as an important component of the communication process, he believes that, “feedback tells us how our messages are being interpreted” (Ruben, 1984:48). In the absence of feedback it is not possible for the communicator to modify his messages for a successful communication but because of the growing popularity of sharing photographs through social media web services that are characterized by reciprocity, the problem of feedback is taken care off because publishing does not separate the content creators from the audience in contrast to traditional forms of broadcasting, where the traffic is one-way (Villi, 2010: 68-69).

The common themes that the respondents wish to communicate through their photographs are beauty of nature, memories, emotions and feelings like joy, happiness, affection, love, care, togetherness, bonding, celebration, beauty of relationships, the spirit or the essence of moment, that life is beautiful and every moment is precious and worth cherishing. The results of the present study can be substantiated by the claims made by Dijck (2007), who says that, cameraphone photos are used to merely show affect, they are more about connecting and getting in touch than communicating memory objects (Dijck, 2007: 114). Van House et al. (2004) also suggest that people share photographs to keep other people up to date on what is going on in one’s life, as well as to connect to loved
ones. Scifo (2005) confirms that, “camperaphones photos intensify communication with proximate relations” (Scifo (2005:367–368). Photo messages are believed to support closeness between friends and family members and function to maintain and enforce social bonds (Oksman 2006, 103; Demumieux and Habbouche 2004; Döring et al. 2006, 207; Gai 2007, 205–205; Koskinen 2007, 135 as cited in Villi, 2010:75.). The results of the present research also point towards a similar trend, as photographs clicked by respondents were mainly aimed at sharing experiences and communicating emotions.

Uploading photographs on Facebook emerged as one of the most common ways to communicate through photographs. These results are not surprising, given the growing popularity of Facebook, as by February 2012, Facebook had over 845 million users who spent more than 9.7 billion minutes per day on the site (Facebook, 2012; Rusli, 2012). Users share four billion pieces of content per day, including uploads of 250 million photos, and Facebook is now integrated with over seven million websites and applications (Facebook, 2012; Tsotsis, 2011 as cited in Wilson et al.2012:203). Over 200 million photographs are uploaded on Facebook every day (Carr, 2011). Adding photographs to Facebook profiles and albums, tagging, writing captions, commenting on photos, presenting them as a collage and arranging them in a sequence to narrate a story were some common ways of communicating through photos on Facebook. Respondents also upload photographs on other social networking sites like Orkut and Hi 5, but nothing beats the phenomenon of uploading photographs on Facebook, which has come become a rage with the youth, who click photographs with the sole purpose of uploading them on Facebook.

Uploading photographs on blogs, Twitter and YouTube as a way of communicating with larger audience was reported by some respondents. Villi (2010) points out that Twitter and other micro blogging websites are being increasingly used by young people. Photo- blogging is growing in popularity with the young generation who are technically savvy (Van House et al., 2004). The popularity of blogging and photoblogging is evident from the fact that there are now well over a million documented blogs and photoblogs in the world, (Cohen, 2005: 885). Villi (2010) suggests that, the previously dominant interpersonal and intimate attribute of visual mobile communication
is replaced, to a degree, by the aspect of publishing, mostly by using designated photo sharing apps or mobile apps for platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

Respondents reveal that emailing photos is a common way of sharing photos with family and friends. Researches done in the past also found that email is preferred over web publishing for individual images and small photo sets as it supported conversation, whereas web did not allow commentary or feedback (Frohlich et al. 2002; Kindberg et al. 2004; Rodden & Wood, 2003; Rantavuo, 2007; Miller & Edwards, 2007).

Publishing photographs on the internet and websites like Wikipedia, Google, was reported by a few respondents, who pursued photography as a hobby. These results are similar to the results of a study conducted by Frohlich et al. (2002) in which they found that the web was used to share photos that are unusual and, relating to hobbies and specific interest. Stelmaszewska and Blandford (2006) also report posting photos on web as a common way of sharing photos. Respondents share photographs with an intimate circle on the screens of laptops, I pads or desktops, tablets. The results of studies conducted by Stelmaszewska et al. (2008) and Rodden & Wood (2003) also confirm that sharing with family is done on desktops, laptops, TV screens, digital tablets.

