Experiment Report: Peripheral and Central Persuasion Name

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ABSTRACT

Attitudes play a significant role in the lives of human beings. These are defined as important characteristics that enable human beings to form certain choices, as well as, determine what is likely to leave an impact on them and what would be the extent of that impact. Persuasion is the process that tends to change the attitudes of human beings towards something based on the type of communication or routes. Outside forces form a great source of most of the persuasions that take place in our lives. How people get convinced to change their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors is included in the process of persuasion. There are two major routes of persuasion commonly used to persuade and change the attitudes of people. These routes are the central route and peripheral route of persuasion. The central route of persuasion is based on persuading the individual towards something through facts and figures, while the peripheral route of persuasion involves using cues to persuade a person. This research will conduct an experiment in order to know which route has more power on the client. This experiment is designed to analyse the effectiveness of central routes and peripheral routes on building the attitudes of the people. In this research, the sample used by the researchers comprises 50 individuals with ages ranging between 18 years to 22 years. This was quantitative research carried out by the researchers and the experiment was done where the respondents were made to watch a video without identifying the route of persuasion used in the video for getting the answers without any biases. Further, the approach Likert scale was used for findings as this type of scale is the most appropriate one for such research works. Shapiro test and Mann-Whitney U-test were used for analysing the data and testing the hypothesis. The null hypothesis got rejected through these tests and showed that central and peripheral routes were sometimes effective and sometimes ineffective. Both central and peripheral routes can sometimes be effective in attitude making, and sometimes, the route model proves to be ineffective. But, the null hypothesis that 'peripheral persuasion is more effective in advertisement' got rejected through this research. The research has limitations based on the gaps in the advertisements shown to the respondents.

Keywords: central route, peripheral route, attitude

1.INTRODUCTION

Attitude is defined as an evaluation of different people, ideas, or objects. Attitudes can differ from picking up objects at a supermarket to casting a vote on the favorite politician (Andrews & Shimp, 1990) [1]. However, attitudes are also built by persuasion. There are two routes towards persuasion. The first route is the central route that uses facts, figures, and information to convince the potential consumers. While the other route is the peripheral route that uses the association of the consumers with cues such as fame, beauty, positive emotions, etc. (Dröge, 1989). [3] In other words, the central route focuses on thoughtful considerations of the message conveyed by the brand and the peripheral route focuses on the cues that are present behind the strength of any argument (Andrews & Shimp, 1990) [1], (Algarni, 2019) [2]. Persuasion is an important element for any brand to attract and convince the potential target audience. Persuasion skills hold great significance for the marketing and sales professionals as they get paid to not only interact with potential customers but also encourage them to invest in the products or services of an organization. Their performance is based on the number of clients they tap for the company majorly through persuasion (Wei et al., 2008) [7]. Persuasion is not a cakewalk and one needs to be really good at it. A successful procedure of persuasion is achieved by changing the mindset and beliefs of the people rather than forcing them or creating unnecessary pressure (Wei et al., 2008) [7]. For proper marketing of the products, the brands are involved in analyzing the

thought process of the target audience. There are some audiences that need to be convinced through proper statistics, and key figures. In order to make the central route of persuasion reach its success in changing behaviors, thoughts, and attitudes, the arguments must be strong. The successful central route of persuasion results in a lasting change of attitude. A person must have a strong motivation or the ability to pay attention in order to make the central route of persuasion effective (Yalch and Elmore-Yalch, 1984) [8]. There are also chances that the target audience will be less elaborative and can be convinced by the cues impacting the ability to think about relevant information (Algarni, 2019) [2], (Dröge, 1989) [3]. The peripheral route of motivation is usually opted when the person does not have a strong motivation or the ability to pay attention. A person having little interest or understanding of the message has higher chances of getting persuaded through the peripheral route of persuasion (Yalch and Elmore-Yalch, 1984) [8]. This experiment is designed to analyze how many people tend to apply the persuasive message in advertisements and the effectiveness of two routes on building the attitudes of the people.

2.METHODOLOGY

This experiment has applied the quantitative research methodology. According to Watson, 2015, quantitative research involves collecting numeric data that is interpreted using statistical tools illustrating the characteristics of the research population. Quantitative research is usually effective when the researchers wish to have greater and deeper knowledge and understanding of the social world/ Quantitative methods are used by the researchers for observing events or situations that have an influence on people. Objective data gets produced by quantitative research and this data can be communicated through numbers and statistics. The data gets interpreted with the help of similar means. The data of quantitative research is used to make predictions, generalize results to a wider population, test cause relationships, and find averages and patterns. Quantitative data provides the researchers with a huge benefit of the addition of objectivity to the research. As quantitative data relies on concrete numeric values, it has few variables. This fact of quantitative data helps in eradicating the biases from the research and makes the results of the research more accurate. Moreover, it is easier to get big sample sizes. A broad study can be made in this way and it will have more subjects that will consequently enable more generalization of the findings. The involvement of a few variables is observed as data has a relation with close-ended information. In this case, the research sample comprises 50 individuals with ages ranging between 18 years to 22 years. It is to be noted that the sample group is selected from the research population and the sample group characteristics apply to the whole research population. In this research, the selected participants would be further di-

vided into two groups. These two groups were of the central persuasion route and peripheral persuasion route. It was ensured that the ratio of male and female participants in both groups is kept equal which would provide us with the holistic views of both sets of participants.

