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POSITIVE AFFECT IN RELATION TO AD LIKENESS AND PREFERENCE TO BUY AMONG THE HIGH AND LOW EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT YOUNG ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

Preference to buy is considered more as cognitive and learned behavioural response based on the information consumers received about a chosen product. However, involvement of affective stimuli in the advertisements has been found to have impacts in the preference. It seems logical to think that Likeness stimulated by the positive affect from movie advertisements can enhance the preference to buy. The aim of the present study is to find out if positive affect induced movie ads can influence the ad likeness, and thereby enhance the preference in buying a product, disregarding the emotional intelligence. Sample consisted of 88 young adults (age group 18 to 24), studying in Little Flower Institute of Social Sciences and Health, Calicut district in the state of Kerala, India. The measures used for the study are Emotional Intelligence Scale (Schutte et. Al, 1997), Happiness Measures (HM) (Fordyce, 1988) and an index of preference (Risha preference Index) prepared by the authors. Student's t test indicated a lack of significant difference between high and low emotionally intelligent young adults in the induction of positive affect after viewing the advertisements. As per correlation analysis, positive affect induced by the advertisements have a significant positive relationship with ad likeness and preference to buy. Mediation analysis results indicated the role of positive affect as a mediator between ad likeness and preference to buy.

KEYWORDS

Preference to buy, Ad likeness, Positive affect, Emotional Intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

Preference to buy a product is rational within the limits of the cognitive and learning capacities of the buyer and within the constraint of limited information (March and Simon, 1958) about it. The model developed by Lavidge and Steiner (1961) advocated three sequential components (of advertising effectiveness) that could stimulate the preference to buy – Cognitive (the realm of thought), Affective (the realm of emotions), and Conative (the realm of motives). As per the model, a sequence of Awareness (cognitive) about the product will lead to Knowledge (cognitive) which would lead to Liking (affective) which would further result in Preference (affective) and then Conviction (conative) and finally Purchase (conative). However, in some cases such as "Impulse buying", affect seems to have direct influence on preference to buy a product (Peter and Krishnakumar, 2010; Verplanken et al, 2005; Gardner & Rook, 1988). Also, it has been noted that visual movie ads that could invoke positive affect in the individuals can influence the consumer preference (Ayanwale, Alimi and Ayanbimpe, 2005; Niazi, et al, 2012).

The influence of affect on consumer buying behaviour is not, indeed, a new line story (Abideen & Saleem, 2011). Heath, Brandt and Nairn (2006) have already noted that affective content in advertising can influence brand favorability even when rational content has no effect. Kelley and Turley (2004) have noted that affect consumers experience from an advertisement can even be used as a measuring tool to find out the effectiveness of that advertisement. In the opinion of Zajonc (1980), affective responses are sometimes inescapable, but hard to verbalize. It may even over rule prior cognition. According to Damasio (1994), once the affect is generated, it could moderate all the purchase decisions. Preference to buy, in such occasions would become an affect based behavioural phenomena (Zajonc & Marcus, 1982).

Affect seems to be an inevitable associate of a memorable information processing (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). Affective contents in information can stimulate phasic activation or arousal, which would in turn promote deeper processing of the same (Kroeber-Riel, 1984). As per the postulations by Ray and Batra (1983) affect increases attention and memory. As affect increases attention and memory, affect induced advertisements are attended more, processed more, evaluated more favourably, and remembered more (Ray & Batra, 1983).

Theories about generation of affect from advertisements have a deep rooted empirical graph. In the opinion of Damasio (1994), generation of affect occurs in audience during ad processing. Visual and verbal media formats shall be innovatively, with a little divergence in presentation, integrated to elicit the affect (Adelaar, Chang, Lanchndorfer, Lee & Morimoto (2003); Tellis, Stremersch & Yin, 2003). Affect may be positive or negative. Positive affect can enhance problem solving and decision making, through flexible, innovative, creative, thorough and efficient cognitive processing. The characteristics related to positive affect include confidence, optimism, and self efficacy; likability and positive construal of others; sociability, activity, and energy; prosocial behaviour; immunity and physical well-being; effective coping with challenge and stress; and originality and flexibility. These attributes have shares in encouraging the active involvement with goal pursuits and with the environment. Dominance of these factors will protect individuals from their withdrawal into a self-protective stance. In a self protective deportment the primary aim of the individual will be the protection of his or her existing resources and avoidance of harm. It is a process that would drive the individual through the experiences of negative emotions. Positive emotions produce the tendency to approach rather than to avoid and to prepare the individual to seek out and undertake new goals.

