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UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING

MESSAGE VARIATION AND SOURCE CREDIBILITY
IN ADVERTISING

VOLUME ONE

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Submitted according to the regulations for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Strathclyde.

GLASGOW

JULY 1986

PhD Thesis titled:

"Message Variation And Source Credibility
In Advertising"

Submitted by:

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DEDICATION

To those who helped to keep alive in me the glimmer of hope and optimism I needed and sustained the conscious motives and the great desire to succeed throughout the period of study. My parents, and my wife, Yusra.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the empirical literature on the effects of source credibility and message variation on persuasive communication.

Much of the literature on the persuasive effects of source credibility has been contradictory, for four main reasons. First, the dimensions used to define credibility are often unclear. Sometimes sources vary on more than one dimension. Alternatively, the independence of the factor the experiment is attempting to manipulate is often confounded with unrelated or extraneous dimensions. Second, given that certain persuasive effects are induced, the process by which this occurs is unclear - the literature is generally weak in dealing with mediating processes. Third, extensive research shows that source credibility operates most effectively when it is interacting with other variables, not in isolation. Fourth, many of the observed effects have been obtained from social persuasion experiments. These may not generalise to an advertising context.

This thesis attempted to extend research in this area by addressing itself to some of the above problems. In particular, it examined the interactive effect of source credibility and an important variable, message variation, in inducing attitudinal and behavioural change in an experimental advertising situation.

Findings from the experimental study are discussed in relation to (1) the difficulties involved in providing independent manipulations of source credibility; (2) findings from previous empirical research; and (3) the practical implications for advertising practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In preparing this research, I was helped by others to whom my thanks and gratitude are due.

I wish to thank my supervisor, Professor Michael J Baker, Deputy Principal and Head of the Department of Marketing at Strathclyde University, who offered the guidance, advice and the constant encouragement that made this study possible. Also, I would like to acknowledge the great support provided by my assistant supervisor, Dr Douglas S Leather, Director of the Advertising Research Unit at Strathclyde University, who directed this research with both high expertise and intellectual precision. To him goes more than I can ever acknowledge here.

I would like especially to acknowledge the generous assistance I received from Dr Philip P Aitken, Research Fellow in the Advertising Research Unit, who willingly participated in lengthy discussions and dealt courteously and patiently with many of the research aspects which required his help.

Many thanks are due to Dr Stephen Tagg, of the Social Sciences Laboratory at Strathclyde University, who offered the statistical and computer advice that were of great help in analysing the results of the experimental study.

Particular thanks go to Mr W G Donaldson, a member of staff of the Department of Marketing, for his assistance in making available the appropriate sample to carry out the experimental study.

I am also much indebted to Mr Neil McCallum, Departmental Librarian, Mr Alex Tomeny, Senior Librarian, and all the staff members of the Social Sciences Department at the Mitchell Library

in Glasgow, who offered me a quiet and comfortable office to study during the course of preparing this research.

Special thanks must go to Pheona Lovie for undertaking the typing work so professionally.

A great deal of gratitude and thanks are also due to the University of Jordan for the encouragement and the financial support provided to enable me to accomplish this research.

Finally, I am very appreciative of the support, encouragement and the peace of mind I have received during the preparation of this work from my dear wife, Yusra, and my children, Luma, Enas and Mayse, who helped to keep alive the glimmer of hope that sustained me throughout the research.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION: THE PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION: THE PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Over 2000 years ago, Aristotle stated:-

"Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible. We believe good men more fully and more readily than others." [1]

From Aristotle's time until the present day, the credibility of the source of any communication has been regarded as an important factor in interpersonal persuasion. It is also one of the major issues with which advertising researchers and practitioners are concerned. It is an intrinsic feature in efforts aimed at developing effective messages which will successfully communicate with the target audience, and in turn contribute to the achievement of the desired end objective of advertising - getting the receivers of the ad to buy the advertised product or service.

Advertising strategy developers are constantly seeking out the most effective techniques by which they can enhance the effectiveness of their advertising messages. However, it has been speculated that one problem they may have is that the audience may perceive a lack of credibility in messages that derive from a single source. This may have motives and beliefs different from those of the audience. The extent to which the audience perceives the source's statements to be correct and true is therefore critical.

Kelman [2] considered credibility of the source as the power base possessed by the communicator which induces internalisation in the receiver. Internalisation can be said to occur when the receiver agrees to behave in the intended manner if the behaviour advocated is congruent with his value system. Kelman added "the individual adopts it (ie. the behaviour) because he finds it useful for the solution of a problem, or because it is congenial to his own orientation, or because it is demanded by his own values - in short, because he perceives it as inherently conducive to the maximisation of his values."

If this pattern of analysis is extended to the field of advertising communication, the advertising message can be a common-shared meaning between the advertiser and the receiver. The arguments the message introduces are learned and recalled, and the conclusions drawn from them can be integrated into the receiver's belief and value system.

However, the source of the message is, in a sense, a part of the message itself. One of the major factors that is thought to have a moderating effect on the persuasiveness of source credibility is the variation in message structure. It can be predicted, then, that in advertising communication, the credibility of the source and hence its effectiveness is dependent upon its interaction with variations in message structure. If this interactive persuasive effect occurs, message variation becomes an important variable for advertising strategists to use in order to enhance the credibility of the advertising source and in turn, the overall persuasive effect of the advertising.

Based upon the above, the present study examines the relevance and contribution of source credibility and message variation in persuasive communication in general, and in advertising communication in particular.

ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study is presented in ten chapters.

Chapter Two is devoted to an introductory analysis of the nature and content of modern advertising and public attitudes towards it. It begins by defining briefly advertising communication, and discusses its boundaries. This is followed by an extensive analysis of its nature and content. Finally, public attitudes towards advertising in the United Kingdom and United States are analysed.

Chapter Three is an attempt to conceptualise the persuasive communication process. It begins by discussing several definitions of communication and its structure. It then examines some of the most significant communication models which have contributed to the theoretical analysis of the communication process. The chapter then discusses the persuasive communication process. This deals with three major issues: defining the persuasion concept, the approaches to persuasion, and the factors which influence persuasive communication. Finally, the chapter deals with cognitive dissonance and the communication process. Within this context, the nature and causes of dissonance, dissonance and the choice process, and the different approaches to reducing dissonance in communication are examined. The importance of this chapter lies in our view that conceptualising the persuasive communication process will help to provide better understanding of the mechanism by which advertising operates - the focus of our discussion in the next chapter.

Chapter Four is an attempt to introduce advertising as a form of persuasive communication and to explore its role in inducing the desired response. The major purpose is to shed some light on the way that advertising works to induce the desired responses from the target audience. The chapter begins by discussing the

structure of the advertising communication process. Four basic components are identified: the source, the message, the media, and the receiver.

The chapter then proceeds to deal with consumers' perceptions in relation to the advertising communication system. This leads to another important issue, an explanation of the influence of advertising on buyer behaviour. Discussion of this concentrates on hierarchical approaches which are considered central to explanations of how advertising can influence consumer behaviour. After this, the discussion turns to one of the most controversial issues in advertising: the objectives of advertising. Three aspects are discussed: sales as a major objective of advertising; communication objectives; and the controversy between the two. It is concluded that both sales and communication can be viewed as advertising objectives depending on the stage in the product life cycle (PLC) and the type of decision involved.

The chapter then explores the role of advertising in product differentiation. Here, issues such as definition of product differentiation, advertising as a source of product differentiation and positioning as an advertising approach to product differentiation are extensively discussed. Finally, the chapter concludes by considering the issue of inducing resistance to persuasion in advertising. This represents one of the important strategic problems that face current advertisers, particularly in their operation of defensive strategies in which they build consumer resistance to competitive persuasion. Four approaches to inducing resistance to persuasion through advertising are introduced. The refutational approach is viewed as the most appropriate one to achieve this goal and is given special attention in Chapter Six.

Chapter Five explores the concept of source credibility and its persuasive effect in advertising. It is divided into five sections, each of which addresses an important issue related to

the concept of source credibility. The first section is devoted to the definition of source credibility. In this context, several are discussed, the common thread being that all highlight the perceptual nature of the concept. The second section is devoted to the discussion of the basic dimensions, with the conclusion that it is a complex and multidimensional concept. The chapter then assesses the persuasive effect of source credibility. In this context, the discussion deals with the issue from two aspects: as a main persuasive effect, and in its interaction with other variables. Section Four of this chapter focuses on the sleeper effect in relation to source credibility. Finally, an attempt is made to explain the persuasive effect of source credibility through cognitive response theory. This introduces the persuasive effects of message variation, the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Six explores the concept of message variation and its effectiveness in advertising. This chapter addresses five important issues: the definition of the variable, the relative effectiveness of nonvaried (or one-sided) versus varied (or two-sided) messages, the effectiveness of varied-refutational versus nonvaried messages, the effectiveness of message variation in advertising, and finally, the theoretical explanations of the effectiveness of message variation.

The final chapter of the literature review addresses the relationship between source credibility and message variation. The particular concern of this chapter is to explore the possibility of a mediating effect by message variation on the persuasive impact of source credibility. The chapter considers the basic models of attribution theory (by presenting these models a conceptual framework for the relationship between source credibility and message variation is laid down); and the interaction between source credibility and message variation as documented in the empirical research on this issue.

Chapter Eight discusses the design and methodology of the experimental research. It is a bridge between the theoretical framework and the empirical findings. This chapter deals with research objectives, research hypotheses, product choice, experimental design, research variables, manipulation of the independent variables, measurement of the dependent variables and the experimental procedure.

Chapter Nine is devoted to presenting the major findings of the experimental research. Finally, Chapter Ten is devoted to the discussion of the research findings, their implications and, where possible, the recommendations for further research.

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CHAPTER TWO

ADVERTISING: AN INTRODUCTORY ANALYSIS

CHAPTER TWO**ADVERTISING: AN INTRODUCTORY ANALYSIS****INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is about advertising. The discussion here deals with the following issues:-

- (1) Definition of advertising
- (2) The boundaries of advertising
- (3) The nature and content of modern advertising
- (4) Public attitude to advertising

During the discussion of these issues, an attempt will be made to clarify, analyse, criticise and interpret the basic aspects of advertising which are the focus of the current debate on advertising.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce advertising as a distinguishable form of mass communication which has an influential role in shaping the current lifestyle of most societies.

DEFINITION OF ADVERTISING

The definitions of advertising are many and varied. It may be defined as a communication process, a marketing process, an economic and social process, a public relations process, or an information and persuasion process, depending on the author's point of view. In this section an attempt to define advertising as a promotional form will be made.

Albert Lasker [1], who has been called the father of modern advertising, said that advertising is "salesmanship in print." That may have been true at that time but he gave that definition long before the advent of other mass media (radio and television) and at a time when the nature and scope of advertising were considerably different from what they are today.

The Oxford Dictionary offers five definitions of the verb "to advertise," and four of the noun "advertisement," of which the closest to modern usage is: "a paid announcement in a newspaper."

Ralph Alexander [2], in his glossary of marketing terms, defined advertising as "the activity that involves any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor." This definition is adopted by the American Marketing Association (AMA). By this definition, advertising includes those promotional forms which involve the use of such media as the following: magazine and newspaper space, the cinema, outdoor methods (posters, signs, skywriting, etc), direct mail, novelties (calendars, blotters, etc), radio and television, cards, catalogues, directories and reference books, programmes and menus, circulars.

Although this definition seems to be comprehensive, Bolen [3] believed that it can be improved by defining advertising as follows:-

"Advertising is any controlled form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor that is used to inform and persuade the selected market."

As may be noted in the above definition, two major changes have occurred. The first involves the term "paid." In almost all the definitions of advertising, the authors emphasise the term "paid" as a crucial component of advertising that might differentiate it from other promotional forms, especially publicity. In Bolen's definition the term "paid" has been changed to "controlled." Indeed, the author gave two explanations to justify this change:-

- (1) Paying for an advertisement gives the advertiser control over the advertisement.
- (2) Since advertising might be donated, it might not be "paid" advertising. Nonetheless, such advertisements are advertising. The American Red Cross, or the Salvation Army, for example, may plan very carefully when and where to run advertisements. Such advertisements will be "controlled" but not "paid."

In fact, changing the word "paid" to "controlled" broadens the definition of advertising to include unpaid public service messages.

Kotler [4] believes that because of the many forms advertising assumes and the various purposes to which it is directed, it is difficult to present all-embracing generalisations concerning the distinctive qualities of advertising as a component of the

promotional mix (publicity, personal selling, sales promotion, etc). However, Kotler defines advertising thus: "it consists of nonpersonal forms of communication conducted through paid media under clear sponsorship." He adds that advertising, far from being a uniform medium, involves a large variety of forms such as magazine and newspaper spaces; radio and television; outdoor displays (such as posters, signs, skywriting); novelties; directories, etc. In this context, Kotler's definition is almost identical to the AMA definition originally provided by Ralph Alexander.

Bovee and Arens [5] proposed the following working definition of advertising:-

"Advertising is the nonpersonal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services, or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media."

This definition has two major advantages - first, it is broad enough to include those donated - unpaid - advertisements. Second, it considers the persuasive nature of advertising. However, the definition makes no specific reference to the type of media through which the advertising is conducted. This may leave a degree of confusion in the definition. Advertising by this definition could not be distinguished from personal selling.