Uploading photographs websites like Flickr, Photobucket, My Shutter, Pixoto, Picasa and 500 px.com to generate constructive criticism in order to improve their photography skills and techniques and seek appreciation for their work was reported by a few respondents who are members of camera clubs. The growing popularity of Flickr is due to its publicness and easy public access (Van House et al. 2006). Miller & Edwards (2007) also found that 'Snapsr,' members of a Flickr group, used Flickr to share photos.

Miller and Edwards (2007) point towards the use of multiple methods like email, personal galleries, blogs, web photo services and social networking sites like Facebook and My space. Van House et al. (2004) also highlight the growing trend towards posting photos on the internet via email, blogs, web pages, due to the ease of sharing photos with distant family and friends and giving them an opportunity to download and print photographs.

Another way devised by respondents for photographic communication was sharing photographs on their mobile phone screens. Similar trend was reported by Okabe
and Ito (2006) who found that most sharing of photos took place off the handset screen. Scifo (2005) also found that screen sharing of photos with family and friends was a common way to share photos. Sharing photos via Bluetooth, infrared, memory cards were some novel ways devised by respondents to share photograph with intimate circle. Kindberg et al. (2004) and Stelmaszewska et al. (2008) report similar results, as participants in their study shared photos with people in the intimate circle like family and friends through infrared or Bluetooth. Sharing photographs through smart phone applications like iPhoto, Blackberry messenger is becoming popular among the youth. Sharing photos via mobile applications like what’s App is also a common practice among youngsters.

Some respondents reported using old ways of photographic communication like maintaining albums, displaying photos at home or at office, while others confessed that storing photographs in digital formats has become a norm and they are slowly drifting away from the old practice of printing photographs and maintaining albums, as it requires too much time and effort. These results confirm the findings of Rodden and Wood (2003) who found that organizing prints was a low priority task and Frohlich et al. (2002) as they report that organizing prints is considered complex and time consuming and participants lack the motivation and time for these activities. Another reason for giving up on preserving photographs in physical form was the cost consideration, storing photographs in digital format does not involve any costs, while prints prove expensive. Digital technology allows one to click as many photographs as one wants without any added cost but it is not practically feasible to get all these photographs printed. Respondents resolved this dilemma by carefully selecting photographs and getting them printed for the purpose of displaying them at home or to add them to the personal collection of photographs.

Almost half of the respondents (49.3%) reveal that their choice of moment while clicking photographs is dictated by their gut instinct or intuition. Some respondents (14.8%) disclose that the familiarity with the subject (the object/subject) makes it easy for them to decide which moment is worth capturing. Few respondents (12.6%) declare that their experience guides them in choosing the decisive moment. While there were some respondents (14.3%) who claim that they go on clicking photos till they get the shot they desired as digital technology gives them the advantage of clicking photographs without
any extra cost, they click as many photographs as they want to, scrutinize them later and
delete the photographs that do not meet their expectations. Digital technology encourages
people to take risky photos as the ones that turn out badly can be retaken or deleted
(Rodden and Wood, 2003). A very small number of respondents (5.7%) claim that they
plan and click photographs.

Nearly half of the respondents (47.30%) resort to digital manipulation of
photographs at least sometimes. (7.88%) respondents reveal that they digitally manipulate
photographs frequently and a small percentage of respondents (3.44%) confess that they
always digitally manipulate their photographs. A little less than half of the respondents
(42.36%) claim that they never resort to digital manipulation. Respondents reveal that the
poor imaging quality of cameraphone photos compels them to resort to digital
manipulation to improve their quality by increasing clarity, adjusting the colour,
brightness, contrast, editing, cropping and sharpening focus. Making photographs more
attractive, beautiful, appealing and interesting and getting rid of unwanted elements and
hiding flaws was also listed as an important reason for resorting to digital manipulation.
According to Pauwels (2002) digital manipulation makes it possible, “to remove
undesired elements quickly and effectively to make room for everything that is better and
more beautiful” (Pauwels, 2002:162). Satiating creativity, desire for experimentation, for
fun and pleasure and to ensure better communication, were also cited as reasons for
indulging in digital manipulation.