Advertisements that invoke positive affect in the individuals will influence the consumer preference to buy the advertised product (Ayanwale, Alimi and Ayanbimpe, 2005; Niazi, et al, 2012). The main reason behind this is the role of positive affect on persuasion. Persuasion occurs by creating a heuristic of feeling (Schwarz 1990), to bias consumer information processing (Zuwerink and Devine 1996), or to generate deeper message processing (Zuwerink and Devine 1996). Consequently, the momentary thought-action ranges of the people will be broadened. Thus, the experience of joy by seeing the advertisement will make the individual play and create. Experience of interest will lead them to explore. While experiencing contentment, they will savor and integrate. Similarly, when experiencing love, a combination of play, exploration and savoring will be occurred (Fredrickson, 1998). Their emotional intelligence will stand for the product that had given them a chance to play, explore and savour. No need of much time to increase the preference to the product.

It has been found that positive affect is a promoting factor in variety seeking among safe, enjoyable consumer food products (Kahn & Isen, 1993). Positive affect can also be a promoting factor in an overt shift from a decision rule focusing primarily on probabilities to one focusing on utilities or outcome values, especially for losses (Nygren, Isen, Taylor & Dulin, 1996). Exposure to positive affect induced ad will bring in the consumer an irresistible urge to possess the product (Rook 1987). The may be as follows. The exposure would charm the consumer escalating the likeness to the ad. The likeness would increase the possessiveness,

which would, in its turn, enhance the affect. Finally, the consumer will be attracted to the product display in the department stores. The sight of the product may enable the re-experience of the affect. This would stimulate the preference to buy the product.

Previously it was thought, as Haley and Baldinger (1991) claimed, that ad-liking is evoked simply intuitively through entertainment. However, later it was understood that likeable adverts are as likely to be informative as they are to be entertaining. According to Alwitt (1987), the basis for likeability is in fact a complex concept with both affective and cognitive components. Studies have attempted to discover what factors and characteristics underlie an advert which is liked. Biel and Bridgewater (1990) were the first to demonstrate likeability's relation to perceptual characteristics of the advertisements. The two strongest predictors of ad liking are 'meaningfulness' and 'energy' (Biel & Bridgewater, 1990; Aaker & stayman, 1990). According to Srull (1983) ad liking can result in product liking because that affect induced out of the mood at the time of encoding information from advertising can influence the mood at the time of retrieval. So the positive mood states would lead to more favourable evaluations and vice versa.

Advertising is a form of communication that is used to persuade an audience (viewers, readers or listeners) to take some action with respect to products, ideas, or services. Most commonly, the desired result is to drive consumer behaviour with respect to a commercial offering, although political and ideological advertising is also common. Advertising has been recognized for its embodiment of aesthetic qualities (Brown 1995; Venkatesh and Meamber 2006), and some theorists have suggested that advertising in itself is a legitimate form of art (Gibbons 2005; Scott 2005). Advertising fulfils a commercial business function for client sponsors. Conflict between art and commerce within advertising agencies has been an omnipresent macro theme of advertising history (Frank 1997; Jackall and Hirota 2000).

For advertising, emphasizing relevant, useful, timely information obscures the importance of emotions in human decision making. Advertisers design brand names and tag lines to be emotive. Wherever possible, they use images and audio-visual materials that evoke favourable feelings. Persons and companies have deep-seated feelings about how good they and their products are. These feelings are fully sufficient to drive vigorous bidding for advertising opportunities. Advertiser's primary mission is to reach prospective customers and influence their awareness, attitudes and buying behaviour. They spend a lot of money to keep individuals interested in their products. To succeed, they need to understand what makes potential customers behave the way they do. The present study, as a backup for this mission, aims to find out if positive affect induced movie ads can influence the ad likeness, and thereby enhance the preference in buying a product, disregarding the emotional intelligence in young adult consumers. Results would provide insights about the importance and inevitability of positive affect contents in the movie advertisements.

HYPOTHESES

H1: High emotionally intelligent young adult viewers differ from low emotionally intelligent young adult viewers in the positive affect that is induced by movie advertisements

H2: Positive affect induced by movie advertisements have a significant relationship to ad likeness and preference to buy the product among the young adult viewers

METHOD

SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 88 final year under-graduate students from Little Flower Institute of Social Sciences and Health, Calicut district in the state of Kerala, India. The population falls under the age group of 18-24. All of them are those who pursue either under graduate or post graduate courses.