The addition of videos to surveys enables the researchers to make the respondents connect mentally and emotionally. Video-based research happens to enable the respondents to get attracted to the procedure of research and their responses are likely to be the most natural ones as the video appears to them for the first time and there are no pressurizing factors in this research that may make the respondents conform. The respondents give true responses when they are not provided with a situation beforehand (Hindmarsh, 2008) [9]. As a part of the research, both groups were asked to watch a video advertisement without knowing the persuasion model of the advertisement. This helped us get unbiased views of the participants. Research questionnaires were prepared and distributed amongst the participants to collect their views regarding the video advertisement. The addition of videos to surveys enables the researchers to make the respondents connect mentally and emotionally. Video-based research happens to enable the respondents to get attracted to the procedure of research and their responses are likely to be the most natural ones as the video appears to them for the first time and there are no pressurizing factors in this research that may make the respondents confirm. The respondents give true responses when they are not provided with a situation beforehand (Hindmarsh, 2008) [9]. There is a scale for measuring results in such pieces of research and it is known as a Likert scale. Likert scale, a psychometric scale, is commonly used in those research that is based on questionnaires. In order to scale responses in survey research, the Likert scale has to be the most widely used approach. This scale has become so widely utilizable in research that its term is often interchangeably used with rating scales regardless of the presence of other types of rating scales (Nemoto and Beglar, 2013) [10]. The Likert scale provides leverage that a universal method for the collection of data is used and this makes it easier to interpret them. It is easier to draw conclusions, results, reports, and graphs from the responses when the researchers are working with quantitative data in research. Moreover, people are not forced to express their answers in either-or options (Nemoto and Beglar, 2013) [10], and this makes the Likert scale a perfect option for this research as the answers for this persuasion-based research have to be as neutral as possible and when people will not be forced to express with direct options, they will be most likely to be neutral in their answers. The analysis part is quite easy after all the responses are received. The questionnaire was designed using the Likert scale with 6 questions. Thus, the views of the participants were quantified using the Likert scale and the results were obtained through the conduction of this research (Watson, 2015). [4]

3. RESULTS

Different statistical tests were conducted to analyze the attitudes of the research participants. These tests included 'Shapiro tests' and 'Mann-Whitney u-test' along with standard mean and standard deviation of the Likert scale questionnaire for both groups.

The Shapiro test is used to analyze the data normality. Shapiro-Wilks test, a test for normality, is one of the three tests of general normality, that is used to detect all departures from normality. Based on the terms of power, this test makes a good comparison with the other two tests. The hypothesis of normality gets rejected when the p-value is equal to or lesser than 0.05. Generally, if the 'P-value' is less than the alpha level, then the null hypothesis is rejected and proves that the tested data is not normally distributed (Hanusz et al., 2016). On the other hand, if the 'p-value' is greater than the alpha level, then the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. In this case, the chosen alpha level is 0.05, so the interpretations are made accordingly (Hanusz et al., 2016). The test results for the central group participants illustrate that the 'P-value' is less than 0.05 in all the cases thus, the null hypothesis can be rejected (Hanusz et al., 2016). In addition to this, the peripheral group questionnaires also illustrated similar values in Shapiro testing showing that both central and peripheral cues are sometimes effective and sometimes ineffective in advertising. [6]

Another test 'Mann-Whitney U-test' was also conducted to analyze the null hypothesis. In order to compare whether there is a difference in the dependent variables of two independent groups, the test of Mann-Whitney U is used by the researchers. This test entertains the comparison based on whether the dependent variables'' distribution is similar to those of the two groups and therefore from the similar population. In Mann-Whitney U-test, if the value of 'p' is less than the alpha level '0.05', then the null hypothesis can be rejected (Nachar, 2008) [5]. In this case, the Mann-Whitney U-test illustrates that there is no considerable difference between the dependent variables between the two groups (Nachar, 2008). Thus, it can be said that both central and peripheral routes are sometimes effective and sometimes ineffective in persuading the consumers. The test results were unbiased as the participants were unaware of the type of video shown to them.

4. CONCLUSION

To conclude, it can be said that this experiment was conducted to analyze the role of the central and peripheral routes in advertisements and the way these routes impact the decision-making of the consumers in persuasion. Thus, the difference between attitude makings was analyzed using the relevant argument model and icon endorsement model. Questionnaires were designed along with the experimental conditions that helped us collect quantitative data from the participant. The participants were divided into two different groups and were shown advertisements either designed according to the central or peripheral route. After the advertisement, the Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect data about their attitudes.

The 'Shapiro-test' results illustrate that there were no major differences between the attitudes of the participants in both groups. Both sets of participants gave mixed vision showing that both central and peripheral routes can sometimes be effective in attitude making, and sometimes, the route model proves to be ineffective. This was also illustrated by the 'Mann- Whitney U-test, where there seemed to be no significant difference between the dependent variables in two sets. So, the null hypothesis that 'peripheral persuasion is more effective in advertisement' is rejected. The results show that both route models are partially effective in advertisements in terms of the attitude making of the consumers. The central route of persuasion is usually driven by logic and utilizes facts and data to convince people of the worthiness of the argument. Instead of focusing on the facts and figures, the peripheral route of persuasion focused on the cues and their related relationships. However, with respect to the advertisement, both routes of persuasion proved to be successful and helped in the formation of respondents' attitudes.

5. LIMITATIONS

Like every experimental activity, there are certain limitations in this experimental activity as well. Firstly, there was a gap between the two sets of advertisements shown to the participants. This seems to impact the results. The gap shows that results may vary for different modes and circumstances. Secondly, the central route presented the message verbally while the peripheral route presented the message visually that seemed to impact the results and the views of the participants. In addition to this, these results cannot be applied to all goods. The element of the product life is important in terms of impacting the results of both types of advertisements. So, the future researchers are suggested to work on the central and peripheral routing of different products to devise more generalized results.

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