The increase in the digital manipulation of photographs can be attributed to the
fact that photography is being used as a tool of identity formation (Slater, 1995; Tinkler,
2008; Dijck, 2008). The desire to construct and present an idealized image of ourselves
explains the trend of resorting to digital manipulation of photographs (Pauwels, 2008;
Dijck 2008). There are two contrasting views on digital manipulation in photography,
some scholars point out that digitalization of photography technology has ushered an era
of digital manipulation of photos whereas other scholars argue that manipulation was
inherent in photography from the day of its inception (Manovich, 2001; Ritchin, 1999;
Holland and Wells as cited in Dijck,2008; Rosler,2005 (1988/1989) & Mitchell,
one thing is certain, earlier photographs were retouched by the professionals in the
studios but digital technology has made manipulation easy, affordable and accessible to the individual photographer.

Family photography was believed to belong to the tradition of straight photography, where construction and manipulation are avoided as a matter of principle (Lister 1997, 283 as cited in Villi, 2010: 58). Family snapshots are considered to be rarely synthetic or heavily manipulated, aside from cropping or adjusting the colours (Villi, 2010:58). But Pauwels (2008) believes, “little lies for the best” is the rule that applies to family photography practices. According to Pauwels (2008) digitally doctored photographs do not represent the family in the true sense but they are representative of their desires and aspirations.

According to Kress and Leeuwen (2002), “Colour fulfills three functions: the ideational function, the function of constructing representations of the world; the interpersonal function, the function of enacting (or helping to enact) interactions characterized by specific social purposes and specific social relations; and the textual function, the function of marshalling communicative acts into larger wholes, into the communicative events or texts that realize specific social practices” (Kress and Leeuwen, 2002:346). Nearly half of the respondents (44.1%) feel that the colour of the photographs helps to set the mood of the photograph. A similar claim is made by Zelanski and Fisher (1996), according to them, “Colour affects our emotions beyond thought and can convey any mood, capture attention or stimulate desire” (Zelanski and Fisher, 1996 as cited in Richards, 2009). More than one third of the respondents (35.7%) believe that the colour of the photograph helps capture the attention of the viewers and attracts them towards the photograph. These findings coincide with the results of the study carried out by Garcia and Stark (1991) to determine whether colour in newspapers attracted reader attention in which they found that colour photographs in particular can be successful at attracting reader attention. Similarly Detenber and Winch’s (2001) study of emotional significance of colour in newspaper photographs found that colour images are rated higher on arousal (Detenber and Winch, 2001 as cited in Martin-Kratzer, 2005). Meyers and Peracchio (1995) also suggest that colour has superior attention getting qualities and a powerful visual impact. According to Douglis (2004), “Colour attracts the eye and stimulates the senses” (Douglis, 2004: 52). A study by Gardner and Cohen (1966) indicates that
monochromatic newspaper ads were less attractive to people than the same ads that had some colour (Gardner and Cohen, 1966 as cited in Detenber et al.2000). The results of the present study reaffirm the results of previous studies that colours convey the mood and attract the viewers of the photograph.