MEASURES

Emotional Intelligence Scale (Schutte et. Al, 1997) was used to measure the emotional intelligence of the participants. As per the authors, the scale showed good internal reliability with two different samples. Two-week test-retest reliability indicated that the scores were fairly stable over time. An internal consistency analysis showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90. Cronbach's alpha of the scale in the present study is 0.87.

The Happiness Measures (HM) (Fordyce, 1988) Emotion Questionnaire is used to measure the happiness, and thereby the positive affect, invoked in the participants, after a live exposure to the visual advertisements. As per the author, the HM assesses both intensity and frequency of affect. Happiness Measures demonstrates strong reliability; remarkable stability; relative freedom from response, sex, age, and race bias; and an exceptionally wide background of evidence supporting its convergent, construct, concurrent, and discriminative validity (Fordyce, 1988).

Risha Preference Index, developed by the researchers is used to understand the "ad-likeness" and "preference to buy" the product to which the participants are exposed through visual advertisements. The index consisted with two items; the first, to identify the intensity of ad-likeness of the participant and the second, to identify the participant's preference to purchase it, with five response options, which extends from "least agree" to "most agree".

PROCEDURE

All the participants were seated comfortably in a hall. At first, they were asked to respond to the Emotional Intelligence Scale. After allowing them to finish that, they were shown four movie (duration extended from 64 to 70 seconds) advertisements (automobile commercials), which contained two advertisements with traditional contents and two with divergent advertisements. After the exposure to each advertisement, the participants were requested to complete one set of happiness measure. Subsequent to the exposure to all the four advertisements, the participants were requested to complete Risha preference index.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Feeling of happiness enhancement after the exposure to each advertisement is measured using Happiness measures. The enhancement in happiness is considered to contribute an improvement in positive affect. Table 1 summarizes the percentage analysis of the positive affect improvement in the participants after each exposure

TABLE 1: IMPROVEMENT IN POSITIVE AFFECT AFTER THE EXPOSURE OF THE PARTICIPANTS TO THE ADVERTISEMENTS

positive affect %	
after I Ad	5.7
after II Ad	8.0
after III Ad	27.3
after IV Ad	100

The contents of the first ad included traditional elements, such as, introducing the special features of the car. The importance was for information about the vehicle. After the exposure to the first ad, only 5.7% in the sample reported an enhancement in the positive affect.

The second ad was an integration of both informative and affective contents. However, more importance was given to the information. After the exposure to second ad, 8 % of the total sample reported enhancement in the positive affect.

The third ad was also informative, but divergent in its presentation. A consistent story line was followed from beginning to end. After the exposure, 27.3% of the sample reported enhancement of positive affect.

The fourth ad included its information along with surprising visual displays. The presentation was divergent and attractive. After the exposure to the fourth ad, 100% of the sample reported an enhancement in the positive affect.

To reach fine and precise conclusions, the sample was categorized in to two criterion groups representing high and low emotional intelligence, based on the median of the distribution of the emotional intelligence scores. Descriptive statistics of the score of emotional intelligence of the subjects in the sample is summarized in table 2.

TABLE 2: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE SCORE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF THE SUBJECTS IN THE SAMPLE

Variable	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Min	Max
Emotional intelligence	126.90	127.00	127	13.00	95	157

The mean (126.9), median (127) and mode (127) of the distribution seem to be approximately consistent. Standard deviation of the distribution is 13. Values ranges from 95 to 157. Emotional intelligence categorized in to criterion variables are summarized in table 3.

TABLE 3: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE CATEGORIZED IN TO CRITERION GROUPS REPRESENTING HIGH AND LOW, BASED ON THE MEDIAN OF THE DISTRIBUTION

Emotional Intelligence	Frequency	Percent
Low	43	48.9
High	45	51.1

43 participants (48.9% of the sample) are categorized in to the group of low emotional intelligence and 45 participants (51.1% of the sample) are categorized in to the group of high emotional intelligence. In order to find out if there is any difference in positive affect between high emotionally intelligent young adult viewers and low emotionally intelligent young adult viewers after the exposure to visual movie advertisements student's t test is used. Results are summarized in table 4

TABLE 4: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND T- VALUE OF POSITIVE AFFECT WITH RESPECT TO THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Variable	Emotional Intelligence	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Positive Affect	High	43	3.56	0.83	0.38 ^{ns}
	Low	45	3.62	0.78	

The t value (0.38), not meeting the level of significance, shows the lack of difference between the criterion groups in their positive affect. It can be concluded that high emotionally intelligent young adults do not differ from low emotionally intelligent young adults in the positive affect that is induced by movie advertisements. In other words, the affect induced by the advertisements had the supremacy to influence the young adult viewers disregarding their emotional intelligence.

