



Subliminal Advertisements And Their Relationship With Consumer Emotion & Buying Decision: A Study On Indian Customer

Surabhi Dhar Kathait^{1*}, Prof. H.C. Purohit², Ishita Saini³, Ishaant Saini⁴

¹Alpine Institute of Management & Technology, Dehradun, Uttarakhand surabhidhar@hotmail.co.uk

²School of Management, Doon University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand Hcpurohit24@gmail.com

³ Department of Arts, University of Waterloo, Canada ishita.saini1919@gmail.com

⁴ School of Management, O.P. Jindal University, Haryana Ishaantsaini912@gmail.com

*Corresponding author:- Surabhi Dhar Kathait

¹Alpine Institute of Management & Technology, Dehradun, Uttarakhand Surabhidhar@hotmail.co.uk

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ABSTRACT

Emotional advertisement is a type of communication used to persuade viewers to buy something or do something with regard to goods, information, services etc. It's also act as an instrument and platforms for capturing the desires, sensation, dreams, and attention of consumers. This study has been focused to comprehend the impact of emotional advertising on consumer buying behaviour. The advertisement which influences the consumer and it generates emotions on their buying behaviour. This study involves the data collection from answerer through questionnaire to test hypothesis. The main aim of this study is to conceive emotional response of general public in emotionally apparent products.

Keywords: Advertisements, consumer emotion, Indian customer, buying decision

1. INTRODUCTION

The word subliminal comes from the Latin sub limen, which means the threshold of conscious awareness. James Vicary argued that the sales rate of the moral sense had grown based on the split-second flashing of visual encouragements suggesting the audience to make these purchases (Zekan. B et al. 2022).

Due to the rapid development of technology and the internet, consumers may now purchase goods from online retailers who provide a wealth of product information. (Ahmed, 2017). Subliminal advertisements are constructed in a way that is not excessively long and does not often contain all the information the consumers demand to know., creating curiosity in the consumer's mind. They try to gather more information about the product. Gaining more information about a particular product helps the consumers decide to purchase. It may be stated that most decisions are made in favour of the product. This aspect of these advertisements has also contributed to its excessive visibility on online platforms and is used extensively to generate brand profits. Subliminal advertisements have great potential to become the future of advertisements.

Companies need to focus on a strategic way to launch their new product in the Indian market, especially during this pandemic situation, by offering some discounts (Song, 2020). It may be mentioned that with the ever-changing aspect of the marketing world, new techniques have been introduced to promote a product and online subliminal advertising is one such approach. Moreover, with the current situation, when direct marketing has taken a hit, online subliminal advertising has become all the rage with the digitisation of the modern world for promotional strategies and increasing brand value. Subliminal messages manipulate the audience's emotions with hidden processes; thus, after the concept of subliminal advertising started, people accepted the subliminal advertising happily without any hesitation. With the help of the subliminal advertisement, the conscious awareness level of the customers is exceeded. As a part of social media marketing, brands pay social influencers

and celebrities to mention the product promotion to portray that as an organic and conscious choice made by the influencer or celebrity to subconsciously instill the brand's image in the consumer's mind.

Online subliminal advertising is a thoughtful combination of different branches of science to communicate to the target audience primarily based online through the rising use of the internet globally. With the growing market of the online user base, advertisement agencies are focusing more on intelligence to have a place in user memory which will increase the probability of purchasing goods from the advertisement content. Online subliminal advertising comes with subtle messages in the form of audio, word, video, image, and colour. It shapes to be more attractive to the potential consumer to gain superiority over the competitor.

The online subliminal advertisement uses hidden messages to attract consumers' attention bypassing the conscious mind, which is vital in activating or stimulating the subconscious mind. Human beings most often follow the passive mind to do daily activities. The ability to persuade customers is a valuable tool of Online subliminal advertising to control the market operations and human behaviours to create brand recognition and popularity. Specifically, when consumers want to buy things, past experiences of the product give clear thought about the product. They are easily inclined to object to buying, which is a benefit of subliminal advertising to be more connected with the customer's mind. The use of subliminal advertising and customer attraction to the advertisement is positively proportionate to the result of the increasing business of the organisation. Consumer behaviour largely influences the brand design and marketing procedure, so the market experts are designing and innovating the existing brand, logo, and advertising with innovation through creative minds and tools to attract more active and boost customer loyalty (Atrees, 2013).

1.1. Role of Emotions in Subliminal Advertising

Emotion is the path that drives the behaviours for purchasing products that help a company move forward and increase its creativity in product making. Emotions make preferences, which leads customers to make decisions as consumers become confused about buying products without making preferences. Emotions are the main reason for selecting their preferred branded products. The customer may buy some products with the same materials in typical shops with lower prices. The evolutionary path followed by prices has been constructed while farm administration determines product prices to reach the strategic objective (Bloch, 2018). The subliminal advertisement may manipulate people's emotions without any hidden process; therefore, after the concept of subliminal advertising started, people accepted this without any argument. To stabilise the immense power of subliminal advertising, people may consider the way the helpful information about the particular product. Customers' behaviour with positive emotion makes a moral decision in comparison to customers' behaviour with negative emotion; therefore, it is necessary to improve customers' positive behaviours (Wang, 2020)

Customers' emotional reaction to an online subliminal advertisement has a much better effect on their reported intention to buy a brand than the contents of the advertisement. In the situation of decision anxiety, customers know they may make a decision; however, they may not be able to catch the service or productivity. An internally satisfied customer always purchases a branded product as they know the better quality of a branded product.

