


Chapter 11


A Study Exploring the Effect of Subliminally Priming Known Human Faces vs. Unknown Human Faces on Product Selections by Consumers: Unseen Motivators

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ABSTRACT

Unconscious thoughts more than often are seen to precede conscious contemplations of the surroundings. The Present chapter attempts to explore how subliminal priming of known and unknown human faces could impact product selection and decision-making time of consumers. 2 (Known face X Unknown face) X 2 (Product selection X Decision-making time) within-subject design was used for the study. A stimulus-priming experiment designed in E-prime software was used to subliminally expose the participants to both known and unknown human faces They were then asked to select a product that they were willing to buy from an option of four

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products, of which one of the products was primed along with Human face (Known Vs Unknown). The product selection rates as well as the time taken to select the product were recorded. A total of 100 Participants falling in the age category of young adults (18-39) took part in the study. The chapter discusses the results and dives deeper into the implications that they hold in the world of marketing.

INTRODUCTION

In the mid to late 19th century, while walking down a road it wasn't an uncommon sight to see big billboards advertising various products. In fact, the first billboard advertisement was done in 1830 by a person called Jarred Bell (Content,2019). The invention of the radio in the early 20th century paved the way for a paradigm shift in the mode of advertising. With its enlarged reach among the public, radios slowly became the preferred mode of advertising. The first radio advertisement aired in 1922 and it was done by WEAJ in New York City (Hogdson,2021). Later around the mid-20th century, the invention of Television ushered in a new age of EVDS (Electronic Visual Display Systems). This paved the way for yet another paradigm shift in the mode of marketing and advertisements. It presented an enlarged reach amongst the public as radio did but also engaged the people in visual form. This gave new impetus to advertisement and marketing campaigns. The first televised advertisement was aired in 1941 (Jay,2023). From then on EVDS has become the preferred mode that most marketing and advertisement campaigns prefer. The introduction of the first commercial computers in 1951 (Sinha & Sinha, 2023) and the launch of the World Wide Web in 1993 (History,2020) worked towards solidifying that status. In the current technological age, social media stands tall as the most preferred mode of marketing and advertising (Remi, 2021).

Despite different iterations and variations, the core aim behind all the above-said examples was the need of an organization or a company to engage a potential consumer and create a positive inclination among them in favour of their products. Over time the methods used towards that end have evolved with the increasing complexity of technology, but the core aim has always remained the same. The current chapter explores the concept of consumer engagement through the lens of unconscious modalities, which yet again is an innovation that is seen to be on the rise, and is used by companies and organizations to influence consumers.

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