Consumer emotional intelligence is defined as a person's ability to use emotional information to achieve a desired consumer outcome, comprised as a set of first order emotional abilities that allow individuals to recognize the meanings of emotional patterns that underlie consumer decision making and to reason and solve problems on the basis of them (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). According to Kidwell, Hardesty and Childers (2008) a better understanding of emotional ability (that is, high emotional intelligence) of the consumers can have considerable value in extending knowledge of consumer behaviour. Impulsivity in purchase can be regulated by a person's emotional intelligence (Kidwell, Hardesty & Childers, 2008). Consumers with high emotional intelligence will make highest quality consumer decisions (Kidwell, Hardesty & Childers, 2008).

However, the present findings bring discrepancy to these conclusions. Positive affect is induced in all the participants, disregarding their emotional intelligence. As per the present investigation, it can be speculated that emotional intelligence can be manipulated by the positive affect induced advertisements. The decision to buy a product might have dependence on the positive affect generated by the ad. Young adults may decide to buy a product on the basis of intellectual perspective. But, the intervention of an ad that can stimulate positive affect can make the young adult's emotional intelligence disrupted. Even the young adult consumers with high emotional intelligence were subjugated to the effect of affect induced advertisement.

Affinity aroused by the affect induced advertisement to the advertised product can be identified after finding out its relation to ad likeness and preference to buy. Relationship of positive affectivity to the ad likeness and preference to buy was found out through correlation analysis. Table 5 summarizes the results of the analysis.

TABLE 5: CORRELATION TABLE WHICH SUGGESTS THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG PREFERENCE TO BUY AND AD LIKENESS TO POSITIVE AFFECT INDUCED IN THE PARTICIPANTS AFTER THEIR EXPOSURE TO THE VISUAL ADS

	Preference to buy	Ad likeness	Positive Affect
Preference to buy	1	.299**	.293**
Ad likeness	.299**	1	.415**
Positive Affect	.293**	.415**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

Positive affect induced in the participants after their exposure to the visual ads seems to have significant positive relationship with preference to buy ($r = 0.293$, $p < 0.01$) and ad likeness ($r = 0.415$, $p < 0.01$). Positive affect seems to have moderately strong relationship with ad likeness and a weak relationship with preference to buy. The relationship between ad likeness and preference to buy also seems to be weak. Probably, positive affectivity shall be doing the role of a mediator between ad likeness and preference to buy.

Emotion having an independent role in advertising is not a new discovery (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Gardner & Rook, 1988). Positive affect has been found to be elicited by the advertising (and) is then transferred to the brand or product advertised (Kover, Goldberg & James, 1995). Research by Peter and Krishnakumar (2010) on impulse buying suggested that people engage in quick buying mostly due to affective reason. Gardner & Rook (1988) investigated and found out a connection between a consumer's impulse to buy and the internal affective reactions (moods and emotions). Rook (1987) also has pointed out that impulse behaviour taking place when the consumer experiences positive affect on a spontaneous confrontation with a product. The urge to buy the product is has direct correlation with the positive emotions evoked by it (Verplanken et al 2005).

The result seems interesting. Further illumination considering the probability of positive affect acting as a mediator in the relationship between ad likeness and preference to buy is searched through mediation analysis using regression. Table 6 summarizes the results of one variable regression analysis establishing "positive affect \rightarrow ad likeness" relationship.

TABLE 6: ONE VARIABLE REGRESSION WHICH INDICATES POSITIVE AFFECT AS A SIGNIFICANT PREDICTOR OF AD LIKENESS

Model	Predictor	β	T	F	r^2	Δr^2
1	Positive affect	0.415	4.231**	17.903**	0.172	0.163

Dependent Variable: Ad likeness; ** $p < .01$

Table 7 is the summary of the results of one variable regression analysis establishing "positive affect \rightarrow preference to buy" relationship.