A simple definition of advertising was issued by the Advertising Association (AA) many years ago. The definition states: "Advertising is the means of making known in order to buy or sell goods or services."

In fact, several points in this definition can be discussed:-

- (1) In it, advertising has been given a very limited commercial role (to make goods and services known in order to sell). However, advertising today plays a very vital role in economic, political and social life. Advertising contributes to economic growth and in turn levels of living by reinforcing the efforts to create new and improved products through expenditure on research and development. Blank [6] has described the process as follows:-

" ... Advertising, by acquainting the consumer with the values of new products, pushes forward their acceptance by the consumer, and encourages the investment and entrepreneurship necessary for innovation. Advertising in short, holds out the promise of a greater and speedier return than would occur without such methods, thus stimulating investment, growth and diversity."

At the political level, advertising plays an important role in promoting candidates' programmes in election campaigns. Also, advertising has a crucial role to play in the social sphere. It influences social values, introduces new values and creates new lifestyles. Thus, advertising plays a vital role in all aspects of our lives.

- (2) The definition made no specific reference to the media through which the advertising is conducted.
- (3) Two crucial components of the advertising definition were overlooked; first the "paid" component and second the "identified sponsor." The only difference between advertising and publicity rests in these two factors,

yet the definition gives no criteria for distinguishing between the two promotional forms - advertising and publicity.

Thus, the AA definition of advertising must be improved to fit the new developments which are taking place in the advertising community.

Another definition of advertising is that of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA). This seeks to explain agency services to advertisers, but the definition is nonetheless sound because it gives advertising an efficient and responsible role. The definition states:-

"Advertising presents the most persuasive possible selling message to the right prospects for the product or service at the lowest cost."

This is a professional definition. It emphasises that advertising should be planned and implemented in order to achieve the most effective results at the least cost. But the definition leaves us with too many unknowns. What are the media through which the message is transmitted? Is the advertising paid for? To what extent is the sponsor of advertising identified?

The definition is not sufficiently comprehensive to provide a clear cut view of what advertising is. Moreover, the increasing level of public disagreement concerning the use of advertising to bring down the cost of goods casts doubts upon the extent to which this definition can be regarded as valid.

Jeremy Bullmore, Chairman of J Walter Thompson, in London gave the following definition:-

"Advertising is a paid for communication intended to inform and/or influence one or more people."

This definition has been described by Fletcher [7] as the best one. However, we have some reservations about it:-

- (1) The definition makes no specific reference to media. The term "communication" clearly includes all types of media while advertising is considered to be a nonpersonal communication. By this definition, one would not be able to differentiate between advertising and personal selling.
- (2) In the definition, advertising is described as "intended." As we know, not all advertisements "work" in the sense of achieving their desired objectives. The fact that the advertisement has failed to achieve its intended objective does not detract from the fact that it is an advertisement.
- (3) In his definition, Bullmore has sought to draw a distinction between informative and persuasive advertisements. In this context, informative advertisements are customarily thought to be acceptable and desirable, while persuasive advertisements are thought to be less acceptable, or even totally unacceptable. In practice the line between informative and persuasive advertising is impossible to draw. All the information which an advertiser chooses to put into his advertisement is intended to be persuasive. But since the persuasive content of advertising is sometimes deprecated, it is perhaps less contentious to say that all advertisements necessarily aim to "influence." An advertisement which did not aim at having some degree of influence could hardly be regarded as an advertisement.

DeLozier [8] defined advertising within the context of marketing communication. He pointed out that advertising must be viewed as a communication process, so it is concerned with "the process of sharing a company paid message by way of the mass media with consumers." Then DeLozier defined advertising as:-

"A form of mass communications which is nonpersonal and paid for by an identified sponsor."

In fact, this definition is significant because it emphasises three basic components of advertising:-

- (1) Mass communication
- (2) A paid-for activity
- (3) Being conducted by an identified sponsor

Thus the definition provides us with clear criteria by which advertising can be distinguished from other promotional forms such as personal selling, publicity or propaganda.

In an attempt to simplify the concept of advertising, Ray [9] suggests that advertising is:-

"Paid communication that is identified clearly as to the sponsor."

Although this definition is sufficient to differentiate advertising from publicity which is unpaid^{*1}, and propaganda

*1 The publicity concept will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

which does not include an identified sponsor^{*2}; it does not clearly distinguish advertising from personal selling.

David Bernstein [10], in his book "Creative Advertising" holds that advertising is "the origination and/or communication of ideas about products in order to motivate consumers towards purchase." The definition puts advertising within an economic context, its purpose being to motivate consumers to buy the product (good or service) advertised. However, the extent to which advertising can play an effective role in social and political life remains vague.

Finally, the definition suffers from two major deficiencies which can be stated as follows:-

- (1) The definition gives no indication about the paid dimension which has been considered a crucial criterion by which advertising can be differentiated from other similar promotional forms, such as publicity (which is not paid for). Moreover, the definition makes no specific reference to sponsorship of the advertising. Through this omission, advertising could easily be confused with publicity.
- (2) Further, the definition makes no specific reference to the media used by advertising. Communication covers various forms of media (mass media, personal selling, etc).

*2 For more detail about propaganda, see Edmund D McGarry, "The Propaganda Function in Marketing," Journal of Marketing, October 1958, pp 131-139.

Again therefore, it could be said that Bernstein's definition fails to distinguish between advertising and publicity.

Finally, responding to the growing debate about the extent to which advertising can be perceived as truthful, some companies have begun to offer their own definitions which emphasise the truthfulness dimension in advertising. According to McCann Erickson Inc, the advertising agency that develops Coca-Cola's national campaigns, advertising is "truth well told." This philosophy is echoed by Coke's Vice President of advertising, William Sharp, who says that a commercial for Coca-Cola should have the properties of the product itself.

What he has said is worth quoting:-

"(Coke's advertising) should be a pleasurable experience, refreshing to watch and pleasant to listen to. It should make you say, I wish I'd been there. I wish I had been drinking Coke with these people." [11]

That is what advertising means to Coca-Cola, but can the same be said for other products and services in the marketplace today? This question will be discussed in more detail when we analyse the public attitude towards advertising.

In the light of the previously stated definitions, we are now in a position to present our own definition of advertising. In our view, advertising is:-

"A controlled, nonpersonal communication attempt conducted by an identified sponsor to induce a mass target audience to adopt what is being advertised (product, service or idea)."

It will be useful to analyse each of the components in this definition.

(1) ADVERTISING IS CONTROLLED

The term "controlled" is used in the definition to include all paid and also unpaid advertising where the sponsor has the power to decide when and where his advertisement is to be run. For example, the American Red Cross advertisements^{*} are donated but they could not for that reason be discounted as advertisements. So the word "controlled" has been used to broaden the definition of advertising to include both paid and donated forms of advertising.

(2) ADVERTISING IS A NONPERSONAL COMMUNICATION ATTEMPT

Advertising is not a face-to-face form of communication, so it has to be differentiated from personal selling. Although the advertising message may attempt to give the impression of a personal appeal, it cannot be truly personal. It is conveyed by mass communication that makes use of various media (radio, television, magazines, direct mail, newspapers, etc). Through its impersonality, advertising has certain advantages and disadvantages compared with personal selling. One of the most obvious disadvantages is that it lacks immediate feedback. It follows that the sponsor of the advertising will not be sure who has actually received the message, and how this message has been interpreted. Indeed, this limits the sponsor's ability to

* See Bovee, Courtland L. and Arens, William F., Contemporary Advertising, Richard D. Irwin, Inc., Homewood, Ill, 1982, p8.

manoeuvre and use other promotional tactics. In contrast, personal selling provides this advantage, since direct feedback from the consumer can be immediately observed.

(3) ADVERTISING IS CONDUCTED BY AN IDENTIFIED SPONSOR

This component is a crucial criterion in determining whether the message is to be an advertisement. For a message to be an advertisement the sponsor must be identified. Most advertising is sponsored by commercial or profit-seeking enterprises. However, non-commercial organisations such as churches, schools, political parties, charitable groups may also sponsor advertising.

Advertising messages are identified with the advertiser either by signature or by oral statement. The component "identified sponsor" makes it easy to distinguish advertising from publicity and other forms of propaganda*.

(4) ADVERTISING IS DIRECTED TO A MASS TARGET AUDIENCE

An advertiser must think in terms of the customers, i.e. the people to whom he wishes to present his advertising message. In this sense, the advertiser must attempt to determine his target audience (market). By definition, the target market consists of

* The differentiation between advertising and other promotional forms will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

those customers on whom primary emphasis is placed when developing the advertising programme.

To advertise effectively to the consumer market, the advertiser must design his programme on the basis of market segmentation - the process of dividing a potential market into distinct subsets of customers and selecting one or more segments as a market target to be reached with a distinct advertising strategy. The advertiser also must understand such characteristics of consumers as age, occupation, race, sex, marital status, lifestyle, etc. Knowledge of these characteristics is essential for optimum advertising presentation.

By knowing the target market (audience), the advertiser will be able to advertise more effectively by tailoring the advertising programme to their needs and desires.

(5) ADVERTISING IS INTENDED TO INDUCE ADOPTION

As has been indicated, many people have sought to draw a distinction between informative and persuasive aspects of advertising. Our view, as our definition makes clear, is that the ultimate objective of advertising is to induce consumer acceptance of the offering advertised (product, service or idea). In practice, the line between informative and persuasive advertising is impossible to draw. All advertisements are intended to be persuasive. Within the context of our definition, advertising operates through a hierarchy of effects which may lead to the consumer's adoption of what is being advertised.

(6) ADVERTISING IS ABOUT PRODUCTS, SERVICES OR IDEAS

According to the proposed definition, advertising is not restricted to the promotion of tangible products such as cars and detergents. It is also used extensively to help sell services such as banking, insurance, or hotel services. Increasingly, advertising is used to sell economic, political, religious and social ideas.

In conclusion, these basic components place advertising within a broad and distinct conceptual framework that helps to differentiate it from other forms of the promotional mix (including personal selling, publicity, public relations, sales promotion, etc).

We now turn to discuss the boundaries of advertising, that is, the differences between advertising and other similar activities in the promotional mix.

THE BOUNDARIES OF ADVERTISING

Confusion has become more prevalent as advertising has moved into new areas of marketing and as its functions have spilled over into related areas. The purpose of this section is to shed some light on the other promotional forms which are usually confused with advertising, such as publicity, public relations, sales promotion and propaganda.

PUBLICITY

Publicity differs from advertising, personal selling and sales promotion in that it is not easily controllable by the firm. Publicity has been defined by Ralph Alexander [12] as:-

"nonpersonal stimulation of demand for a product, service or business unit by planting commercially significant news about it in a published medium or obtaining favourable presentation of it upon radio, television or stage that is not paid for by the sponsor."

In this sense, publicity is thought of as being a "free" means of promoting market offerings.

Another definition of publicity is "any form of nonpaid commercially significant news or editorial comment about ideas, products or institutions" [13]. This definition points out the major difference between publicity and advertising, namely, that advertising is a paid form of communication with the public, whereas publicity is nonpaid.

In an attempt to explore further the confusion between advertising and publicity, Dunn and Barban [14] stated:-

"Like advertising, publicity is nonpersonal, is exposed in the media, and is used persuasively. There are, however, important differences - publicity is not paid for at established rates, and the sponsor is not identified. Usually, publicity appears unidentified as such in the editorial or news columns of printed media or in the non-commercial portion of radio or television programmes."

This definition therefore identifies another difference between advertising and publicity - the sponsor is clearly identified in advertising but not in publicity.

Bolen [15] also tried to differentiate between advertising and publicity. He pointed out that publicity is concerned with the development and presentation of information before the public in a nonpromotional format (eg. a news story), while advertising has a promotional format. He also concluded that it is important to note that advertising should be developed in conjunction with publicity when appropriate, but it should not be confused with it.

On the other hand, publicity has been viewed as "the generation of news about a person, product or service that appears in broadcast or print media and is usually thought of as being free because the medium has no publicity rate card."

In this sense, publicity is a news item generated by the media, in contrast to advertising which is designed by the advertiser. The significance here is that a news item will tend to possess greater credibility in view of the fact that consumers will normally perceive that the news media have no intention of

manipulating the public on the issue (ie. there is nothing to gain), and thus, publicity appears more objective and credible than advertising.

Publicity has three distinct qualities which have been summarised by Kotler [16] as follows:-

- (1) High veracity. Publicity comes through news stories and such features seem to most readers to be authentic, media-originated reports. Therefore readers are likely to regard news stories about products as having a higher degree of veracity than if they were sponsored by a seller as is the case in advertising.
- (2) It takes people off guard. Publicity can reach many potential buyers who otherwise avoid salesmen and advertisements. This is because the message is packaged in a way that reaches them as news rather than as a sales-directed communication.
- (3) Dramatisation. Publicity has, like advertising, a potential for dramatising a company or product.

To sum up, despite the fact that publicity and advertising are both nonpersonal forms of communication that have the same objective - to contribute to increased consumer awareness of a company and its products, particularly new products and innovative practices and policies of the firm - three critical differences exist between them:-

- (1) Advertising is a paid form of communication, but publicity is not.
- (2) Advertising is usually identified with a particular sponsor, whereas publicity is not.

- (3) Publicity is a news item, whereas advertising is specifically designed by advertisers. As a result, the seller usually has little control over the format of publicity, whereas he exerts full control over the format of advertising.