Picture size has long been recognized in psychology (Kosslyn, 1980 as cited in Percy & Rossiter, 1983) and in advertising (Starch's 'square root law') as a visual stimulus variable that increases memory responses such as recognition and recall. Photograph size is associated with greater recall (Baxter, et al., 1978 as cited in Seels et al, 1999: 125-138). Research indicates that image size influences message processing and the viewing experience (Detenber and Reeves, 1996; Lombard, 1995; Reeves, Lang, Kim, and Tatar, 1999 as cited in Detenber et al.2000). More than half of the respondents (54.9%) think that right size of the photograph ensures clarity of the subject. A little more than a quarter respondents (27.3%) believe that photograph size determines the weight or importance of the photograph. These results coincide with the findings of Wanta (1988) who asserts that the size of the photograph influences readers' perception of importance as the size of a photograph influences what issues they think are important (Wanta, 1988 as cited in Detenber et al.2000). Wanta (1988) in a study of the effects of dominant photographs explored the correlation between photograph size and the prominence of issues on readers' agenda and found that “newspaper editors have the power to raise their readers' salience on certain issues over a short period of time by merely increasing the size of photographs” (Wanta, 1988: 111). A study by Detenber and Reeves (1996) showed that the large images were more arousing and were perceived as more dominant than the small images. A study that manipulated the size of newspaper pictures discovered that larger photographs on a printed page increased the readership of the accompanying story (Huh, 1994 as cited in Detenber and Reeves, 1996). Garcia and Stark (1991) found that the most dominant element on the page served as the point of entry. Readers consistently looked at the largest photographs first. The results of the present study also confirm that photograph size determines the importance given to photographs by the viewers.

Nearly one third of the respondents (33%) disclose that they focus on choosing the best angle while clicking a photograph. A quarter (25%) respondents reveal that they
try and incorporate all important elements while framing a shot. Ensuring clarity of the subject or the object of the photograph was considered essential while clicking photographs by (17.7%) respondents. These results are similar to the claims made by Chalfen (1987) that, “it is often carefully arranged who gets into the photograph (or is kept out), who stands next to whom, and where the photograph is taken” (Chalfen 1987:72-73). Only (2.5%) respondents adhere to the rules of photographic composition while clicking photographs. (7.9%) respondents claim that they click photographs without any before thought or contemplation. This indicates that everyday photography practices are not well thought, these results coincide with the views of Green and Lowry (2003) who believe that snapshots are badly focused and ill-composed images (Green and Lowry, 2003: 58), Halpern (1974) according to whom, snapshots are informal and casual in style (Halpern, 1974: 66) and Kouvenhowen (1974), who thinks that, “snapshots are taken quickly with a minimum of deliberate posing and selectivity” (Kouvenhowen, 1974: 106). Similar thoughts are expressed by Model (1974) who suggests that snapshots are not thought out (Model, 1974: 7). Snapshots rarely aspire to technical or artistic merit (Holland, 1991:4), or entail conscious construction (Dewdney and Lister, 1988: 68).

The results of the exercise carried out to test whether the decoder or the viewer is able to decode/interpret the photograph as encoded by the encoder/photographer reveal that on an average (20%) respondents succeed in interpreting the photographs as encoded by the encoder or the photographer. The results show that respondents brought in their personal interpretations while decoding the photographs. The decoders (viewers) were able to decode the photographic message in a photograph as encoded by the photographer very few times. Similar finding is reported by Lantz (1995), who says that, many audience members will not read the image the way it was intended because of the personal interpretations they bring to the viewing process (Lantz, 1995 as cited in Daniels, 2005:28). Barthes (1984) also argued that photographs will mean different things to different people, and, because of the reader’s background, likes and dislikes and memories, the photograph will be read differently”( Barthes,1984 as cited in Cass, 1998:15). Similarly Worth (1981) suggests that meaning is limited by individual psychological, social and cultural histories, which interact with socio-cultural limitations placed within specific contexts (Worth, 1981: 181 as cited in Lazaro, 1999:21). Sturken
and Cartwright (2001) explain that, “Audiences often see an image differently from how it is intended either because they bring experiences and associations to a particular image that were not anticipated by its producer or because the meanings they derive are informed by the context in which an image is seen” (Sturken and Cartwright, 2001:46)

**Summary**

The results of the present study confirm that demographic variables of age, gender, level of education, occupation, socio-economic status and marital status influence the nature of photographs clicked. Bourdieu’s structural constructionist perspective which explains the difference in the preferences of people with regard to the choice of the subject of photography stands re-affirmed.