The emotionally satisfied consumers help marketers and business owners to manage or improve their business. The company needs to focus on Customer-Based Brand Value (CBBV). Marketers easily understand customer preferences, and it provides the opportunity for the company to move forward. Therefore, the CBBV offers a link between brand value, equity and brand competitiveness through which the organisational management may improve strategic ways to sustain the business globally (Winzar, 2018). Brands constantly advertise products or services. Consumers find that exasperating affects brand value and receive a low rating; however, online subliminal advertising does not let buyers detect that an ad does not receive high ratings. Consumers tend to go through reviews and ratings to make the best decision hence, obtaining good reviews and ratings is extremely important for brands (Maslowska, 2017).

1.2. Subliminal Advertising and Buying Behaviour

Online subliminal advertising spending may have a consequence on the customers' buying behaviour because more money spent may be added to advertising standards. Customers buying behaviour means the ultimate behaviour of consumers, as well as buying behaviour, which includes purchase, and selection of products and goods. However, it may be impacted by several factors (Ramya, 2016). Spending on advertisements may result in remaining or lasting intuition in consumers' minds. Massive advertising shows that the company is investing in a product, which means the company has a significant investment. Hence, the customers think that the outcome might have good quality.

The impact of online subliminal advertisement on consumer behaviour may not be overlooked; it is still highly relevant in the modern marketing age and brings fruitful results. The use of online subliminal advertisements is quite prevalent in most countries. Thus, marketers and brands continue to generate significant revenue through that. Consumers these days always want to stay up to date with trends. Online subliminal advertising is a framework or technique that plays a crucial role in improving stimuli and helps expose customers' simplicity. Ethics needs to be implemented to protect the buying behaviour of customers (Elci, 2015). Advertising spending may be directly linked with service or product quality, through which the company may attract a huge customer base to increase their sales. Advertising spending may react to customers' buying

behaviours as spending is not done by a company. The consumers will never pay attention to the brand of the company. The scantiness of advertising may negatively impact the quality and brand promotion of a product. An effective business decision is necessary to improve the publicity and brand equity management (Nikabadi, 2015). Consumer buying behaviour is to pay attention to the individuals creating decisions to spend time, effort and money on utilisation-related products.

The company will be allowed to envision the customer's response to different informative and contextual signs and help the company's marketing plans accordingly once the company understands customers' way of purchasing behaviour. Before advertising spending, the company has to predict the consumers' reaction to their brands after purchasing, and companies have to check consumers' reviews every day. The packaging of a product or good packaging creates an effect on customers' buying behaviour while the packaging may be treading a self-promotional advertising tool used by several organisations (Raheem, 2014).

One of the prime features of buying decisions due to subconscious stimuli is that it may consist of immaturity, foolishness and lower intelligence. The economic condition of customers and social visibility always creates an enormous impact on buying behaviour (Rook, 1995).

Several customers' behaviours impact the company's success, such as seeking for diversity, perpetual and complex buying behaviour in which seeking for diversity behaviour of the customers on a particular product has been increased. One of the prime features of the earlier is that retailers may use several procedures and strategies to influence consumers' buying behaviours and unplanned purchasing decisions, which may result in buying products (Foroughi, 2014). Perpetual buying behaviour is a decision of purchasing by the customer while the products are available in the market, but, customers will not show their interest in those products.

Complex buying behaviour may be described as when customers show high interest in India's available products, which positively generates revenues. In the pandemic situation, companies already face many consequences and meet a tremendous amount of loss. Through online subliminal advertisement, they give some discounts on their products to seek customers' attention. The planned buying behaviour of a customer may be incurred from a specific decision but the unexpected buying behaviour of the customer might occur from an error or wrong decision-making (Hadjali, 2012).

Customer behaviour can be influenced by online subliminal advertising by encouraging them to buy, which helps in changing customers' buying decisions fruitfully. In addition, some organisations need to maintain the lower price of products even though the advertising of low prices is exceptionally impactful to changing customers' buying decisions and impulsive buying behaviour. One of the prominent roles of online subliminal advertising is to anticipate the demand level of customers, but if an advertisement helps to anticipate the customers' behaviours and needs, then it will be essential to change the buying behaviour of customers.

Consumer buying behaviour is based on various factors such as the age of consumers or may be associated with an individual's profession. Advertisements are known as manipulative as these approaches tend to make consumers compulsive buyers due to their nature, which is highly unethical. Finally, it may be concluded that although subliminal advertisements are great as a marketing strategy, in reality, these advertisements play with the emotion of consumers, and their implementation needs to be limited. Impromptu buying is based on several factors, such as social influence and situation influence, and marketers try to use these situations in promoting a product. Customers who do not have jobs, such as students, are more likely to be hasty buyers than those who are working professionals, as consumers with jobs tend to make purchases with prior planning (Han, 1991).

Impulsive buying tendency is the arbitrary decision of customers, while online subliminal advertisement makers use emotion to improvise the impulsive buying tendency of customers. Hasty buying decisions are one of the most innovative approaches which need to be used by advertisement makers. A customer's pre and post-purchasing conditions are also associated with impulsive buying tendency (Miao, 2013). Most customers buy a product without planning, while online subliminal advertising helps stimulate customers' buying behaviour.

Impulsive buying tendency is focused on some emotional triggers such as mood consumers are highly impactful to measure the impulsive buying tendency of customers. Virtual and online presentations of products may have more impact on customers' online impulsive buying tendency than web advertising techniques (Shen K. N., 2012). Consumer behaviour is changing day by day, while the advertisement makers have used several effects strategies that affect the impulse buying tendency of the customers. Online subliminal advertising may use the impulsive buying tendency of consumers, while advertisement makers use several commercial stimuli that affect customers' purchasing behaviour.