SALES PROMOTION

Sales promotion has been defined as:-

"a direct inducement which offers an extra value or incentive for the product to the sales force, distributors or the ultimate consumer." [17]

This definition points out three areas towards which sales inducements can be directed: the sales force, distributors and the ultimate consumer.

Bovee and Arens [18] defined sales promotion as "a direct inducement offering extra incentives all along the marketing route - from manufacturers through distribution channels to consumer - to accelerate the movement of the product from the producer to the consumer."

According to this definition, there are three important features of sales promotion:-

- (1) Sales promotion is an acceleration tool designed to speed up the selling process.
- (2) It normally involves a direct inducement (such as money, prizes, extra products, gifts), which provides an extra incentive to buy, visit the store, request literature, or take some other action.

- (3) It may be used anywhere along the marketing route - from the manufacturer to the dealer, from dealer to consumer, or from manufacturer to consumer.

Sales promotion is thus used to maximise sales volume - in some cases, by motivating consumers who have been unmoved by other advertising efforts, or in other cases, by motivating in favour of particular brand selection when all brands are considered more or less equal. In short, sales promotion ideally generates sales that would not otherwise be achieved. In this sense, it is a useful technique for stimulating a quick and immediate sales response from consumers [19].

Historically, sales promotion was regarded as an ad hoc collection of sales tools to be used when necessary as a direct, short-term sales stimulus. With its professionalisation in recent years, sales promotion is increasingly viewed as an important tool in its own right. It plays a critical role in different stages in the product life cycle, and also appears to be especially effective during periods of rapid inflation [20].

Kotler [21] described sales promotion as the catchall for various promotional tools that are not formally classified as advertising, personal selling, or publicity. These tools may be subclassified into items for consumer promotion (eg. samples, coupons, money refund offers, premiums, contests, prices-off, etc), distributors (trade) promotion (eg. buying allowances, free goods, dealer sales contests), and sales-force promotion (eg. bonuses, contests, sales rallies)*.

* A comprehensive discussion of the subject is found in John F. Luick and William Lee Ziegler, Sales promotion and modern Merchandising, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1968.

Because of its immediate and direct effects, sales promotion is preferred to advertising, the response to which may take a certain period of time. Yet insufficient research and decision modelling has been devoted to it [22].

Fletcher [23] has sought to distinguish between advertising and sales promotion by classifying all sales promotional tactics as below-the-line activities and advertising as above-the-line. Below-the-line activities cover a vast range of sales techniques such as Giveaways, self-liquidating premiums, prize competitions, gift coupons, cash vouchers, multi-packs, free samples, flash-packs and money-offs. Display and merchandising material and door-to-door distribution and the implementation of such activities is increasingly being directed by specialist companies quite distinct from advertising agencies. It is nevertheless essential for anyone in advertising to have a working knowledge of when, where and how below-the-line promotions should be used.

The author argued that below-the-line sales promotion techniques have a short-term or immediate impact on sales, while media advertising builds loyalty to a brand over the long term. Moreover below-the-line methods are more effective when backed up by strong, continuous brand advertising. For example, free plastic daffodils are unlikely to persuade us to buy an unknown, unadvertised detergent called "SPLURGE," while they were extremely effective in persuading millions of housewives to buy heavily advertised "DAZ" [24].

Additionally, too frequent below-the-line promotional techniques can be counter-productive in sales terms. Some years ago Ribena, the famous blackcurrant Vitamin C drink, virtually stopped all media advertising in favour of regular below-the-line techniques (sales promotion) with unfortunate results: first, supermarket buyers ceased to buy Ribena for their stores except when there was a promotion on offer. Second, housewives began to switch

away from Ribena and buy other makes, particularly the less expensive (and usually less good) brands of the stores themselves. Ribena sales plummeted. Beecham, who own Ribena, quickly saw what was happening and re-started media advertising [25].

Another difference between advertising and sales promotion is that the former is a media-type of promotion, whereas the latter is a non-media promotional technique ie. advertising is conducted through the mass media, while sales promotion techniques are conducted apart from the mass media, particularly inside the store.

However, sales promotion and advertising must be planned and executed together if maximum effectiveness is to be achieved.

To sum up, the term "sales promotion" has a wide variety of meanings. It includes all overt promotional efforts other than advertising, publicity and personal selling.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Faison [26] pointed out that public relations is used in conjunction with advertising. However, it refers to the "planning and execution of strategies designed to create a favourable impression towards a product or company. These strategies do not involve direct payment for media space or time to advertise specific products; instead they involve the use of publicity, corporate symbols, corporate themes, community relations programmes and many other approaches."

Sandage and his associates [27] indicated that there are many facets of public relations, which make it difficult to develop a concise and all-encompassing definition. However, the authors

cited a definition developed by Simon as an acceptable one. According to this, public relations practice is:-

"The art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organisation leaders, and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organisation's and the public interest." [28]

Given this potential, advertising may provide an efficient instrument of communication in furthering the public relations programmes of various firms.

The purpose of public relations as stated by Ray [29] is to communicate the nature of the organisation to various sectors of the public most of which would not be directly involved with the marketer's products, services or ideas. Public relations may therefore use advertising, publicity, or any tools that might be appropriate [30].

Bovee and Arens [31] clearly distinguished between the two forms of promotion. They pointed out that advertising is generally described as openly sponsored and paid for media communication between sellers and buyers. Certainly, like public relations, the purpose of advertising is to affect public opinion. However, this is normally accomplished by means of an open attempt to sell the company's products or services.

Public relations activities, like advertising, may also involve media communication, but these are not normally openly sponsored or paid for. Usually they appear through news articles, editorial interviews, or feature stories. One means of relaying a public relations message, though, is through corporate advertising which is used for a variety of purposes, such as to

report the company's record of accomplishment; to position the company competitively in the market; or to avoid a communications problem with agents, dealers, or customers.

Another interesting difference between public relations and advertising is the orientation or perspective of professional practitioners in the two fields. Advertising professionals tend to be sales or marketing oriented. They view marketing as the umbrella process used by companies to determine what products the market needs and what means will be required to distribute and sell the products on the market. To them advertising and public relations are primarily tools of marketing used to promote sales of the company's products and services. As a rule, they tend to use advertising and public relations strictly as "good news" vehicles for the company and its products [32].

Public relations professionals, on the other hand, consider public relations as the umbrella process that companies should use to maintain their continuing relationship with their target audiences. From their perspective, marketing and advertising are tools of public relations to be used for establishing the company's sales relationship with customers and prospects; other tools are used as well; among them programme sponsorships, publicity, newsletters and press conferences [33].

Overall, the public relations orientation is more inclined to the use of various public relations vehicles whether or not the result is favourable.

It is worth mentioning that agency public relations departments are usually run as wholly independent subsidiary companies. Fletcher [34] suggested three reasons for this:-

- (1) The particular knowledge and expertise needed in public relations work - close contact with journalists and

politicians for example - are not normally found in an agency.

- (2) People who have this expertise are highly paid and agencies cannot afford to offer their services "free."
- (3) The media, whom public relations are generally trying to influence, prefer advertising to be kept quite separate from editorial contents and therefore prefer to deal with public relations companies which are independent of advertising agencies.

However, our view is that both advertising and public relations must be considered within an integrated framework in which all promotional components (personal selling, advertising, publicity, public relations, sales promotion etc) are interdependently related.

Within this context, advertising and public relations efforts should be closely co-ordinated. As a result, many advertising agencies have public relations departments or perform public relations activities.

Before leaving this discussion of public relations, it is important to note that its activities cover a broad range designed to create a favourable company image. In addition to the consuming public, there are many other groups that a company must consider. Stockholders, legislators, and community leaders can influence many decisions that can affect the fortunes of a company.

We now turn to discuss the concept of propaganda and how it is differentiated from advertising.

PROPAGANDA

The Oxford Dictionary defines propaganda as "an association or scheme for propagating a doctrine or practice," and the word takes its origin from the Latin 'propagare' which means the gardener's practice of pinning the fresh shoots of a plant into the earth in order to reproduce new plants which will later take on a life of their own [35]. Therefore one implication of the term when it was first used in the sociological sense was that the spread of ideas brought about in this way is not one that would take place of itself, but rather a cultivated or artificial generation.

Within the present century, however, the popular image of propaganda has undergone radical changes and the word has come to acquire overtones implying a process which is frequently sinister, deceitful, and based on a deliberate attempt on the part of an individual or group to manipulate, often by disguised or underhand means, the minds of others for their own ulterior ends [36].

It would appear that this change of meaning dates the official use of propaganda as a weapon in the total warfare of modern times, beginning with the First World War, when lies, political subterfuge, and atrocity stories were unscrupulously employed in an attempt to influence the final result.

Brown [37] argued that propaganda is a difficult word to define. It is often employed in a derogatory sense, and in spite of the fact that part of the original meaning was undoubtedly the implication that it was "a collective appeal to larger or smaller groups of people made either by an individual or another group, it is now frequently used as indiscriminately as the more recent "brainwashing" to refer to the activities of any unfortunate individual who wishes to convey a piece of unwelcome or unacceptable information to another."

Since the greater part of any written or spoken communication is intended to arouse some sort of response in the recipient, it is easy to see why many authorities consider that propaganda is a word which has outlived its usefulness.

Brown [38] argued that "propaganda" would exclude what we quite justifiably refer to as health propaganda. However, it is always set within a particular social-cultural framework. Doob [39] pointed out that the meaning of propaganda becomes clearer when it is contrasted with education. For the essence of education, he suggested, is its objectivity in the light of scientific truths prevalent at the time, whilst the essence of propaganda is the attempt to control people's attitudes, often in irrational directions.

The uneasy feeling experienced by so many people in the face of propaganda, namely that an attempt is being made to manipulate them by underhand methods, is quite justified. There is nearly always something concealed by the propagandist. What he conceals may be his real aim in engaging in his campaign, the means employed (suggestion and other psychological techniques), the fact that there are alternative views to his own, or the fact that if these are mentioned at all it is only to misrepresent them. Whether the material presented is true or untrue, the operator sincere or insincere, his aims "good" or "bad," is entirely irrelevant. What makes behaviour propaganda is the manner in which the material is presented, just as much as its content.

The fundamental mechanism employed by all forms of propaganda is, as we have seen, suggestion. Brown [40] defined suggestion as "the attempt to induce in others the acceptance of a specific belief without giving any self-evident or logical ground for its acceptance, whether this exists or not."

From the above discussion, it could be concluded that propaganda possesses five pronounced features:-

- (1) It is a mass communication form.
- (2) Since it aims at changing attitudes, it follows that manipulation is a crucial component of propaganda.
- (3) In propaganda, the intention of the propagandist is always concealed.
- (4) It is directed by an unidentified sponsor.
- (5) Propaganda is a sponsored form of communication.

In this sense, propaganda shares some of the qualities of advertising; it is paid, mass communication, and it aims at attitude change by persuasion. However, the crucial difference between advertising and propaganda relates to two major aspects: the sponsor and the intention of the sponsor. In advertising, the sponsor and his intention is clearly identified, whilst in propaganda, both the sponsor and his intention are unclear.

Finally, Table 2-1 summarises the major differences between advertising, publicity and public relations.

Table (2-1): The Major Differences Between Advertising, Publicity and Public Relations

The Promotional Form Criterion	Advertising	Publicity	Public Relations
Paid	Paid for	Free	Normally not paid for
Sponsorship	Identified	Non-identified	Non-identified
Control	Controllable	Uncontrollable	Relatively Controllable
Credibility	Relative credibility	Higher credibility than advertising	Higher credibility than advertising

Source: Constructed by the researcher

THE NATURE AND CONTENT OF MODERN ADVERTISING

Advertising frequently generates controversy. It has been studied, analysed, defended, and attacked by individuals representing a wide spectrum of professional interests, including economists, socialists, social psychologists, politicians, businessmen, novelists, and historians. This section attempts to analyse the different perspectives relating to the nature and content of modern advertising.

There are those who believe that modern advertising in developed countries is highly correlated with a high degree of economic growth [41]. This relationship prompted Sir Winston Churchill to write that "advertising nourishes the consuming power of men. It creates wants for a better standard of living ... It spurs individual exertion and greater production." The opposite view was taken by the historian Arnold Toynbee, who wrote:-

"If this (relationship) were demonstrated to be true, it would also demonstrate, to my mind, that an economy of abundance is a spiritually unhealthy way of life."

[42]

Most supporters of advertising adopt some variant of the Churchillian argument. The assumption is made that there is some sort of causal association between advertising and material welfare. Others, however, are as outspoken as Toynbee. They argue that under modern conditions of production, the real function of the advertising is to infer differences between products that do not exist, or grossly to exaggerate the significance of small differences that do exist [43].

In fact, this variation in views about advertising can be largely explained by the fact that opinions associated with it are heavily interwoven with more fundamental values and beliefs about how a society does and should operate.

Since people can be influenced to considerably different degrees, there is undoubtedly some truth in both sides of the advertising argument. As Aaker and Myers [44] stated:-

"Because value judgements and basic assumptions are involved and much depends on the perspective of a particular consumer, the debate is often highly subjective."

However, it is important to understand the essence of the argument. To facilitate this, it is worth examining the major dimensions concerned which are of primary relevance in the current debate over the content of advertising. These dimensions will be discussed as follows:-

(1) THE PERSUASIVE/INFORMATIVE DIMENSION

Underlying the long-standing debate over the content of advertising is the question of whether or not advertising is designed to provide information on which consumers can make intelligent product choices.