The present research examined whether photography is considered to be a truthful depiction of reality or a subjective interpretation of the world by the photographer. Even today the realist view of photography dominates as photography is viewed as an objective process that involves minimum human intervention, as the camera is regarded to be a dispassionate device that records reality as it is, without interfering with it. The photographic process is considered to be automatic and mechanical and photographer’s role is thought to be limited to pressing the shutter. However, some people doubt photography’s capacity to represent reality, they believe it to be a subjective interpretation of the world by the photographer. The constructionist view helps to understand photography as a construction and not a perfect representation of reality as this view takes into account various subjective decisions made by the photographer in the process of making a photograph. The constructionist view of photography sees the photograph as coloured by photographer’s subjective vision.

The present study explored photography as a compensatory mechanism. Based on the psychoanalytic framework the present research assumed that photography acts as a compensatory mechanism as it helps people deal with the feelings of negativity and loss. The psychoanalytic perspective sees photography as a defense to overcome the anxiety of the passing time or the fear of losing something or someone and a means to compensate for a perceived loss, absence or threat in the object world and for the feeling of anxiety,
fear and despair. The results of the present study confirm the use of photography as a compensatory mechanism.

The present study found that photography is used as a means of visual communication by photographers and people alike but the purpose for which it is used differs. Professional photographers consciously create a photograph with the intention of communicating an idea or a thought to the viewers but they also believe in giving the viewers the freedom to interpret their photographs according to their own perception. The photo-journalists wish to convey a message through their photographs to the readers of the newspaper and it is crucial that the photograph is correctly interpreted by the viewer, thus it becomes indispensable that the photographs depict the essence of the moment or the truth of the event. Amateur photographers do not have any fixed ideas or themes that they wish to communicate through their photographs, they just click photographs for pleasure, as a leisure activity.

Photographs clicked by ordinary people in everyday life are generally not very well thought, there are no specific themes that they want to communicate, for them sharing photographs with each other is a way to express their love and affection towards their family and friends and also to keep each other updated about their lives visually. The results of the present study confirm Carey’s ritual view of communication as photography is used for visual interpersonal communication and this photographic communication is primarily meant for staying connected and updated about each other’s life and less for exchanging information. Clicking photographs of family and friends is common because of love and closeness to them and these photographs are shared to maintain relationships, stay connected and communicate emotions of affection, love, care, togetherness, bonding, beauty and strength of relationships. Regular sharing of photographs takes place between the members of close knit and intimate groups, and this photographic visual communication boosts the cohesion and sense of belonging.

Respondents indulging in everyday photography report a high rate of success in communicating what they intend through their photograph as the present day photographic communication is equipped with the option of feedback. Feedback helps people to design their future photographic messages in a manner that are easily
understood by the recipients. A common context shared by the people who communicate with each other visually with the help of photographs and an opportunity to clarify doubts, ensures a better decoding of visual photographic messages in interpersonal communication. The accompanying of photographic messages with oral, written communication increases the chances of successful decoding. Similarities in socio-cultural backgrounds also ensure a successful photographic communication in interpersonal relationships.

In photographic visual communication between the photographer (encode) and the viewer (decoder) the context of the photograph is absent and there is no common shared knowledge that assists the decoding of the photographic message. Moreover there is no mechanism of feedback in place that enables the photographer to design the photographic communication in a way that results in successful visual communication. Only a small percentage of respondents were able to decode the photographs as encoded by the photographer. Respondents brought in their personal interpretations while decoding the photographs. The reason for different interpretations of the same message is the difference in the encoder’s (photographers’) and decoder’s (viewers’) communication skills, attitudes, knowledge level, position within a social-cultural system as explained by Berlo’s SMCR model of communication.

Limitations

The current research suffers from certain limitations, one of the limitations stems from the absence of a theory of visual communication, on the basis of which the process of visual communication between the encoder and the viewer could be understood. However, an attempt was made to elucidate the photographic communication between the encoder and decoder by applying Berlo’s SMCR model. In order to understand the process of visual communication through photographs in inter-personal relationships the Ritual View of Communication was used, as there does not exist any particular theory to explain visual communication in inter-personal relationships.

The present research made use of the Uses and Gratification perspective to understand the motivations behind the practice of photography, but there was no standard need gratification scale of photography, which could be used to measure gratifications
derived through the practice of photography. The present research made an attempt to
device a need gratifications scale of photography by reviewing past literature to identify
the uses of photography.