Online subliminal advertising may affect the buying behaviour of customers. The advertising markets may affect the mentality of consumers and help to change customers' buying decisions. Impulsive buying tendency consists of the satisfaction level of buying a product's self-esteem. The online subliminal advertisement may positively impact customers' self-esteem, which helps to change the impulsive e-buying behaviours of customers.

Some organisations may use effective strategies such as cost-free shipping is one the impactful strategies to improve the buying behaviour of consumers. Many modern organisations may implement the discount strategy, which is highly effective in creating a positive impact on customers' subconscious minds and results in changing the impulsive buying behaviour of customers. Online subliminal advertising also uses social media, while many people use social media in India. It is one of the most innovative platforms for news to be used by online subliminal advertising makers. One of the main motives of online subliminal advertising is to promote

the products and increase the overall sales of products. Every modern organisation needs to target more customers through innovative marketing techniques, which will help increase product sales.

The advertising makers need to think globally while the buying behaviour of Indian citizens is changing day by day. Online subliminal advertising makers use digital platforms such as social media, which will be highly impactful in creating an impact that improves customers' impulsive buying tendencies. Organisations need unique logos and images that help anticipate the impulsive buying tendency of customers. It may also be highly impactful in promoting the sales of the organisation. In India, many modern organisations have implemented online subliminal advertising, which is exceptionally impactful in improvising the impulsive buying tendency of customers.

It has been established that online subliminal advertisements significantly impact the subconscious human mind and influences consumer behaviour to a great extent. However, it needs to be discussed how online subliminal advertising has changed the whole paradigm of advertisements, and the reasons for its success need to be evaluated. It has been previously mentioned that online subliminal advertising dramatically impacts those who are more likely to spend their time on the internet, especially individuals having compulsive buying behaviour. Consumers who have obsessive buying tendencies are more likely to be influenced by subliminal messages since these individuals are highly likely to make a purchase decision based on a whim. Thus, brands and marketers have exceptionally curated this form of advertising to influence the minds of consumers who have this buying tendency to achieve promotional objectives. Brands profit greatly through online subliminal advertisements since this form of advertising triggers customers' compulsiveness. Identity crisis and a strong niche for materialism correlate with buying tendencies and impulsive buying Tendencies, and young adults are more likely to be these kinds of shoppers due to using too many social media sites (Sharif, 2017).

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objectives of the Study:- Based on the extensive literature review, the following objectives were formulated:

- To examine subliminal advertisements and their relationship with consumer emotion.
- To analyse consumer emotion and its relationship with buying decisions.

2.2 Hypotheses of the Study:-

In order to fulfil the objectives of this research, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

- H₀₁: There is no relationship between subliminal advertisements and consumer emotion
- H₀₂: There is no relationship between subliminal advertising and buying decisions.
- H₀₃: There is no relationship between consumer emotion and buying decisions.

2.3 The Instrument for Data Collection:-

A structured instrument was formulated to measure the variables of the study. A cover letter was attached with the questionnaire, which mentioned the request for the participation, name and email address of the researcher so that the respondents could share any doubts about the survey, if any.

Tools used in the questionnaire for the collection of the responses were adopted from the extensive literature review. Several pre-established reliable and validated tools were used to establish a reliable instrument for the study and test the hypothesis. In a two-section questionnaire, section-A was used to collect the demographic data of the respondents. It consisted of five questions to gather data on the demographic profile. Section B of the questionnaire consisted of a total of twenty-four questions about subliminal advertising and buying behaviour. Data on subliminal advertisement was collected using the variables advertisement involvement, advertisement evaluation and impulse buying tendency. A five-item Advertisement Involvement scale was adopted from Maheswaran and Meyers(1990), a five-item Advertisement Evaluation scale was adopted from (Xu & Du, 2011), and a five-item Impulse Buying scale was adopted from a scale developed by Verplanken & Herabadi, (2001). Further, to evaluate buying behaviour, a five-item scale to measure consumer emotions was taken from the CASC scale developed by Kovacic & Podgornik (2013). Four items from a scale developed by Pongianann (2011) and Amandeep & Aulia (2017) were used to test buying decisions.

2.4 Sampling :-

The research was carried out in tier-I city Delhi and tier-II city Dehradun. A non-Probability convenient sampling method has been used to approach the respondents. The population considered as a sample of the research was 15 years and above. The survey sample was those digitally literate people, a vivid online shopping app and social media users.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the data for the research was collected online using google forms through different channels such as WhatsApp, emails, study groups, Facebook and LinkedIn.

2.5 Sample size:-

Using Cochran's formula, a sample size of 344.76 was calculated which was rounded off to 345 when the confidence level was set at ninety-five per cent and the margin of error at 0.05. According to the telecom data, the total number of active internet users across Delhi and Dehradun was 21452876, so the p-value or population proportion was calculated to be 0.66. The z- score used was 1.96.

The formula used for the calculation was:

$$n = z^2(pq)/e^2$$

Where: n = Sample Size
 z = Confidence level
 p = Proportion of Population
 q = $1-p$
 e = Margin Error

The literature review from the previous researchers had a varying sample size from 100 to 2500 responses, so, in that view, a structured questionnaire was used, and the response of 360 was collected for the study, out of which 325 respondents were found suitable for the research, and 72 responses were rejected due to incomplete responses.