Critics contend that advertising is essentially persuasive or suggestive and that the provision of information content is secondary or sometimes irrelevant to advertising. One focus of the argument concerns the seemingly illusory nature of "information." It has been argued that advertising information cannot be viewed with complete objectivity because consumer processing of messages is a function of a number of behavioural and psychological constructs that result in subjective perception [45].

In this sense, the separation between the persuasive and informative aspects of the content of advertising is a false

dichotomy since the objective of all advertising is to influence one's thinking or buying, i.e. to persuade him to buy.

On the other hand, there are those who emphasise such a separation and it is worth examining both perspectives in more detail as follows:-

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF SEPARATION

Some social critics of advertising have tried to separate persuasive advertising from informative advertising. Moreover, they suggest some criteria for achieving such separation. They argue that persuasive advertising has as its objective attitude change, whereas information advertising tells consumers how they can make intelligent product choices. In this regard, Marshall [46] distinguished between "constructive" and "combative" advertising. He stated that the former is designed to inform people about products offered for sale, which he thought was beneficial, while the latter is primarily not informative but repetitive and persuasive. This type is considered to be wasteful, even if it raises output and lowers costs, because such economies could be reaped without it.

The following are the most important criteria suggested:-

(1) THE REPETITION OF THE MESSAGE

Kaldor [47] emphasised the need to distinguish between informative and persuasive advertising. His account is worth quoting here in full:-

"We must distinguish here, of course, between the purely informative element in advertising and the persuasive element (which belongs to another branch of

the argument). If, to take an example, XX Ltd spend large sums annually on advertisements, saying 'XX is good for you,' this may be an effective method of increasing the sales of XX beer, but the informative content of the advertising is merely this: 'XX Ltd believe that the consumption of XX is beneficial to health.' Whether this is a valuable piece of information or not, its information value is exhausted as soon as the public are first told of it. Any further repetition of the message, and its display in prominent form, does not serve the purpose of information but of persuasion, it serves the purpose of inducing the public to believe it as well, and to keep it in the foreground of consciousness. While as a means of persuasion it may be very effective, its information value is zero."

The statement suggests that the repetition of the advertising message determines whether advertising is informative or persuasive. According to the author's view, if the advertisement is repeated, this indicates that it has been designed for persuasive purposes. On the other hand, if the advertisement is not repeated, one can assume that the purpose of the advertisement is informative.

Given the multiplicity of exposure to most advertising, the distinction between repeated and unrepeated advertising is tenuous. However, the question of repetition and its persuasive effect has been extensively investigated.

McGuire [48] pointed out that, while an increase in the impact of a message is usually apparent with one or two repetitions, this quickly reaches a point beyond which further repetition has little effect. McGuire also argued that while most of the research that led to this conclusion was based upon repetition of

the overall message, the principle would seem to apply to repetition of points within messages.

However, there is evidence that repetition is a very effective means of preventing message decay - the decline of the persuasive effect over time. A number of experiments in the behavioural sciences report findings that support this notion. Cook and Insko [49] and Wilson and Miller [50] shared the conclusion that with repetition, the probability of immediate increase of the buyer response is quite high. Zajonc [51] suggested that even repeated "mere exposure" (by which he means nothing more than accessibility to and perception of a stimulus) of a receiver to a stimulus is a sufficient condition for the enhancement of the receiver's attitude towards it. Sawyer [52] pointed out that persuasion and attitude change are positively affected by repetition, but to a somewhat lesser degree. However, the researcher did not give any explanation of this result.

In fact, it would seem reasonable to conclude that, in terms of advertising response, the reason for the persuasive effect may not be so much a function of repetition increasing persuadability as such, but rather of retarding retention decay.*

Thus, while the evidence clearly points to the positive relationship between repetition and persuasion, more exposure does not always mean greater communication effectiveness.

* McGuire argues that repetition increases yielding rather than reception.

(2) THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION PROVIDED IN ADVERTISEMENTS

The continual interest in distinguishing between informative and persuasive advertising led other researchers to seek additional criteria to justify their separation, and to consider the amount of information in a given advertising message from a memory retention standpoint. Percy and Rossiter [53] suggest that the fewer message points (the number of issues included in the message), the more persuasive the message will be, particularly if they are often repeated. They argue that "with less to learn or comprehend in a persuasive message, the likelihood of retention and subsequent attitude or behaviour change should increase."

While this assumption theoretically has sound intuitive appeal, Cook and Insko [54] provided experimental evidence that communication with six message points was superior to a communication of comparable length dealing with only two in both effecting attitude change and in maintaining that change over a period of time. They reasoned that an attitude is more likely to be internalised (integrated into the individual's value system) when a greater variety of values or more important values are linked to the new attitude. This internalisation of attitude should explain the resistance to retention decay over a period of time.

As is fairly well known, short-term memory appears capable of handling something like six to eight functional units; it may be that once this limit is exceeded, the likelihood of retention decreases.

One final note on the amount of information contained in the message relates to the overall length of the message. Calder, Insko and Yandell [55] have found that longer messages tend to have a more enduring effect on attitudes than shorter messages.

However, the researchers did not distinguish between the length of the message and the complexity of the content.

Thus, while the argument about the amount of information is an area meriting careful study, the extent to which the amount of information represents a criterion for distinguishing between persuasive and other kinds of advertising (including informative advertising) needs more investigation. Therefore, the separation of persuasive and informative advertising can hardly be justified.

(3) THE COMPETITIVE TONE OF THE MESSAGE

Using this criterion two kinds of advertising have been distinguished: informative advertising and competitive advertising. The latter is also called "persuasive advertising." Pigou [56] drew an extreme distinction between "informative" and "competitive" advertising. The author pointed out that competitive advertising had:-

" ... the sole purpose of transferring the demand for a given commodity from one source of supply to another."

He considered that most advertising was "competitive" and therefore undesirable. Advertising could lead to inter-company arrangements between formerly independent firms thereby establishing a monopoly; it could be self-defeating because the advertising efforts of competing firms cancelled one another out; and it could merely substitute the products of one firm for those of another and more efficient firm. Pigou suggested that the wasteful element in advertising might be prevented by taxing or even prohibiting "competitive" advertising.

Stonier and Hague [57] distinguished between two kinds of advertising. First, promotional or informative advertising, which may include the provision of a certain amount of information about the general class of product being advertised; second, competitive or persuasive advertising, which does not primarily give information about a class of product, but tries to persuade the consumer to change his attitude in favour of the brand in question.

As stated by the authors [58], the aim of competitive (persuasive) advertising is "to persuade consumers that X's product is better than all others in the group."

Implicit in the distinction made between informative and competitive advertising seems to be the belief that it was competitive advertising which was responsible for product differentiation. Braithwaite [59], for instance, propounded the idea that advertising could restrict competition because price and quality lost their powers as instruments of competition and were replaced by the power of producers to win markets by creating "reputation" monopolies.

In the 1930s Chamberlin and Robinson developed Braithwaite's notion of reputation monopolies by claiming that advertising could be used to "differentiate" products from one another by emphasising the less important advantages, thus creating "loyalty" for each brand. This gave each advertiser a monopolistic power regarding his brand and he could then charge a higher price for this brand, but his turnover would be lower than it would have been in a situation of perfect competition.

Comanor and Wilson [60] seemed to imply that advertising was the essential requirement for the introduction of product

differentiation. The authors stated:-

" ... advertising in this analysis acts as a proxy for product differentiation, or, more specifically, for the product and market characteristics that permit heavy advertising expenditures to differentiate effectively the products of a firm from those of its rivals. Although these product and market characteristics are not easily measured, they are typically characterised by heavy advertising expenditure."

Narver and Savitt [61] in their analysis of the current market situations believe that competition among suppliers is the rivalry in effecting larger intersections of the offer-set and the want-set. If all other things are equal, the seller whose offering produces the largest perceived satisfaction gets the purchase by the consumer. Within the context of this analysis, a powerful seller is the one who can achieve more intersections between his offerings and the consumers' wants and needs. In other words, the competitive power of any seller rests on his ability to exploit the differential advantage in the market.

The authors defined "differential advantage" as follows:-

"Differential advantage is the belief of a demander that one supplier's offering possesses more want-satisfying ability than other suppliers' offerings." *

* For a greater understanding of differential advantage, see Wroe Alderson, *Dynamic Marketing Behaviour*, Richard Irwin, Homewood, Ill, 1965, p 184.

They added that the seller can gain differential advantage by manipulating the physical product, thereby differentiating himself from his rivals. He can change the physical product by altering its shape, its components, or in general, altering its functional, tangible attributes. Frequently, however, a seller may be unable to alter the physical product - for example, if he sells coal - or for other reasons he may choose not to alter the physical offering. Instead he alters the total product by differentiating the firm or other non-physical aspects of the product. This is called "enterprise differentiation" and is effected, for example, by changing the product appeals, by changing the meaning conveyed by the firm's institutional advertising, by changing the character and quality of the sales force and outlets through which the firm distributes its offerings, or by other related efforts [62].

Within this context, advertising helps to exploit the differential advantage. Some kinds of advertising (eg. comparative advertising) are intended to orient the demand for the product more completely to the brand of a particular seller.

However, Lancaster and Miracle [63] have analysed the concept of differentiation in greater depth. They argue that brands can be differentiated horizontally or vertically, depending on the type of differentiation relevant to the product class, the distribution segment of the product class, and the distribution segment of the product analysed. Horizontal product differentiation is said to occur between brands of comparable price and quality which are nevertheless different; a vertical choice is made between a higher priced, higher quality brand and a lower priced, lower quality brand. From the authors' standpoint, informative advertising is more appropriate for cases of vertical product differentiation, whereas persuasive advertising suits horizontal differentiation because the buyer groups overlap more in horizontal than in vertical brand

differentiation. However, the authors did not provide any criterion by which persuasive and informative advertising could be distinguished.

Thus, according to the competitive tone criterion, if any competitive tone is perceived in the content of advertising, this indicates that there is a persuasive purpose underlying the message.

However, other writers argue that the separation argument can be largely resolved by defining informative advertising, ie. by establishing what kind of advertising is considered to be informative.

A study conducted by Resnik and Stern [67] proposed an operational definition of information and used independent judges to evaluate 378 television commercials. The study established a classification system for advertising information based on fourteen criteria, or "cues," which represent all practical categories of information potentially useful to consumers. These criteria are:-

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (1) Price or value | (8) Packaging |
| (2) Quality | (9) Guarantees or warranties |
| (3) Performance | (10) Safety |
| (4) Components or contents | (11) Nutrition |
| (5) Availability | (12) Independent research |
| (6) Special offer | (13) Company-sponsored research |
| (7) Taste | (14) New ideas |

According to this classification, commercials were rated as informative if they communicated any of the above categories of information about the product, service, or institution.

Despite an exceedingly liberal definition that required that a commercial contains only one of the informational cues to be considered informative, only 49.5 percent of the sampled commercials met the requirement. When the standard was raised to two cues, only 16% were considered informative. At three cues, the percentage of informative commercials dropped to 1%.

Although this attempt is laudable, serious problems of interpretation remain. The classification of what is informative in the Resnik and Stern study appears to have relied heavily on quantifiable measures, specific comparisons, other methods of establishing benchmarks for the consumer, or a combination of all of them. Specifically, the researchers failed to introduce any criterion by which we distinguish between information and persuasion. For example, assuming that an advertisement provides information about the safety and performance of a certain brand, the question is, to what extent is this piece of information perceived as persuasive? In other words, the authors did not indicate the level at which information begins to serve a persuasive purpose.

Thus, although the authors tried to broaden the definition of product information to include almost all potential information sought by the consumers, their definition did not provide any criteria to distinguish between informative and persuasive advertising.

Utilising a different technique, Marquez [65] analysed the content of 600 magazine advertisements to determine whether they were informative or persuasive in nature. Using dictionary definitions of information and persuasion, the study concluded that the majority of print advertisements were predominantly persuasive.

In a separate follow-up study, Laczniak [66] argued that the Marquez definitional approach was too subjective to assess information content accurately. He used the Resnik-Stern information criteria to evaluate 380 advertisements in four consumer magazines. Based on the presence of at least one informational cue, the study concluded that 92% of the advertisements contained some useful information. Using the criteria of two cues or three cues, the number of informative advertisements dropped to 59 and 49% respectively.

While the Laczniak study represents a useful analysis of print advertisements, its limited sampling of both advertisements and magazines presents difficulties in generalising its data and conclusions over a wide range of consumer magazines and product/service categories.

Stern and his associates [67] conducted a study designed to provide a broader data base by applying the Resnik-Stern information criteria to a sample of 1300 advertisements from 100 consumer magazines. Information content was analysed by magazine type, product category, and advertisement size. The effect of government regulation on the informational content of advertisements was also investigated. The study found that 86% of the sampled consumer magazine advertisements contained face-value information that can potentially assist the typical buyer in making an intelligent product choice. This compares favourably with the smaller proportion (49%) found in previous studies conducted on television commercials.

In fact, the area of investigation of this study and others on the information content of advertising raises profound issues about the fundamental functions of advertising in society. Although the incidence of informational cues is substantially higher for magazine than television advertisements the question of the differential impact of persuasive versus informative-based

advertising remains unanswered. The main reason for that is the absence of an objective measure based upon content analysis, since there is no generally accepted informativeness measure.