The use of multiple case study method to explore the practice of photography by
three different types of photographer: the professional photographers, the photo-
journalists and the amateur photographers, did not permit the generalization of the results
of the multiple case study analysis to the population of photographers, because the
sample size was small and the use of non-probability sampling method (purposive
sampling) did not guarantee a representative sample. The results could not be subjected to
a statistical analysis to examine the causal relationships between different variables. Case
study being a qualitative method is subject to researcher bias, and researcher's
subjectivity influencing the data collection and interpretation of results. However, the
present research tried to overcome this problem by using the logic of triangulation in data
collection and adopting the principle of explanation building, pattern matching and
establishing linkage to arrive at reliable results.

The present research relied on the self-reported photographic behavior of the
respondents. The constraints of time and money made it practically impossible to verify
respondents' statements in the light of analysis of their photographs. The present study
studied visual communication through photographs, but the textual or the verbal
messages that accompanied photographs were not studied. This is a limitation,
considering the fact that the meaning of the photograph lies in the context.

Suggestions for Further Research

The present research found that there is an urgent need for a theory of visual
communication which will help in understanding the process of visual communication.
The researches to be conducted in the future in the field of visual communication should
make an attempt to synthesize a theory of visual communication. The researches in future
need to examine the barriers or obstacles in visual communication through photographs
and suggest ways to overcome these barriers to make photographic communication more
effective.
There is a need to device a standard procedure or model that will help in decoding the photographs. At present, there is no mechanism to guide researchers studying visual communication in interpreting photographs.

Uses and Gratification Perspective has been used to study various mass media like newspapers, magazines, radio, television, internet etc., and these researches have yielded a list of gratifications that are derived from these mass communication mediums. Since photography has not been studied from the Gratification perspective before, there is no standard need gratification scale of photography that can be used to measure the satisfaction derived from practicing photography. Future research researches should make an attempt to device a need gratification scale of photography, which will be helpful to researchers trying to study satisfactions derived from the practice of photography in future. The future researches can also explore the relationship between demographic and psychographic variables and nature of need gratification.

Worth and Gross (1981) suggest that the researchers need to study how people make meaning by studying cultural artifacts created by them. Thus future researchers should make an attempt to understand the photographic behaviour of people, by examining photographs created by them, how they are created, viewed, shared and talked about. In future, researchers could conduct longitudinal studies that examine the evolution of photography as a medium of visual communication and the how changing social, cultural, and economic conditions have influenced the practice of photography over the years.

An emerging form of photographic visual communication is the sharing of photographs on the web, with larger audience on platforms like, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr etc. Future researches can make an attempt to study this new phenomenon.

Future researchers can examine the negative ramifications of growing popularity of photography, is it creating threat to privacy and security? Is it breeding negative emotions like jealously, Is it creating conflict between the actual and the desired self?

We need to examine that how will the increasing use of photographs in interpersonal communication affect relationships in future? There is a need to study that
whether the increasing use of photographs leads to increasing or diminishing their importance as means of communication. Is visual communication replacing or overshadowing textual and verbal communications? If yes, then what are its implications?

Rivière (2005) in her study entitled, *Mobile Camera Phones: A New Form of “Being Together” in Daily Interpersonal Communication*, “speaks of the transient nature of photographic communication that is characterized by an unsatiated desire for pleasure, derived from the immediacy and intensity of the moment that creates a sense of an ideological disillusion due to its sensation seeking nature” (Rivière, 2005:183-84). According to Rivière (2005) “cameraphone photographs over invest in emotion as a form of relating to one another and the instantaneous nature of these photographic exchanges tempts us to give into the common imagination that creates an illusion of “being together” that is based on the sharing of an affective reality in the moment together”(ibid.). Future research needs to put to test the claims made by Rivière (2005) and explore whether instantaneous photographic exchanges that have become a ritual of everyday communication create a pseudo feeling of being connected while endangering face to face communication in inter-personal relationships in real time.