2.6 Pilot study :-

In order to test the internal consistency of the scale for the study, a pre-test and pilot test were conducted before the primary survey. The pre-test was shared with four respondents from different walks of life, such as a marketing faculty, a research scholar, a college student and a professional, after their suggestions, the questionnaire was improved, and then a pilot test was conducted. The pilot test for the research was conducted on sixty respondents, forty-three among them were used for testing the reliability, normality, and statistical accuracy of the data and the rest of the responses were discarded due to incomplete responses.

2.7 Reliability of The Instrument:-

Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire by testing the variance, covariance, and repeatability. The value of the coefficients is expected to be between 0 to 1. The coefficient value closer to 1 indicated a good consistency for the questionnaire.

The reliability of the Scales used in the study to measure add involvement, impulse buying, add evaluation, consumer emotion, consumer brand preference and consumer buying decision was measured by applying Cronbach's alpha. According to (Jolliffe et al., 1988), Cronbach's higher than 0.7 is considered good consistency.

The Cronbach's Alpha ranged from .780 to .942, whereas Composite Reliability statistics ranged from .850 to .956. Hence, construct reliability is established.

2.8 Validity Analysis :-

In order to measure the validity of the instrument, convergent validity and discriminant validity test were performed. Convergent validity was performed to check how closely the variables in the construct are correlated, AVE was extracted, and discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker's criterion) was performed to check the difference in the correlation between the variables where AVE was evaluated to be greater than max shared variance and average shared variance. Heterotrait and Monotrait Ratio were also performed to establish the discriminant validity.

The latent variable score of the measurement model was calculated to check the correlation between the variables to establish and valid and reliable construct.

2.9 Correlation :-

Using SPSS vs 23, Pearson Correlation was used to measure linear relationships' strength and direction.

2.10 Summary of Tools Used for Hypotheses testing :-

To analyse the data collected in the research, Smart PLS software version 3 was used to test the relationship between Subliminal advertising and its components and buying behaviour and its components.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

SEM test was applied in order to test the proposed null hypothesis and test the structural relationship between the variables.

2.11 Demographic Profile of The Respondents

To prepare the profile of the respondents of the survey, a simple percentage method was applied to the demographic part of the data. A tabular and pie chart representation of the Frequency and percentage of the gender, marital status, age, income, and educational qualifications of the respondents was prepared using the simple percentage method and presented and discussed below :

2.11.1 Gender-wise Distribution of the Respondents :-

After implementing the frequency test, it was observed that more than half of the total respondents were males (53.1%).

2.11.2 Age-wise Distribution of the Respondents :-

Age also forms an integral part of consumer behaviour as one would see huge differences in consumer buying decisions depending upon the stage of age the consumer may be. Taking these things into consideration, the age factor was included to see how the exposure to subliminal ads varies in comparison to different age groups. In this study, the frequency tests have revealed that the majority of them were youth and middle-aged groups between 15 to 35 years of age (64.4%), and more than one-third of respondents belonged to a mature age group of 36 to 55 years of age group (35.6%).

2.11.3 Marital status-wise Distribution of the Respondents :-

A great majority (67.8%) of the respondents were married, while 32.2% of the respondents were unmarried.

2.11.4 Education Qualification wise Distribution of the Respondents :-

The educational qualification of the respondents portrays that a significant majority (90.2%) of the respondents were highly qualified with master's and doctoral degrees and the most minor percentage (9.8%) were those respondents that are just graduates.

2.11.5 Occupation-wise Distribution of the Respondents :-

The occupation of a person plays a significant role in the behavioural response to advertisements. Occupation of the respondents refers to the type of work, profession, or job they undertake for their livelihood. In our case, a great majority of the population belonged to the service class (65.2%), and people of professional background belonged to the minority (16.7%).

2.11.6 Income-wise Distribution of the Respondents :-

The personal income of the respondents represents the income earned from all possible sources within a period of one year, while the family incomes of the respondents describe the total income earned by all the members of the family living together. In this research, it was observed that a great majority of respondents were those with a family income of above 60000 per month (69.6%). Only 7.7 % of the respondents had an income below 30000 per month.

3. Data Analysis and Result

The analysis in the present study was done using Smart PLS Software version 3, which included the assessment of the Measurement Model and Structural Model. The measurement model establishes the reliability and validity of the constructs, whereas the structural model ascertains the significance of hypothesized relationships. The following hypotheses were using the above tests:

H₀₁: There is no relationship between subliminal advertisements and consumer emotion

H₀₂: There is no relationship between subliminal advertising and buying decisions.

H₀₃: There is no relationship between consumer emotion and buying decisions.

3.1 Hypothetical Model :-

The following conceptual model was formulated as per the objectives and hypothesis of the research



Source:Author

Figure 1: Measurement Model for the current study :-

The quality of the constructs in the study is assessed based on the evaluation of the measurement model. The assessment of the quality criteria starts with evaluating the factor loadings, followed by establishing the construct reliability and construct validity. (figure 1)

3.2 Factor Loadings :-

The factor loading refers to “the extent to which each of the items in the correlation matrix correlates with the given principal component. Since all the items showed a value above .50, Hence no items were further removed. Factor loadings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1- Factor Loadings

	BD	CE
BD1	0.915	
BD2	0.851	
BD3	0.833	
BD4	0.815	
CE1		0.917
CE2		0.81
CE3		0.824

CE4		0.879
CE5		0.84

Abbreviations: BD = Brand Decision, CE = Consumer Emotion.

3.4 Indicator Multicollinearity :-

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) statistic is utilised to assess multicollinearity in the indicators (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). Table 2 presents the VIF values for the indicators in the study and reveals that the VIF for each of the indicators is below the recommended threshold.