Aaker [68] suggests that consumer information will be useful to the extent that it is relevant, currently unknown, substantial enough to motivate processing, truthful, complete, and intelligible.

Recently, a study conducted by Aaker and Norris [69] attempted to determine what characteristics of a commercial are perceived as informative. The study was based upon 524 prime time commercials. These commercials were divided randomly into two groups for purposes of subsequent analysis. The first group was a test group of 352 commercials. The second was a "hold-out" validation sample of 172 commercials. As part of their study, the researchers defined an informative commercial as one encompassing personal relevance characteristics and commercial characteristics. The first category suggests that informative advertising tends to be: (1) worth remembering, (2) convincing, (3) effective, and (4) interesting.

The second category included a set of twenty measurable commercial characteristics with high potential for explaining a commercial's informativeness.

In general, several findings regarding the characteristics of informative television commercials emerged:-

- (1) Informative commercials were perceived to be convincing, effective, and interesting. However, the "worth remembering" characteristic was virtually synonymous with "informative" whereas "convincing" and "effective" tend to tap the persuasiveness dimension of the advertisement. Thus, to some extent the audience felt that an informative advertisement was persuasive.

- (2) Informative commercials were quite distinct from three other types of commercials, namely, those disliked, those perceived as entertaining, and those perceived as warm, ie. if it had high personal relevance, it tended not to be either "entertaining," "warm," or "disliked." Negative correlations between each of these three characteristics and informative advertising were observed.
- (3) The variables related to the creative process that tended to distinguish an informative commercial were hard/soft sell, problem-posed and, to a lesser extent, product class orientation, and the number of claims made.
- (4) A somewhat surprising finding was that several commercial characteristics thought to be related to informativeness had a low incidence of occurrence. These included:-
 - product class orientation
 - expert testimonials
 - relative or actual price mentioned
 - product components shown or discussed
 - Government test reports
- (5) Finally, an unexpected finding was that comparative advertising was not perceived as substantially more informative than other advertising.

In our opinion, this is an important study, for several reasons:-

- (1) The focus of the study was the informativeness of television advertising. Television advertising is of particular interest because of its visibility and

vulnerability to criticism. It involves greater expenditure than magazine and radio advertising combined and is generally considered to be less informative.

- (2) A concern of television advertisers is that commercials in particular can become irritating and annoying and therefore ineffective or even damaging. Advertisers can combat this tendency by generating positive feelings towards the advertising in some contexts. The appropriate method is to make the commercial appear to be informative. Indeed, there could be several strategic reasons why it might be desirable to create commercials perceived as informative, the most important of which are:-

- (a) The advertising objective could involve the communication of factual information. Commercials perceived as informative might then be highly appropriate and effective.
- (b) Being informative is one of at least three rather distinct ways in which a commercial is perceived positively and a positive perception could be desirable.
- (c) Understanding the characteristics of an informative commercial could potentially be helpful in creating advertising and in designing copy.

Thus, it can be concluded that the supportive perspective of the separation between the informative and the persuasive advertising is based on the purpose and uses of each. However, in order to consider the argument more fully it is worth examining the other perspective, counter-separation, in more detail.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST SEPARATION

The distinction between informative and other advertising was considered illogical and impracticable by Braithwaite [70]. She judged, however, that most advertising was not informative. If advertising increased output by facilitating standardisation and mass production, and reduced costs per unit and therefore prices, then it could be considered beneficial. On the other hand, if it merely redistributed demand for different commodities, resources were used in a less desirable pattern from the community's point of view.

Greyser [71] also views any separation between persuasive and informative advertising as a false dichotomy since the objective of all advertising is to influence one's thinking or buying behaviour. He argues that for analysis purposes, one may say that a particular advertisement may use more exhortation and less detailed information, but the objective is the same.

In the same spirit, Hall [72] concludes:-

"No one pays to advertise his products in order to establish the eternal verities. All advertising is persuasive in intent. Since we cannot identify the distinction between informative and persuasive advertising by reference to experience of either of the two persons effected, either the consumer reading the advertisement or the advertiser himself, it seems better to leave the distinction to the realm of ideas where it properly belongs."

The same stand is adopted by Albion and Farris [73]. They emphasised that the separation between informative and persuasive aspects in the content of advertising may indeed be a false idea. They added that the ultimate objective of any type of advertising

is to persuade consumers to buy the product or service advertised. According to their standpoint, information should be viewed within the persuasive context. As a result, they define information as "any stimulus that is relevant to the decision to buy or consume a product or service."

Our view is that informativeness and persuasiveness in the content of advertising are inseparable aspects for three main reasons:-

- (1) The artificial distinction drawn between "informative" and "persuasive" advertising is based on a misunderstanding of the nature, purpose and rationale of advertising. This is wider than conveying to the consumer information about products which are already in existence. It applies also, for example, to new products; continually changing consumers - eg. baby products; new uses of an established product; and changes in the product itself.

The information presented in advertising is intended to persuade the buyer to accept the advertiser's claim. The message implies an attempt by the advertiser to induce the buyer to accept the advertised brand, and in turn, to buy it. So it is implicitly intended that any information used in advertising is persuasive in its intent.

- (2) The distinction between information and persuasion seems to be both undesirable and impossible to maintain. If one permits oneself to accept this separation, the distinction between the intent and the means could be acknowledged. Persuasion cannot be induced without information and information without the aim of persuasion in advertising is a meaningless

assumption because information can be presented through other kinds of promotional devices involving less cost. So it is a fact that presentation of information in advertising is purposeful since to the extent that the content of the advertising message is informative, this may lead to a higher level of persuasion. Thus, in advertising, more information is assumed to add a persuasive dimension to the message content, otherwise it would be meaningless.

- (3) Even if the distinction between informative and persuasive advertising is theoretically accepted, it would be difficult to maintain it in practice, because there is no simple method of measuring information isolated from persuasion. Either objective stimuli must be specifically defined, or different definitions for each product-market-customer situation considered. Thus, while there may be some agreement on the conditions under which commercial persuasion is more or less appropriate, to lay out the specific criteria on which to base such judgements is difficult, if not impossible.

Finally, it can be concluded that the distinction between the informational and the persuasive elements in the content of advertising is not an issue that poses an important problem, if it is understood that all information provided by advertising aims at persuasion. Within this framework of thinking, all advertising can therefore be said to be persuasive.

(2) THE DECEPTIVE DIMENSION IN ADVERTISING

Truthfulness/deception dimensions of advertising have been the focus of much criticism by consumer activists. Perhaps the greatest attack on advertising has been and continues to be against the deceptive practices of some advertisers.

Because this area is well covered by the law and because of its importance to the advertising decision maker and regulator, it will be treated in greater depth in this section.

The problems of definition and measurement of deception are closely linked with an understanding of the perception process. Such problems are implicit in many of the issues to be raised in this section.

Critics define deceptiveness not only as false and misleading statements but also as any false impression conveyed, whether intentional or unintentional. Advertising deception has been extensively investigated and discussed by social critics. In our discussion, we shall examine the deception dimension in the content of advertising as dealt with by those critics.

Greyser [74], while discussing the nature and content of advertising, stated that "any consideration of advertising content leads us directly to the matter of truth and deception. While we know that the public has a high tolerance of puffery in advertising, the atmosphere in recent years has become one of increasing public scepticism in regard to whether advertisements generally present a true picture of the products advertised."

In examining the extent of truthfulness in the content of advertising, Greyser [75] introduced four subcategories of truth, each of which calls for a different level of concern. These are

as follows:-

- (1) **Literal truth.** This involves the question of claim substantiation. Although on the surface the matter of claim substantiation seems straightforward enough, in fact it is far from clear-cut.
- (2) **True impression, as distinct from literal truth.** The question here involves the extent to which the impression drawn from advertising is true. This level of truthfulness raises questions of what goes on in a "reasonable" person's mind. For the claim to give a true impression, it should include a host of reservations and caveats about the product (rare indeed is the brand which is not stronger than competition in some dimensions and weaker in others).
- (3) **Discernible exaggeration.** Apart from the absence of literal truth, the question here involves the level of exaggeration in the claim. Some advertisements ignore the consumer's power of reasoning; for example, who believes that a specific soap powder can truly "make a washing machine ten feet tall?" Consumers need a different kind of claim, one that can provide them with reasonable and logical information.
- (4) **False impression.** The issue here is whether the claim is deliberately misleading or not, ie. does the advertising claim actually include material intended to create a false impression (deceptive claim).

In addition to this classification, Greyser adds irrelevance as a fifth category. He stated that one important dimension of truthfulness in the message is its relevance, ie. the extent to which the advertising claim addresses itself to what consumers want to know.

In an attempt to clarify the concept of deception in the content of advertising, Aaker and Myers [76] viewed deception as "a perceptual process." They added:-

"Deception exists when an advertisement is introduced into the perceptual process of some audiences, and the output of that perceptual process (1) differs from the reality of the situation, and (2) affects buying behaviour to the detriment of the consumer."

The authors continued, however, that great difficulty exists when the advertisement is not obviously false but the perceptual process generates an impression that it is deceptive (false impression), eg. advertisements which imply uniqueness, or present unsupported "best buys," or those advertisements which generate illusions and romanticisation. However, substantiation can help in such cases. But it is in this category that the creative freedom to develop imagery by means of words and pictures clashes with literalness.

Rao [77] carried out a survey among consumers to ascertain their views on deceptive advertising. A sample of 216 subjects was drawn from residents of Fayetteville City in Arkansas State, in the US. The general findings of the survey can be summarised in the following two conclusions:-

- (1) Deceptive advertising ranked second among the seven marketing related social problems listed, the first being rising prices of products and services (66% considered that deceptive advertising is either a "very serious" or "serious" problem).
- (2) Overall, the respondents considered that advertisements were dependable sources of information for the purpose of explaining product features and product use.

At the end of his survey, Rao felt that the growing anti-business and anti-advertising propaganda in recent years might have contributed to this attitude.

Rosch [78] looked at "Marketing Research and The Legal Requirements of Advertising" from a Federal Trade Commission (FTC) perspective. He noted that FTC does not need to find that an advertisement has actually deceived the public to realise that it is deceptive. The researcher emphasised the role of advertising research in identifying the evidence of deception in advertising. Once this evidence is established, the FTC then has to determine whether the advertisements in question had the tendency or capacity to deceive.

Dillon [79] suggested that the idea of deception in advertising is an elusive one and that "deceptive advertising is not a valuable tool for everyone. Deceptive advertising is only valuable to someone in a position to make one sale and thereafter not care." This is usually not the case in the business world. According to Dillon's suggestion, any firm exists in the market to survive, not to leave it the day after. Deceiving consumers constitutes the beginning of its end, particularly under competitive market conditions. Dillon concluded that he accepts as a constructive suggestion finding out directly from the consumer what his problems are with regard to deception in advertising.

In a study by Cohen [80], the author discussed four "surrogate indicators" as potential instruments of deception: colours, symbols, endorsements and magnitudes. In another study [81] Gardiner, proposed the idea that "if an advertisement leaves the consumer with an impression, or belief different from what would normally be expected if the consumer has reasonable knowledge, and that impression, or belief is factually untrue or potentially misleading ... deception is said to exist."

Jacoby and Small [82] suggested the use of experts to judge whether an advertisement has the capacity to deceive. However, the researchers agreed that judging whether an advertisement has this capacity is obviously not the same as demonstrating that the advertisement is actually deceptive.

Thus a variety of views regarding deception in the content of advertising have been presented. As was pointed out, advertising deception can take a number of forms and many of these are highly controversial with no hard and fast rules. Advertising critics have broadened the concept of deception in advertising to include many practices that can be considered deceptive or unpermissible exaggeration. Some of those are listed here:-

- (1) False promises. Making an advertising promise that cannot be kept, such as "restores youth" or "prevents cancer."
- (2) Claims of uniqueness. Asserting that a product is "unique," "unparalleled," or "the first of its kind."
- (3) Misleading comparisons. Making meaningless comparisons, such as "a genuine antique reproduction" or "as good as a diamond" if the claim cannot be verified.
- (4) False comparisons. Demonstrating one product as superior to another without giving the "inferior" item a chance, or by comparing it with the least competitive product available. For example, comparing the road performance of a steel-belted radial tyre with an average "economy" tyre.
- (5) Bait-and-Switch offers. Advertising an item at an unusually low price to bring people into the store, and then "switching" them to a higher priced item, stating

that the advertised product is "out of stock."

- (6) Incomplete description. Stating some, but not all, of the contents of a product, such as advertising a "solid oak" desk without mentioning that only the top is solid oak and that the rest is made of hardwoods with an oak veneer.
- (7) Visual distortion. Making a product look larger than it really is - for example, a TV commercial for a "giant steak" dinner special showing the steak on a miniature plate that makes it appear extra large. Or, showing a "deluxe" model that is not the same as the one offered at "sale" price.
- (8) Testimonials. Implying that a product has the endorsement of a celebrity or an authority who is not a bona fide user of the product.
- (9) Underselling claims. Making claims like "lowest prices in town," "highest trade-in allowances," or "never undersold."

In conclusion, the common theme of the reported literature relating to deceptive advertising is that there is real concern on the part of the consumer and society as a whole about deception in the content of advertising.