TABLE 7: ONE VARIABLE REGRESSION WHICH INDICATES POSITIVE AFFECT AS A SIGNIFICANT PREDICTOR OF PREFERENCE TO BUY

Model	Predictor	B	T	F	r^2	Δr^2
1	Positive Affect	0.293	2.837**	8.046**	0.086	0.075

Dependent Variable: Preference to buy; ** $p < .01$

Table 8 is the summary of the results of hierarchical regression analysis establishing the mediation of positive affect between ad likeness and preference to buy

TABLE 8: HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS ESTABLISHING POSITIVE AFFECT AS A MEDIATING FACTOR

Model	Predictor	β	T	F	r^2	Δr^2
1	Positive Affect	0.293	2.837**	8.046**	0.086	0.075
2	Positive Affect	0.204	1.824	5.988**	0.124	0.103
	Ad likeness	0.214	1.918*			

Dependent Variable: Preference to buy; ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Positive affect predicts preference to buy in block 1 ($\beta = 0.293$, $p < .01$), but loses its significance in block two ($\beta = 0.204$, N.S.) when ad likeness is introduced. In block two, ad likeness establishes ($\beta = 0.214$, $p < 0.05$) the role of significant predictor. Significance of mediation analysis is ascertained through Sobel test. Table 9 summarizes the direct and total effects of mediation analysis

TABLE 9: DIRECT AND TOTAL EFFECTS OF MEDIATION ANALYSIS

Paths	Coefficient	Standard Error	T
C b (YX)	0.2996	0.1033	2.9018**
A b (MX)	0.3367	0.1187	2.8366**
B b (YM.X)	0.3124	0.0881	3.5476**
C b (YX.M)	0.1945	0.1014	1.9182

Y = ad likeness, X = Preference to buy, M = Positive affect, b denotes for unstandardized coefficient

** $p < .01$

Considering the table path C (*ad likeness to preference to buy*, the Total effect, $b = 0.2996$, $p < .01$) path A (*preference to buy to positive affect*, $b = 0.3367$, $p < .01$) and path B (*positive affect to preference to buy*, controlling for the *ad likeness*, $b = 0.3124$, $p < .01$) are significant. Path C (*ad likeness to preference to buy*, controlling for the *positive affect*, the Direct effect) is not significant ($b = 0.1945$, N.S.). The model has met all the criteria for mediation. When positive affect is controlled, the relationship between ad likeness and preference to buy lost its significance.

Summary of the indirect effects of mediation analysis is given in table 7

TABLE 7: INDIRECT EFFECT OF MEDIATION ANALYSIS

	Value	Std Err	Z
Effect	0.1052	0.0486	2.1637*

* $p < .05$

Indirect effect (0.1052) of Path A and Path B is provided in table 7. Here path A = 0.3367 and path B = 0.3124. Indirect effects ($Z = 2.1637$) are significant ($p < .05$) as per the analysis.

As once mentioned, affective responses to the ads are unavoidable, hard to verbalise, most important of all and need not depend upon their prior cognition (Zajonc, 1980). The findings are in line with that of Zajonc and Marcus (1982), confirming preference as primarily an affect based behavioural phenomenon. If positive affect is induced, the role of higher order cognitive processing in consumer decisions will get reduced (Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999). Damasio (1994) rightly said that there are less evidences for a direct link between reasoning strategies and decisions, but affect has a big role in moderating all decisions. Thus, as in the study of Abideen and Saleem (2011), it can be concluded on the basis of the present results that affect has strong association with the consumer decisions.

Biel & Bridgewater (1990) were the first to demonstrate likeability's relation to perceptual characteristics of the advertisements. They found out five factors that were associated with likeability: 'ingenuity'; 'meaningfulness'; 'energy'; 'rubs the wrong way'; and 'warmth'. It can be speculated that all these factors are the output of positive affect felt. The result further contributes to the findings of Srull (1983) which offered an explanation why ad liking can result in product liking. Srull's (1983) suggestion that mood at the time of encoding information from advertising can influence the mood at the time of retrieval seems to be copiously accurate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Information from the findings shall be used to enhance the effect of movie advertisements. It contributes to the literature the reason of the movements made by some movie advertisements in the market. However, the study had some limitations. First of all, the commercials chosen for the purpose of data collection, even though were unfamiliar, contained brand which were familiar to the subjects. This might have created a bias in choosing their preference. If the brands too were unfamiliar, the results could be more potent. Secondly, the duration of the ads varied a little. The time of ads might have influenced the audience. A study using the ads with unfamiliar brands and equating the time of the movie can make the results more momentous. Finally, the sample included only 88 subjects, and was selected from one institution only. In order to generalize the findings, the study shall be replicated in a large sample.

CONCLUSIONS

As hypothesized, positive affect showed a significant relationship with ad likeness and preference to buy, discounting the effect of emotional intelligence. Affect in the movie advertisements can overrule or predispose the cognition. Decisions made by the buyers, thus, cannot be fully intellectual. Dissolving emotional intelligence through the exposure to the contents with positive affect is an area which has scope for further inquiry. Insight to the factors that could play in between positive affect and emotional intelligence can help the advertisers to use them as a tool that can act between likeness and preference to buy.

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