Table 2 - Multicollinearity Statistics (VIF) for indicators

	VIF
BD1	3.230
BD2	2.408
BD3	2.168
BD4	1.960
CE1	3.770
CE2	2.301
CE3	2.348
CE4	2.875
CE5	2.417

Abbreviations: BD = Brand Decision, CE = Consumer Emotion.

3.5 Construct validity:-

Statistically, using PLS-SEM, construct validity is established when there is convergent validity and discriminant validity.

3.6 Convergent Validity:-

“Convergent validity is the degree to which multiple attempts to measure the same concept are in agreement. Convergent validity results based on the AVE statistics in the current study show that all the constructs have an AVE value greater than .50. Hence, convergent validity is established. Table 3 shows the AVE value for each of the constructs.

Table 3 - Construct Convergent Validity (AVE)

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
BD	0.730
CE	0.731

Abbreviations: BD = Brand Decision, CE = Consumer Emotion.

3.7 Discriminant Validity- Fornell & Larcker Criterion:-

Discriminant validity is the degree to which measures of different concepts are distinct. According to Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion. In this study, the square root of AVE for a construct was found to be greater than its correlation with other constructs (Table 4). Hence, providing strong support for the establishment of discriminant validity.

Table 4 - Discriminant Validity – Fornell & Larcker Criteria

	BD	CE
ADE		
ADI		
BD	0.854	
BP	0.414	
CE	0.593	0.855
IBT	0.460	0.613

Note: Bold and Italics represent the Square-root of AVE

Abbreviations: ADE = Advertisement Evaluation, ADI = Advertisement Involvement, BD = Brand Decision, BP = Brand Preference, CE = Consumer Emotion, IBT = Impulsive Buying Tendency

Cross loadings help assess if an item belonging to a particular construct loads strongly onto its own parent construct of other constructs of the study. The results (Table 5) show that the factor loading of all the items is more substantial on the underlying construct to which they belong instead of the other construct in the study. Hence, based on the evaluation of cross-loadings, discriminant validity is attained.

Table 5 - Discriminant Validity – Cross Loadings

	BD	CE
ADE1	0.210	0.182
ADE2	0.150	0.156
ADE3	0.183	0.152
ADE4	0.159	0.147
ADE5	0.195	0.182
ADI1	0.189	0.181
ADI2	0.199	0.178
ADI3	0.284	0.159
ADI4	0.247	0.199
ADI5	0.240	0.219
BD1	0.915	0.548
BD2	0.851	0.533
BD3	0.833	0.511
BD4	0.815	0.430
BP1	0.386	0.627
BP2	0.319	0.547
BP3	0.372	0.645
BP4	0.442	0.659
BP5	0.331	0.624
CE1	0.582	0.917
CE2	0.531	0.810
CE3	0.440	0.824
CE4	0.494	0.879
CE5	0.482	0.840
IBT1	0.412	0.570
IBT2	0.329	0.306
IBT3	0.344	0.306
IBT4	0.359	0.570
IBT5	0.358	0.545

Abbreviations: ADE = Advertisement Evaluation, ADI = Advertisement Involvement, BD = Brand Decision, BP = Brand Preference, CE = Consumer Emotion, IBT = Impulsive Buying Tendency.

3.8 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT):-

HTMT is based on the estimation of the correlation between the constructs. Discriminant validity is established based on the HTMT ratio. The HTMT results show (Table 6) that the HTMT ratio is less than the required threshold of .90.

Table 6 - Discriminant Validity – HTMT

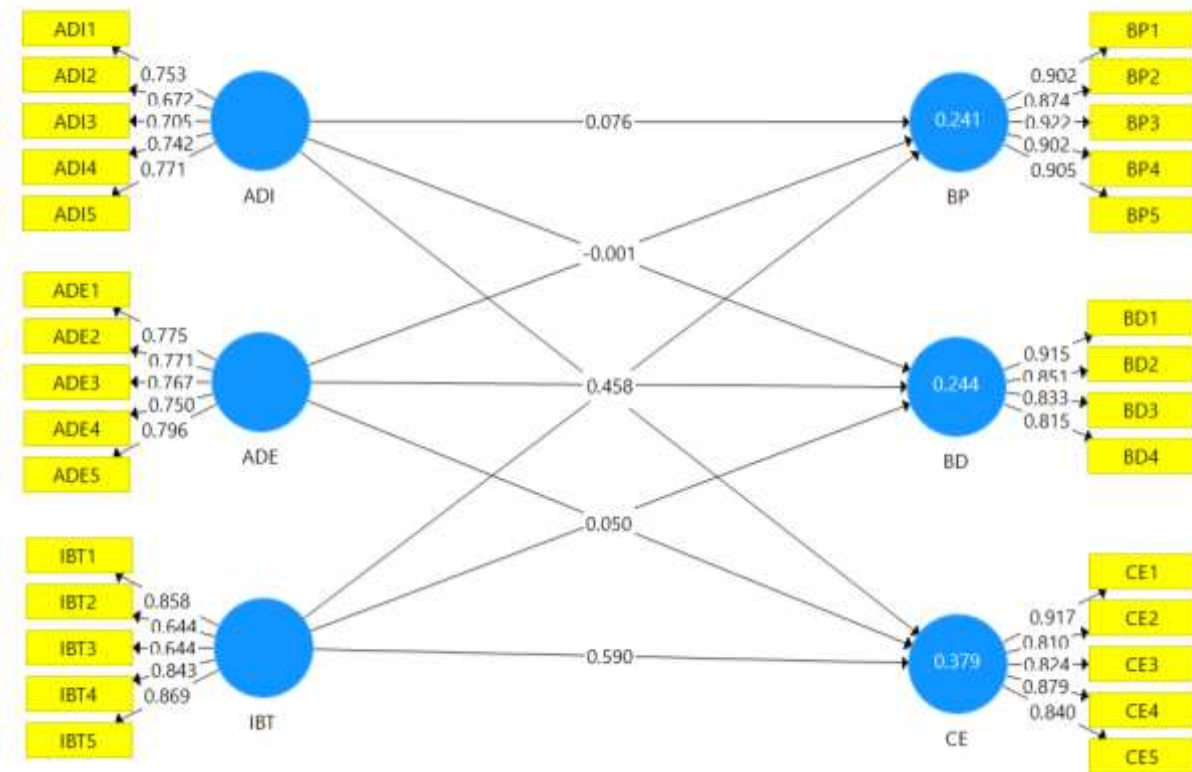
	BD	CE
ADE		
ADI		
BD		
BP	0.448	
CE	0.663	
IBT	0.540	0.680