Since people can be influenced to considerably different degrees, any attempt to detect deception in the content of advertising depends on individual value judgements. Without some advance guidelines for measuring deception, such a judgement will continue to be based on a subjective process. In this regard, any attempt to measure deception must be based on distinguishing between one's own value judgement of advertising's power and capabilities, and the assessment of the rights and wrongs of that

power, ie. one's appraisal of whether an advertisement is deceptive should be separated from one's value judgement.

Determining whether or not an advertisement is deceptive requires us to adopt a consumer's perspective.

To this end, we turn to discuss another dimension in the content of modern advertising, namely manipulation.

(3) THE MANIPULATION DIMENSION

Perhaps the essence of a free marketplace and a free society is freedom to make decisions of various kinds, or in this context, freedom to select or reject a particular brand. There are those who fear that this freedom is circumscribed by the "power" of advertising - that advertising is so effective that it can manipulate a buyer into making a decision against his will or at least against his best interests when allocating his financial resources [83].

The argument put forward is that advertising creates useless or undesirable wants at the expense of things for which there is greater social need. When advertising makes consumers want and buy automobiles with tail fins, tobacco, and movie-star swimming pools, there is less money (fewer resources) available to improve public hospitals, build better schools, or combat juvenile delinquency.

One of the elements involved here is subliminal perception, ie. the situation where consumers are stimulated below their level of conscious awareness. Schiffman and Kanuk [84] pointed out that under this type of manipulation, people can perceive advertising stimuli without being consciously aware of them. They added that the threshold for conscious awareness or conscious recognition

appears to be higher than the absolute threshold for effective perception. Thus, stimuli that are too weak or too brief to be consciously seen or heard may nevertheless be strong enough to be subconsciously perceived.

Subliminal perception created a great furore in 1950 when it was reported that advertisers could expose consumers to subliminal advertising messages that they were not aware of receiving. Supposedly, these messages could persuade consumers to buy or act in ways that would benefit the advertisers without those consumers being aware of why they did so. Subliminal perception has been seen by many critics as a decisive and powerful marketing tool. Furthermore, it received widespread attention outwith marketing as a result of such books as Vance Packard's "The Hidden Persuaders." In his book, Packard observed:-

"The large scale efforts are being made, often with impressive success, to channel our unthinking habits, our purchasing decisions, and our thought processes by the use of insights gleaned from psychiatry and the social sciences. Typically these efforts take place beneath our level of awareness; so that the appeals which move us are often, in a sense, "hidden." The result is that many of us are being influenced and manipulated far more than we realise, in the pattern of our everyday lives." [85]

The concept of the consumer being manipulated at the subconscious level caused a great deal of controversy. The effectiveness of such subliminal advertising was reportedly tested in a drive-in movie in New Jersey, where popcorn and Coca-Cola ads flashed on the screen during the showing of the movie so rapidly that viewers were not consciously aware of having seen them. It was reported that during the six-week period of the test, popcorn

sales increased 58% and Coca-Cola sales increased 18% [86]. However, since apparently no scientific controls were used in the so-called experiment, the results are somewhat dubious. What is more interesting, no one has been able to replicate the result. Although laboratory experiments have supported the notion that individuals can perceive subliminally, there is no scientific evidence that subliminal stimulation will cause subsequent action.

Investigations in this area stated that other tests of subliminal communication have had negative results. There is therefore an overwhelming consensus among the advertising professional community that subliminal perception simply does not work.

However, Saegert [87] has suggested that perhaps this conclusion might be premature. One marketing study did generate significantly greater "thirst ratings" by subjects exposed subliminally to the word "Coke" than other subjects exposed to a nonsense syllable word.

Hawkins [88] conducted several experiments designed to test the effectiveness of subliminal stimulation. He found that while the simple subliminal stimulus "Coke" did serve to arouse thirst in subjects, the subliminal command to "drink Coke" did not have any greater effect nor did it have any behavioural consequences.

Clearly, these studies only raise the possibility that subliminal communication might be able to bring unconscious motives to the surface, not that it could create or change motives. It appears that effective consumer persuasion still depends on supraliminal stimuli, ie. stimuli that are presented above the level of conscious awareness.

Kotler [89] indicated that people have elaborate perceptual defences against the mass media. Messages that are incongruent with their needs and cognitive make-up are ignored or distorted.

Bauer [90] in his article "The Obstinate Audience" stated that a person's wants, needs and values are influenced not only by the "mass media" but by other factors (including family, peers, religion and so on).

Greyser [91] adds to this by saying that:-

"The myth of the defenceless consumer is one of the most enduring outputs of the social critic of advertising. Yet a substantial body of consumer behaviour research tells us that the consumer is hardly a helpless pawn manipulated at will by the advertiser."

In addition, Bauer [92] put forward the theme that far from being a merely passive and responsive group, many consumers actively drive a hard bargain with advertisers concerning products advertised. In both articles, Bauer stressed the intricacy of intervening psychological processes which he says "guarantee that some large portion of advertising messages will produce an effect other than intended."

In his attempt to answer whether advertising manipulates, persuades, or just presents information, Ray [93] pointed out that the answer really depends on how effectively the brand, product manager and all the people working with him have performed. In other words, this issue involves the efficiency of advertising, ie. the question of whether advertising presents the correct information and how far consumers or buyers consider that they have been persuaded or manipulated. Thus it could be concluded that from Ray's point of view, the level of perceived manipulation in the content of advertising can be determined by the extent to which the advertising can present what might be perceived by consumers as correct information.

Again, Ray [94] emphasises that there are many more influences apart from the communication message that can affect whether a person searches for, tries, buys, and/or eventually adopts any particular market offering. He adds, "advertising is only one part of the communication mix, its goals are usually to effect some state of mind before action and the consumer is exposed to all kinds of personal (word-of-mouth) and non-personal (mass media) information about each market offering, each of which might have greater impact on the action of buying."

However, White [95] argues that while it is perfectly true that an advertisement is useless if no one notices it, it is by no means true that an advertisement which everyone notices is necessarily effective - it may be noticed for reasons which are totally irrelevant to the strategy involved. White adds that the ways in which people take in messages from advertisements are often almost subconscious. (This is not to say that advertisers can deliberately reach people by advertising "subliminally," merely that it is quite possible to get a message out of an advertisement without really being aware of it.)

To sum up, the failure of the passive audience model led scholars to develop a new line of thinking by which a better understanding of the advertising process can be achieved.

In recent decades, therefore, scholars have come to believe that the intervening steps between communication stimulus and response are less simple than has generally been believed. They were related to the purpose of "getting the message through," getting it accepted and to the important psychological processes that might be triggered by present and stored perceptions of social relationships and role patterns, in such a way as to influence response to any communication.

As Schramm [96] stated:-

"Without such complicating concepts we could never explain why the anti-cigarette campaign was not initially more effective, why adoption of new practices proceeds as it does."

This pattern of thinking has been reflected in the way that advertisers measure audiences and tailor their commercial messages.

Indeed, this led to the belief that advertising exerts its influence on the audience by a simple hierarchical progression of effects. Specifically, this line of thinking is not concerned only with the preliminary response to advertising through attention or perception, but also considers these processes as prerequisite to higher-level responses [97]. These latter include attempting to gain the receiver's agreement with their position (some degree of conviction or attitude change) and often a desired overt action (such as the purchase of a specific brand).

It is worth noting that the hierarchy of effects models* explain that a receiver's response to an advertising message involves more than a simple observable form of behaviour. Instead, it encompasses several mediating convert responses between the presentation of a message and the action intended by the advertiser. The models also emphasise that advertising is not a

* The hierarchy of effects models will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

manipulative process but a persuasive one. The step-by-step process in all the models implies that the consumer weighs up advertising rationally.

As will be discussed further in Chapter 4, this view may be found to be highly questionable, at least with regard to advertising for low-priced habitual purchases.

THE PUBLIC ATTITUDE TO ADVERTISING

Having discussed the basic dimensions of the content of modern advertising, we are now in a position to assess what might be called a public attitude to advertising. Specifically, the concern here is the extent to which people approve or disapprove of advertising.

Although it is not the intention of this section to give a comprehensive explanation of attitude and the related literature, a brief discussion about the definition of attitude is undertaken.

DEFINITION OF ATTITUDE

Behaviouralists do not agree about a definition of attitude. However, some of the most significant definitions will be presented.

O'Sullivan and his associates [98] defined attitude as "an opinion, belief or disposition based upon the prior experience of the individual." They argued that these develop either through direct experience, or are learned from others through socialisation. Also, DeLozier [99] viewed attitude as "a state reflecting how positive or negative, pro or con, favourable or unfavourable a person is toward some object or concept."

However, one of the most frequently quoted definitions was provided by Allport [100] who surveyed the multitude of definitions that had been proposed by other theorists and suggested a definition of his own which might be sufficiently

broad to cover the many kinds of attitudinal dimensions which psychologists today recognise. According to Allport, an attitude is:-

"... a mental and neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related."

In the same spirit, but within a different semantic context, Fishbein and Ajzen defined attitudes as:-

"... learned tendencies to perceive and act in some consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with regard to a given social object or idea, such as a product, service, brand, company, store, or spokesperson." [101]

As the above definitions and most others suggest, the common thread is that attitude involves a preparation or readiness for response. This readiness may have several dimensions from the "most latent, dormant traces of forgotten habits" to "motivating influences initiating behaviour." [102]

In the light of these definitions, we can define attitude as a state of mind, formed and developed through experience, learning, and other socialising processes. It has an influential power to formalise and direct the individual's response to any situational stimulus to which he is exposed. By this definition, attitude represents the tendency to respond in a certain manner. It has a dynamic nature because it develops over time, and it has the capacity to influence the behavioural pattern of individuals. Thus, attitudes are characterised by a predisposition or state of readiness to act or react in a particular way to certain stimuli.

Over recent years, particular interest has focused on the influence of attitudes on buying behaviour, with researchers exploring the attitudinal characteristics of particular types of buyers. In advertising research, for example, changing the consumer's attitude towards specific products or services was considered to be a very useful method of assessing the effect of advertising [103]:

" ... the raw material out of which public opinion develops is to be found in the attitudes of individuals whether they be followers or leaders and whether these attitudes be at the general level of tendencies to conform to legitimate authority or majority opinion or at the specific level of favouring or opposing the particular aspects of the issue under consideration."

ATTITUDE TO ADVERTISING

Advertising is a subject about which people tend to have strong opinions. Talking about advertising, Webb [104] stated:-

"It is one of the most visible forms of communication and people tend to have highly personal reactions to it ... outside observers tend to see advertising as more negative than positive, the core of their concern rarely voices their opinions about the fundamental workings of the marketplace."

Our assessment of the attitude to advertising includes attitudes in both the UK and the US.

PUBLIC ATTITUDE TO ADVERTISING IN THE UK

During the last twenty years, a number of surveys of public attitudes to advertising have been conducted. The surveys were carried out at more or less regular intervals.

One of those was carried out in 1965 by National Opinion Poll (NOP) for Adweekly [105]. Questions were carried in NOP's Random Omnibus survey and were put to a sample of 2060 adults aged 16 or over. The sample was a random probability one, designed to be representative of all the adults in Great Britain, classified by sex, age and social class. The major findings of that survey were:-

- (1) 73.8% of the public gave their implicit approval to advertising by their acknowledgement of its necessity. When the respondents were asked whether they thought that advertising raised the standard of living, 46.2% thought it did and 41.8% claimed it made no difference. However, a small percentage (6.6%) claimed that advertising lowered the standard of living.
- (2) Around half (46%) thought that advertising resulted in better products.
- (3) When the respondents were asked whether they believed that advertising raised prices, 54.2% believed that it did so, whereas 25.8% believed that it had no effect.
- (4) A high percentage (79.4%) claimed that advertising could persuade people to buy things they did not want.
- (5) 65.4% thought that advertising helped them to make a better choice.

- (6) Finally, 53.4% believed that advertising presented a false picture of the goods advertised, while 16.9% "did not know."

In addition to this survey, the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) and the Advertising Association (AA) commissioned during the same period (1961-1980) a series of surveys of public attitudes to advertising. These were carried out at more or less regular intervals and were conducted by the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB). The first was carried out in 1961, the most recent in 1980, with some additional interviews in the early part of 1981. Specifically, the surveys were carried out in 1961, 1963, 1966, 1969, 1972, 1976 and 1980.

The surveys dealt with a number of issues. These are discussed below:-

(1) APPROVAL OF ADVERTISING

The findings of the surveys indicated the extent to which people approved or disapproved of advertising in general over the period 1961-1980. Table (2-2) summarises the public's attitude to advertising:

Table (2-2): Public's Attitude to Advertising

	1961	1963	1966	1969	1972	1976	1980
Base: *	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	1260	N/K	1160
<u>Percentage who:</u>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve a lot	33)84	74	22)68	35)79	25)67	73	77
Approve a little	51)		46)	44)	42)		
Disapprove a little	5)13	20	14)25	10)16	14)24	19	16
Disapprove a lot	8)		11)	6)	10)		
No opinion/ Don't know	3	6	7	4	9	8	7

Source: The British Market Research Bureau. The Surveys, 1961, 1963, 1966, 1969, 1972, 1976, 1980.

Note: N/K = Not known

* The researcher tried to get the base number for all these years through a personal call to the Information Officer in BMRB, but all these bases have been destroyed.