Abbreviations: ADE = Advertisement Evaluation, ADI = Advertisement Involvement, BD = Brand Decision, BP = Brand Preference, CE = Consumer Emotion, IBT = Impulsive Buying Tendency.

3.9 Latent Variable Score of Lower order Variables:-

In Figure 2, the latent variable score of the measurement model is calculated. In the model, all the latent variables correlate with each other, and the factors are further associated with their individual items. Hence all the factors correlate with each other in the given model, indicating it to be reliable and valid.

Figure 2- Latent score of variables



Abbreviations: ADE = Advertisement Evaluation, ADI = Advertisement Involvement, BD = Brand Decision, BP = Brand Preference, CE = Consumer Emotion, IBT = Impulsive Buying Tendency.

3.10 Correlation:-

To examine the covariance between the variables as mentioned above Karl person's correlations coefficients were computed. The results are presented in the table below (Table 7). All the variables bear a significant relationship with the others and are in the hypothesised direction.

Table 7 - Karl Pearson's coefficients of correlation

		CE	BD
ADI	Pearson Correlation	.214**	.271**
ADE	Pearson Correlation	.126*	.158**
IBT	Pearson Correlation	.740**	.804**
SA	Pearson Correlation	.527**	.597**
CE	Pearson Correlation	1	.805**
BD	Pearson Correlation	.805**	1
BP	Pearson Correlation	.750**	.897**
BB	Pearson Correlation	.895**	.960**

Abbreviations: ADE = Advertisement Evaluation, ADI = Advertisement Involvement, BD = Brand Decision, BP = Brand Preference, CE = Consumer Emotion, IBT = Impulsive Buying Tendency, SA = Subliminal Advertising, BB = Buying Behaviour.

3.11 Validating higher-order constructs:-

These higher-order constructs are also validated as part of the measurement model assessment. Each of these constructs was assessed for reliability and convergent validity. Furthermore, the higher-order constructs were tested for discriminant validity with other lower-order constructs in the study. The results for reliability and validity of the higher-order constructs show that both reliability and validity were established. The reliability and convergent validity for all other constructs are established as the value for reliability are more significant

than .70, and the AVE is greater than .50, respectively (Table 8). Further to the assessment of reliability and validity, discriminant validity of the higher order constructs with the lower order constructs is also assessed. The results of Fornell and Larker's (1981) criterion show that the square root of AVE of the construct is higher than its correlation with all other constructs (Table 9), whereas HTMT is also lower than .85 (Table 10).

Table 8 - Higher Order Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
BB	0.797	0.881	0.713
SA	0.608	0.770	0.534

Abbreviations: BB = Buying Behaviour, SA = Subliminal Advertising

Table 9 - Fornell & Larker (1981) Criterion – Higher Order Discriminant Validity

	BB	SA
BB	0.844	
SA	0.599	0.731

Note: Bold and Italics represent the Square-root of AVE.

Abbreviations: BB = Buying Behaviour, SA = Subliminal Advertising

Table 10- HTMT – Higher Order Discriminant Validity

	BB	SA
BB		
SA	0.752	

Abbreviations: BB = Buying Behaviour, SA = Subliminal Advertising

3.12 Statistical Indices of the variables:-

Table 11 indicates the percentage agreement and disagreement of the consumers toward the items of the construct. The central tendency of the items was calculated by measuring the mean value and the standard deviations of all the items in the construct.

Table 11- Statistical indices of variables

S. No	Item	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	CE1	87.1%	1.8%	11.1%	5.72	1.661
2.	CE2	82.2%	6.4%	11.4%	5.43	1.594
3.	CE3	85.3%	3.7%	11%	5.54	1.344
4.	CE4	86.8%	2.8%	10.4%	5.39	1.502
5.	CE5	88.9%	1.2%	9.9%	5.44	1.474
6.	BD1	89%	2.1%	8.9%	5.84	1.483
7.	BD2	86.8	6.4	6.8	5.57	1.361
8.	BD3	88	3.7	8.3	5.63	1.379
9.	BD4	90.8	3.4	5.8	5.62	1.204

Abbreviations: BD = Brand Decision, CE = Consumer Emotion.

3.13 Structural Model :-

The next step in structural equation modelling is the assessment of the hypothesized relationship to substantiate the proposed hypotheses.

3.14 Hypotheses Testing:-

H₀₁: There is no relationship between subliminal advertisements and consumer emotion:

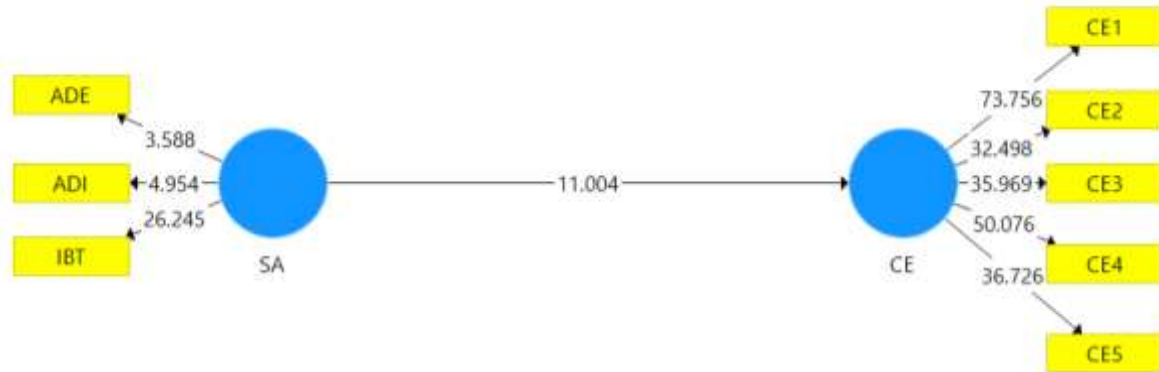
H₀₁ evaluates whether subliminal advertising has a significant impact on consumer emotion. The results revealed that subliminal advertising has a significant effect on consumer emotion ($\beta = .577$, $t = 11.004$, $p < .001$). Hence, H₀₁ was rejected.

	Original (O)	Sample	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
SA -> CE	0.577		0.052	11.004	0.000

Abbreviations: SA = Subliminal Advertising, CE = Consumer Emotion.

Figure 3- Structural Model – Impact of Subliminal Advertising on Consumer Emotion

The Figure 3 shows the Structural Model – Impact of Subliminal Advertising on Consumer Emotion



Source: PLS-SEM output

H₀₂: There is no relationship between subliminal advertising and buying decision:

H₀₂ evaluates whether subliminal advertising has a significant impact on the buying decision. The results revealed that subliminal advertising has a significant effect on buying decision ($\beta = .48, t = 7.07, p < .001$). Hence, H₀₂ was rejected.

	Original (O)	Sample	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
SA -> BD	0.480		0.068	7.070	0.000

Abbreviations: SA = Subliminal Advertising, BD = Buying Decision.

Figure 4 - Structural Model – Impact of Subliminal Advertising on Buying Decision

The Figure 4 shows the Structural Model – Impact of Subliminal Advertising on Buying Decision



Source: PLS-SEM output

H₀₃: There is no relationship between consumer emotion and buying decision:

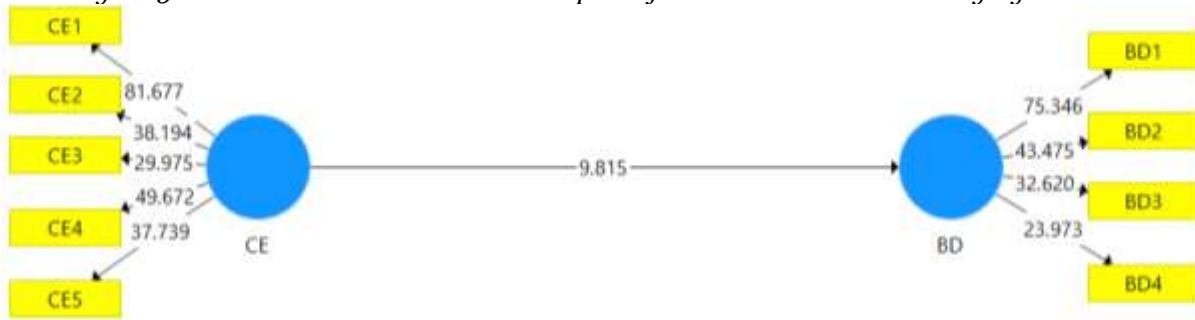
H₀₃ evaluates whether consumer emotion has a significant impact on the buying decision. The results revealed that consumer emotion has a significant effect on buying decision ($\beta = .598, t = 9.815, p < .001$). Hence, H₀₃ was rejected.

	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
CE -> BD	0.598	0.061	9.815	0.000

Abbreviations: CE = Consumer Emotion, BD = Buying Decision

Figure 5- Structural Model – Impact of Consumer Emotion on Buying Decision

Figure 5 shows the Structural Model – Impact of Consumer Emotion on Buying Decision



Source: PLS-SEM output

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION:-

The study titled “ Subliminal Advertising And Online Consumer Buying Behavior: A Study of Indian Consumer” focuses on how subliminal advertising and its indicators namely advertisement Involvement, advertisement evaluation and impulse buying tendency affect the buying behavior and its components of indicators namely consumer emotion, buying decision and brand preference.

This chapter has been categorized into the summary of major findings which discusses the percentages of agreement and disagreement of the consumer’s response towards the items in the questionnaire as well as the findings of the hypotheses testing, conclusion which contains the essence of the research, implications, limitations that were faced during the research and scope of future studies.

4.1 Summary of Major Findings :-

Advertisement involvement was measured on a 5-item scale ((Maheswaran and Meyers, 1990). As per the values in table 12. It can be observed that a great majority of the consumers (above 95%) agree with the following statements- “The advertisement is always important”, “The advertisement means a lot to me”, and “I am very concerned about the content of the advertisement”, “The advertisement is relevant to me”, “ I always look out for information in the advertisement”.