The trend can be described as follows: a substantial, steady decline in the level of approval of advertising between the years 1961 and 1966 from 84% to 68%, followed by a sharp recovery in 1969 (79%), a sharp fall in 1972 (67%) to the 1966 position, and since then a further but more gradual recovery, almost reaching the 1969 level.

In explaining the decline in the level of approval of advertising between 1961 and 1966 the 1972 report suggested that:

"1961 was the high point of intellectual objections to advertising, partly because advertising had been expanding so rapidly over the previous few years and partly because of the beginnings of consumerism."

The report continued:

"By 1966, the first wave of consumerism had died down, advertising's period of explosive growth was over, the Advertising Standards Association (ASA) had been set up, people were more used to commercials on TV but approval fell by 16% over that 5 year period and disapproval increased by 12%."

The report suggested that this could be due to changes in the public's political preferences. However, in a speech at the Conference of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) in 1966, Dr John Treasure [106] attributed the decline in approval of advertising between 1961 and 1966 to the growth and development of television advertising, which the surveys showed to be more disliked than press advertising. This was combined with a growth of anti-advertising propaganda and an increase in the power of consumer organisations.

Treasure's analysis is almost certainly the correct one. In the early 1960s commercial television was still comparatively new in Britain and a lot of the advertising was particularly strident and obtrusive.

More difficult to explain is the substantial decline in the level of approval of advertising that the 1972 survey shows, followed by an increase during the second half of the decade, until it almost reached the 1969 level by 1980. It is not clear to what

extent the drop in 1972 was a reflection of people's views about advertising or their reaction to external conditions such as the rapid rise in prices.

The 1972 survey [107] also showed that the most frequently mentioned reason for approving of advertising was that it informed people about products and prices. Reasons for approval of advertising over the period (1961-1972) are provided in Table (2-3):

Table (2-3): Reasons for Approval of Advertising

	1961	1966	1972
Base:	N/K	N/K	1260
<hr/>			
<u>Percentage who said:</u>	%	%	%
Tells people about products/prices	45	27	32
Tells people about new products	15	17	13
Helps people choose between products/ compare different products	9	7	10
Helps sell products/creates demand	14	18	19
Lowers costs	1	1	1
Helps business/trades/best way to get business	10	9	12
Helps employment/people make living out of it	2	1	4
Supports TV/gives better programmes	*	1	1
Supports the press	*	*	1
Essential/useful	3	4	7
Interesting/educational/broadens the mind	3	3	7
Amusing	2	2	2
Other reasons	2	5	3
Ambiguous/non-committal answers	4	8	3
Don't know/not stated	1	3	3

Source: The Advertising Association, "Attitudes to Advertising: Report on a survey amongst the general public, July 1972"

Note: N/K = Not known

* = Less than 0.5%

The main two categories on which much emphasis has been placed by the advertising industry were, that advertising tells people (a) about products/prices and (b) about new products. However, there was a noticeable decline in these reasons for approving advertising over the period (1961-72). This decline may reflect the public's low perception of the informative role of advertising.

Analysis of the surveys by sex, social class, area, educational level, political allegiance and membership of either a Trade Union or a consumer organisation showed that basic levels of approval did not vary very much. They did, however, appear to be affecting the level of approval of advertising.

Young people (the 15-24 age group) showed the highest level of approval (75%) with a steady decline through the age groups, the elderly recording a significantly lower level of approval than the average for all respondents by about 7 to 10%.

Interestingly, there is no evidence in the surveys to show that members of Trade Unions or consumer organisations approve of advertising less than the average respondent, which is something that many people might have expected to occur.

(2) THE SALIENCE* OF ADVERTISING

A difficult question that the surveys tried to answer concerns the relative saliency of advertising. In other words, how important is it in people's lives and to what extent does it feature as a topic of conversation?

* The term indicates the importance of advertising relative to other current issues.

First attempts to measure the relative saliency of advertising appear to have originated in research carried out in the United States in 1964 for the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA), the results of which were published in 1968 in a book titled "Advertising in America: The Consumer View," by Raymond Bauer and Stephen Greyser.

What the AAAA study did was to try and put people's views on advertising into perspective by assessing it against other current issues in American society, such as religion, clothing and fashions, professional sports, and bringing up children. People were asked to what extent they talked most about, or had strong opinions on, the various subjects included in the list. Advertising consistently came bottom of the list in terms of its "relative saliency."

This technique for measuring "relative saliency" was copied by the Advertising Association (AA) in its 1972, 1976 and 1980 surveys. As in the American study, respondents were asked which of the topics listed they talked about most, had the strongest opinions about and also which they felt were most in need of immediate attention and change.

The results of the AA studies of 1972, 1976 and 1980 can be compared with the AAAA studies of 1964 and 1967 in the US. Table (2-4) summarises these results [108].

From a comparative point of view, it can be seen that the relative saliency of advertising and the relative strength of opinion on advertising was as low in Britain as it was in America.

Comparing AA's figures of 1972, 1976 and 1980 with AAAA's figures of 1967, however, the number who thought that advertising needed immediate attention and change was greater in America than in Britain. In the absence of the AAAA's figures in the same period

Table (2-4): Attitude Change to Advertising in UK and US (1964-1980)

Base: Percentage who mentioned:	Q1 Talked about most					Q2 Strongest opinions					Q3 Need immediate attention and change				
	AAAA		AA			AAAA		AA			AAAA		AA		
	1964	1967	1972	1976	1980	1964	1967	1972	1976	1980	1964	1967	1972	1976	1980
	N/K	N/K	1260	N/K	1160	N/K	N/K	1260	N/K	1160	N/K	N/K	1260	N/K	1160
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Advertising	11	8	8	6	8	7	7	6	3	4	15	12	5	3	2
Big business	13	14	9	6	9	8	10	6	3	5	11	12	5	5	4
Bringing up children	58	55	45	43	41	52	51	29	25	25	20	17	11	8	9
Clothing and fashion	35	41	39	41	36	12	15	11	10	9	6	15	2	2	2
(a) Education	41	39	44	43	42	33	37	32	28	30	41	38	24	24	23
Family Life	49	50	57	54	53	43	45	31	26	26	12	12	6	6	5
(b) The Government	36	42	48	36	42	32	32	34	23	31	28	44	35	35	34
Professional sports	33	38	36	44	42	11	14	14	16	14	5	2	2	5	3
Religion	47	44	24	17	16	35	36	22	14	12	10	11	10	5	3
(c) Trade Unions	18	19	25	22	30	18	18	24	19	27	26	28	31	20	30
None/don't know	2	N/A	3	3	3	5	N/A	8	8	8	17	N/A	13	12	10

Source: Michael L. Barnes, "Public Attitudes to Advertising," Journal of Advertising, 1982, Vol 1, pp119-128.

Notes: N/A = Not available
 N/K = Not known
 (a) "Public education" in the AAAA studies
 (b) "The Federal Government" in the AAAA studies
 (c) "Labour Unions" in the AAAA studies

of time covered by the AA surveys, this poses the question of whether the gap has currently widened or narrowed as a result of consumerist pressure being stepped up in both countries [109].

Nevertheless, the AA's figures of 1980 indicated that the relative need for immediate attention and change in advertising was low (2%) in Britain compared with the need for immediate attention and change in education (23%), Government (34%) and in Trades Unions (30%). These figures are almost the same as the 1972 and 1976 figures.

Much is made in the report of the 1980 survey of the very small (and declining) proportion of people who said that advertising was one of the three or four topics on the list that they had the strongest opinions about or felt most in need of immediate attention and change. Nevertheless, although "relative saliency" clearly is a crucial factor, one cannot help wondering whether there are not better ways of measuring it.

After all, one would think that clothing and fashion, the Government, professional sports and bringing up children are matters of fundamentally greater interest than advertising to the average person. The figures of the above table may be taken as indicating a very low level of concern about advertising in the population, but not as absolute proof of that fact.

(3) LIKING FOR ADVERTISING IN THE MEDIA

As well as measuring levels of approval or disapproval of advertising, most of the surveys also contained questions about liking or disliking advertisements in different media. Research carried out by the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB) in 1966 and 1976 explored opinions about advertising in different media in particular detail [110].

(a) LIKING FOR PRESS ADVERTISEMENTS (NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES)

Table (2-5) shows the trend in opinions of press advertising, i.e. the extent to which press advertisements are liked:-

Table (2-5): Trends in Opinions of Press Advertisements in the UK Over the Period (1961-1980)

	1961	1966	1972	1976	1980
Base:	N/K	800	N/K	326	N/K
<u>Percentage who:</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Like advertisements	21	11	15	10	14
Quite like advertisements	42	30	35	29	33
Don't bother about ads/ don't know	31	44	38	49	44
Don't really like ads	4	9	7	6	7
Dislike ads	2	6	5	5	3

Source: Advertising Association, "Public Attitudes to Advertising 1980-1981," September 1981, London: Advertising Association

Note: N/K = Not known

As the above table shows, the percentage of people who expressed their liking for press (newspapers and magazines) advertising were: 63%, 41%, 50%, 39% and 47% in the years 1961, 1966, 1972, 1976 and 1980 respectively. This trend highlights a marked decline in the degree of liking for press advertisements between the years 1961 and 1976 (from 63% to 39%), followed by a sharp recovery in 1980 (47%).

It might be expected that the marked decline in extent of liking for press advertisements would lead to an increase in the proportion of people who disliked them.

However, this did not occur, the percentages disliking the advertisements also declining over the period. The explanation lies in the increase in ambivalent responses in the ten years between 1966 and 1976, indicating no consistent trend in opinions polarising over time.

(b) LIKING FOR TV COMMERCIALS

The extent of liking for TV commercials was also assessed in the BMRB research. Table (2-6) indicates the extent to which TV commercials were liked by the British public over the same period (1961-1980) [111].

Table (2-6): Trends in Opinions of TV Commercials

	1961	1966	1972	1976	1980
Base:	N/K	800	N/K	326	N/K
<u>Percentage who:</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Like commercials	11	9	13	14	18
Quite like commercials	24	24	30	34	32
Don't bother about commercials/ don't know	37	39	33	36	34
Don't really like commercials	14	14	12	8	9
Dislike commercials	15	16	12	8	6

Source: Ibid

Note: N/K = Not known

As the figures show, with the exception of the decline in the extent of liking for TV commercials between 1961 and 1966, the number of people liking TV commercials to some extent moved

steadily upwards during the years 1966, 1972, 1976 and 1980 (33%, 43%, 48% and 50% respectively). In contrast, those disliking TV commercials to some extent decreased during the same period (30%, 24%, 16% and 15% respectively).

It is possible that the drop in the extent of liking for both press and TV advertisements between the years 1961 and 1966 was due partly to the rapid expansion of advertising during this period, and partly because of the introduction of consumerism.

(c) THE IMAGE OF ADVERTISING

Although people recorded high levels of approval of advertising in the abstract, the AA studies showed that the image of advertising was weak in the sense that, when confronted with specific statements about advertising, respondents were on the whole somewhat negative.

Table (2-7) shows that around half the sample in the 1961 and 1972 surveys agreed that there is no need for advertising if a thing is good: with marginally more (55%) agreeing in 1976.

There was also a sharp decline in the extent of agreement with the view that advertising helps to bring down the cost of goods (30%, 18%, 16% for 1961, 1972 and 1976 respectively) or that it helps to keep the country prosperous (69%, 46% and 41% respectively).

Finally, just over half the public in 1961 felt that advertising makes people buy things they do not want (56%). This figure dropped to 53% in 1972, followed by a rise in 1976 to 59%. Overall, therefore, there was a tendency to harbour unfavourable opinions about advertising in Britain over the period 1961 to 1976.

Table (2-7): Levels of Agreement of Advertising Over Time (1961-1976)

Base:	1961		1972		1976	
	N/K		N/K		N/K	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
<u>Statement about advertising:</u>	%	%	%	%	%	%
If a thing is good, you don't have to advertise it	52	46	48	48	55	42
Advertising helps bring down the cost of goods	30	67	18	74	16	74
Advertising helps to keep the country prosperous	69	27	46	37	41	46
Advertising presents a true picture of the product advertised	N/A	N/A	34	62	37	58
Advertising makes people buy things they don't want	56	44	53	44	59	38

Source: Advertising Association, Various surveys published on public attitudes to advertising (1961, 1972, 1976), London: Advertising Association

Notes: N/A = Not available
N/K = Not known

The fourth statement - advertising presents a true picture of the product advertised - was also used in the Bauer and Greyser study of 1964 on behalf of the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA).

Hence a comparison can be drawn between UK and US opinions. Table (2-8) displays these comparative figures:-

Table (2-8): The Extent of Agreement on the Accuracy* of Advertising (Comparison Between UK and US)

	AA's study of			AAAA's
	1972	1976		study of 1964
Base:	N/K	1260		N/K
<u>Percentage who:</u>	%	%		%
Agree strongly	10)	37	Generally agree	20)
Agree a little	24)	34	Partially agree	27)
Disagree a little	29)	58	Partially disagree	26)
Disagree strongly	33)	62	Generally disagree	20)
Don't know	5	1	Don't know/ no opinion	2)
			Can't say	5)

Source: Advertising Association, "Public Attitudes to Advertising in the UK, the USA and the EEC" London: Advertising Association

Note: N/K = Not known

* Accuracy of advertising is measured by the extent to which advertising presents a true picture of the product advertised.