Advertisement evaluation was measured on a 5 item scale (Xu & Du, 2011). It was observed that an overwhelming number of the respondents (above 96%) are in agreement with the statements “ My mind notices the special content of the advertisement “, “ Content of the advertising arouse my interest”, and “Technique of the advertising arouse my interest”, “I get the idea of buying the advertised product”, “Advertisement is reliable”.

Consumer emotion was measured on a 5-item scale (Kovacic & Podgornik, 2013). Upon testing the result indicated that most of the respondents (above87%) strongly agree with the statements “ The ad made me feel happy”, and “ The ad made me feel a sense of affiliation”. a great deal of respondents (above 85%) strongly agree with the statement “ The ad made me feel angry”, and “The ad made me feel proud”. Only 82.2% of the respondents strongly agree with the statement “The ad made me feel sexy”.

Buying decision was measured on a 4 item scale (Amandeep & Aulia, 2017; Pongiannan, 2011). Just 8.9% of the respondents disagree with the statement “ Subliminal advertisement encourages me to feel the need to buy the product while still staggering 89% of the respondents agree with it. More than 86% of the respondents agree with the statements “Subliminal advertisement gave me the feeling that I product is suitable for me”, and “Considering all factors, I feel encouraged to buy the product advertised in the advertisement”. A great number of respondents (above 90%) agree that “ Watching the subliminal advertisement I get convinced to buy the product”.

4.2 Summary of Hypotheses:-

H₀₁: There is no relationship between subliminal advertisements and consumer emotion.

The results of the analysis showed that there is a positive significant relationship between subliminal advertisement and consumer emotion. With a p-value less than .001, it was observed that when consumers watch a subliminal advertisement on OTT platforms like YouTube it tends to penetrate their emotional and mental state and affect their emotions. The findings of this hypothesis are in line with the previous research of (Shukla, 2022), (Kujur & Singh, 2018), (Theus, 1994)

H₀₂: There is no relationship between subliminal advertising and buying decision.

The results from the analysis show a p-value of less than .001and t value obtained is 7.07 with suggests a significant positive relationship between the subliminal advertng and buying decision. Subliminal advertisements tend to affect the decision-making capability of the consumer by influencing their minds through subconscious stimuli. The results of this research are in agreement with the previous research done by Verwijmeren et al. (2013), and Tsai et al., (2007).

H₀₃: There is no relationship between consumer emotion and buying decision.

Consumer's emotions are the underlying reason for their major actions and intentions. The results from this research revealed the t-value at 9.815 and the p-value is less than .001 which indicates a positive significant relationship between the emotions of the consumer and their buying intention. The findings are supported by the previous research of Tang et al. (2013) and Soodan (2016).

Table 12 - Summary of Hypotheses

S. No	Hypotheses	Accepted/ Rejected
1	There is no relationship between subliminal advertisements and consumer emotion	Rejected
2	There is no relationship between subliminal advertising and buying decision	Rejected
3	There is no relationship between consumer emotion and buying decision	Rejected

Table 13 - Summary of Objectives

The table 13 shows the Summary of Objectives

S. No	Objectives	Result
1	To examine subliminal advertisements and their relationship with consumer emotion.	Significant positive Relationship
2	To analyze consumer emotion and its relationship with buying decisions.	Significant positive Relationship

4.3 Implications of The Study :-

Subliminal advertisements influence the consumer's buying behaviour as supported in this research. The present study indicates that emotions play a vital role in framing the behaviour of the consumer also the study tests the relationship between advertisement involvement, advertisement evaluation, impulse buying tendency, consumer emotions and brand preference. This is a valuable insight for advertising and marketing companies in framing effective advertisement policies for their product success. Though the current usage of subliminal advertisements had been unethical if used ethically, this technique can be used to market a wide array of products.

4.4 Limitations of The Study :-

This research educates us about how various advertisements on online OTT platforms such as YouTube etc influence the consumer psychologically by inducing subconscious stimuli. However, the research had certain restrictions. Firstly the demographic location was restricted to just Tier I city Delhi and Tier II city Dehradun, this gives us a very limited knowledge about the consumer as India is such a widespread nation with a diverse population from all walks of life.

The second limitation of this study was that the sample size of the study was limited given the restriction of the demographic location hence the limited population. A bigger demographic profile would have given us a bigger insight into how consumers from pan India react to the subliminal advertisements.

The third limitation of the study was the online survey conducted for the research. due to the worldwide pandemic Covid-19, human interaction was highly restricted and in that light, the data for this research was only collected online through emails, study groups, WhatsApp on Facebook, LinkedIn and other networking sites.

The last limitation of the study is that since subliminal advertisements are majorly used by brands that promote vulgarity, sexuality, alcoholic beverages, tobacco etc . this makes the content of the advertisement unethical and the consumers often shy away from such advertisements and avoid watching the advertisements altogether making them unaware of the existence of subliminal advertisement altogether.

4.5 Scope of Future Study :-

The findings of this study have presented a valid implication for future research. The research will help advertising companies in understanding the consumer's attitude toward the advertisements and use subliminal advertising as one of the most effective tools of product advertising.

Researchers can conduct future studies in extended demographic locations for much more elaborate findings. Also, the demographic profile of the consumers such as their age, income, and education qualifications can be tested hypothetically with subliminal advertisement and its indicators that would give us a new insight into this direction.

The future research can also extend to other mediums of advertisements such as Television, print, and radio. Also, various brands use their brand logos to send a subliminal message through it, This can be a new branch of subliminal advertisements that can be researched extensively.

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