As is shown in the table, the UK surveys show a marginal improvement from 1972 to 1976 in the level of agreement with the statement "advertising presents a true picture of the product advertised," from 34% to 37%. However, the AAAA's data reveal that a higher proportion (47%) in America in 1964 agreed with the proposition than in Britain.

It is also interesting to note that the level of disagreement with the statement in the UK in 1972 and 1976 was higher than in the US in 1964. As the second part of the table shows, opinions on this statement were probably not strong, and it is not clear how much weight should be given to the American survey.

Interestingly, when the statement "advertising presents a true picture of the product advertised" was reversed and presented negatively, opinions in the US changed as can be seen in Table (2-9):-

Table (2-9): "In general, advertisements do not present a true picture of the product advertised"

	AAAA's study of 1964
Base:	N/K
<u>Percentage who:</u>	<u>%</u>
Generally agree	(26)
Partially agree	(34) 60
Partially disagree	(18)
Generally disagree	(15) 33
Don't know/no opinion	(2)
Can't say	(5) 7

Source: Ibid, p13

Note: N/K = Not known

As the table shows, the change in the statement lowered the percentage of agreement with the original statement by 14% (the percentage of agreement with the statement in its positive context was 47%, whereas the percentage of disagreement with the statement in its negative context was 33%).

This conclusion indicates a differential image according to a change in question wording. This issue is explored in more detail below.

**(d) THE EFFECT OF THE IMPERSONALITY OF QUESTIONS
ON THE PERCEPTION OF ADVERTISING AS MISLEADING**

One very relevant issue that the AA's study of 1976 brought out was the quite different answers that people gave in the interview situation according to whether they were being asked about the effect of advertising on other people or on themselves. This issue was well demonstrated by Tom Corlett's use of the 1976 Advertising Association (AA) data in a presentation that he gave at a seminar organised by the AA in London in November 1976 [112]. The seminar was about public attitudes to advertising in the UK, the US and the European Economic Community (EEC). The EEC had commissioned a major piece of quantitative research in each of the member countries. The survey covered a wide range of topics of interest to consumers, but only two out of 60 questions were specifically about advertising. The purpose of Corlett's presentation was to demonstrate that the conclusions which the authors of the EEC report came to were far weaker than was warranted by the very limited evidence that they had obtained.

In the course of proving his point, Corlett illustrated very succinctly the quite widely differing answers that can be obtained in an interview situation by the extent to which questions are put in concrete and personal terms. He contrasted the impersonal questions in the EEC survey, where reference is

made to "consumers" rather than "people" with two types of question used in the AA's 1976 survey. The first was couched in general, though more concrete, terms than in the EEC survey, and the second in explicitly personal terms. Table (2-10) and Table (2-11) illustrate his point perfectly:-

Table (2-10): Comparison of Different Questions About Advertising as Misleading (Results for the UK only)

	EEC survey "Advertising often misleads consumers"	AA survey "The Ads you see are often misleading"	AA survey "I am frequently misled by the ads I see"
Base:	N/K	N/K	N/K
<u>Percentage who:</u>	%	%	%
Agree entirely	33)	29)	12)
Agree on the whole	45) 78	38) 67	16) 28
Disagree on the whole	13)	20)	30)
Disagree entirely	3) 16	8) 28	38) 68
Don't know/no reply	6	5	5

Source: Ibid, p17

Note: N/K = Not known

As is shown in the above table, the level of agreement with the question about advertising as misleading declined when reference was made to people themselves rather than consumers in general. The level of disagreement with the same question increased where reference was made to people themselves (the respondents) rather than consumers in general.

This may suggest that people are most likely to underestimate negative effects when they are in an evaluative situation in which they are required to answer a direct personal question

about themselves. On the other hand, they tend to overestimate when they are required to answer questions which don't involve them personally.

This point was further demonstrated by Corlett with regard to questions about the unnecessary purchases evoked by advertising. This can be seen in Table (2-11):-

Table (2-11): Comparison of Different Questions About Unnecessary Purchases (Results for UK only)

	EEC Survey "Advertising often makes consumers buy goods which they don't really need"	AA Survey "Advertising makes <u>people</u> buy things they don't want"	AA Survey "Advertising makes <u>me</u> buy things I don't want"
Base:	N/K	N/K	N/K
<u>Percentage who:</u>	%	%	%
Agree entirely	33)	27)	4)
Agree on the whole	45) 78	32) 59	11) 15
Disagree on the whole	14)	16)	19)
Disagree entirely	5) 19	22) 38	65) 84
Don't know/no reply	3	3	1

Source: Ibid, p18

Note: N/K = Not known

Again, the same conclusion can be drawn. When the question was formulated in explicitly personal terms, the respondents tended to underestimate the negative effects of advertising, the reverse of the position when the question was formulated in impersonal terms.

Finally, several important conclusions can be drawn from the AA's surveys regarding the UK public's attitude to advertising during the last twenty years. These are as follows:-

- (1) Advertising is an extremely low matter of concern. Few people have very strong opinions about it, and fewer still feel that it needs much attention or that it should be changed. This contrasts with the increasing concern over education, Government, and Trade Unions.
- (2) There is a gradually increasing trend in the number of people who say that advertising is misleading. In the years between 1966 and 1972, the percentage of those claiming that advertising was misleading in some respect doubled.
- (3) It appears to be counter-productive to argue that advertising brings down the cost of goods. This argument received very little support over the period 1961-1976.
- (4) The question as to whether advertising presents a true picture of products advertised was the only one to move against the trend, and produced a more favourable reaction to advertising.
- (5) Although TV advertising aroused stronger feelings than press advertising, the 1976 and 1980 surveys showed a higher level of liking for TV advertising than for press advertising. Dislike of both TV and press advertising has declined over the last twenty years.

We now turn to discuss the public attitude to advertising in the US.

PUBLIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS ADVERTISING IN THE US

In the United States, several studies to monitor public attitudes towards advertising have been conducted by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA). The most important are the 1964 and 1974 studies.

THE 1964 STUDY

In 1964, Bauer and Greyser, sponsored by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA), conducted a study on the American public's attitude to advertising. This was published in 1968. The primary objective of the study was to assess the state of public opinion towards advertising as an aspect of American society, and towards advertisements themselves. Four major issues were covered by the study:-

- (1) The salience of advertising compared with other selected aspects of American life.
- (2) The public's view of advertising as an aspect of American society. This encompassed their overall attitudes towards advertising and their reactions to its economic, social and content aspects.
- (3) Consumers' reactions to advertisements themselves.
- (4) Why consumers react to advertisement the way they do.

The major findings of this study were:-

- (1) Advertising and other communication elements were not of high importance to most people most of the time.

- (2) Public opinion towards advertising and advertisements were mostly favourable.
- (3) Support or criticism of advertising was at most only slightly related to demographic factors such as sex, age, income and education.
- (4) The main reasons given for liking or disliking both advertising and advertisements were as follows:-

"The necessity for an informational function is recognised and advertisements and advertising are approved of for filling this role. Disapproval comes in part for deficiencies in this informational role, but more from the fact that advertisements themselves are unpleasant and intrusive."

On the whole, advertisements were seen as more pleasant than unpleasant.

- (5) There were differences in the way advertisements were classified depending on the media in which they were presented, the product advertised and the relationship of the individual to the product and brand advertised. For example:-

- broadcast media evoked a high degree of annoyance
- print media were considered more informative
- heavily advertised products such as detergents generated annoyance

- users of a given product reacted favourably towards advertisements for it.

- (6) Advertisements themselves were not regarded as the major determinant of overall attitudes towards advertising.
- (7) In the interacting system which included advertisements, products, media, one's life situation and one's generalised attitude, each one of these elements might play an independent role and any two or three might have an interactive effect.

As was indicated in the previous section, the design of this study was copied as a base for similar undertakings by the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB). Indeed, this allowed certain comparisons to be drawn between the public's attitude towards advertising in the UK and the USA*.

In 1967 a supplement to Bauer and Greyser's 1964 study was carried out by the Opinion Research Corporation (ORC). Comparison of the two studies revealed that advertising remained an issue of low salience after the passage of three years and that the public's attitude towards it in general remained more or less identical.

THE 1974 STUDY

The 1974 study indicated that advertising was among the "three or four topics talked about most," and it was ranked seventh in terms of "needing immediate attention and change." [113]

* For more detail about these comparisons, see the previous section - public's attitude to advertising in the UK.

In fact, when favourable-unfavourable feelings towards five social institutions were elicited, they were ranked as follows in terms of favourability: the press, advertising, labour unions, big business, and Federal Government. The same ranking was obtained for another question asking "can you depend on what they tell you?" There also seemed to be no particular group had unfavourable attitudes to any of these institutions, including advertising.

A more recent study provides some support for the 1964 and 1974 studies. In a telephone survey conducted in ten major US markets in early 1979, researchers found that "advertising complaints and dissatisfactions do exist but at lower levels than suggested by many people, and they're less significant than the levels of complaints we found for some brands of some kinds of product."
[114]

The study did not ask about specific advertising experiences. Instead, respondents were asked if they had seen or heard advertising that: made them upset or angry (28% said yes); they found to be amusing (40% said yes); made them want to buy or try something (30% said they had).

Again, while these negative responses were reasonably high, they are global responses, and were lower than the positive responses. They were also apparently significantly lower than negative responses to specific products [115].

In conclusion, it could be said that American consumers have no intense dislike of advertising; on the whole, they displayed a favourable, positive attitude towards advertising, when they were asked to focus on it, but overall it had low saliency for them. They were aware of the social, economic and content issues of advertising and within the latter area, they called for more information in the advertisements to which they were exposed.

BUSINESSMEN'S ATTITUDES TO ADVERTISING

Having assessed the public's attitude to advertising in both the UK and the USA, it is worth examining businessmen's attitudes to advertising. The purpose here is to broaden the assessment of attitudes towards advertising by including those of most relevance to the business side of advertising.

The next section initially considers the attitudes of businessmen in the UK, followed by those in the USA.

(1) IN BRITAIN

In the area of researching businessmen's attitudes to advertising in Britain, the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB) conducted a survey called "A Survey of Advertisers' Opinions of Advertising and Advertising Agencies" in 1972. [116]

This explored the following three main issues:-

- (1) The importance of advertising and its economic effects.
- (2) Public's opinion and advertising standards.
- (3) Advertising agencies.

The sample interviewed consisted of "Brand Management" defined as individuals who were responsible for marketing goods and services spending at least £20,000 yearly on display advertising. In addition, a small separate sample of chairmen of companies spending £250,000 yearly or more on advertising was taken to facilitate comparisons with an earlier 1963 survey.

It is worth noting that BMRB changed their "mix" of sampling units between 1963 and 1972. In 1963, chairmen, managing directors and directors of advertising were sampled. However, in 1972 the survey focused on brand managers. Table (2-12) shows brand management attitudes to advertising in 1972:-

Table (2-12): Brand Management Attitude to Advertising 1972*

<u>Form of statement</u>	Generally agree %	Partially agree %	Can't say /not stated %	Partially disagree %	Generally disagree %
If the thing is good, you don't have to advertise it	-	8	1	27	64
Advertising helps bring down the cost of goods	16	31	10	21	23
Advertising helps to keep the country prosperous	34	36	13	9	7
Advertising presents a true picture of the product advertised	31	45	4	16	4
Advertising makes people buy things they don't want	2	28	4	20	46

Source: The Advertising Association, "Attitudes to Advertising: Report on a Survey Amongst the General Public," July 1972.

* Base: Unknown

The major findings of the survey were as follows:-

- (1) Most advertisers accepted that advertising works and indeed that it is necessary.
- (2) Some felt that it was a necessary evil. One in five thought that there was too much advertising and serious doubts were expressed about the effect of advertising on prices and inflation.
- (3) The trend of public opinion was thought to be adverse. The consumer movement was recognised as being "antagonistic" towards advertising, "powerful" and worthy of "attention."
- (4) Many faults were perceived in advertising. Most advertisers recognised that some advertisements are "uninformative," "irritating," or "insulting to the intelligence."
- (5) Comparatively few were prepared to defend the honesty of advertising.
- (6) Advertisers were willing to accept that it should not be left to the agencies alone to concern themselves with the question of hostility towards advertising.
- (7) Advertisers were still dismally unaware of the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) or the Code of Advertising Practice (CAP). However, most were aware of the existence of a regulatory code and (for example) they frequently mentioned the Independent Television Companies Association (ITCA) as the controlling body for television.

As can be seen in the table the wording of the statements were identical to those used in the (AA's) public attitudes study described earlier, but the verbal agreement scale differed slightly. However, the scale can be split into agree and disagree for comparison purposes. Table (2-13) gives the comparative data for the surveys:-

Table (2-13): Comparison between Attitudes of the General Public and Brand Management

		General public	Brand management
Base:		N/K	N/K
<u>Form of statement</u>		%	%
If a thing is good, you don't have to advertise it	- Agree	48	8
	Disagree	48	91
Advertising helps bring down the cost of goods	- Agree	18	47
	Disagree	74	44
Advertising helps to keep the country prosperous	- Agree	46	70
	Disagree	37	16
Advertising presents a true picture of the product advertised	- Agree	34	76
	- Disagree	62	20
Advertising makes people buy things they don't want	- Agree	53	30
	- Disagree	44	66

Source: British Market Research Bureau (BMRB), "A Survey of Advertisers' Opinions of Advertising and Advertising Agencies, BMRB publications, 1972.

Note: N/K = Not known

The results indicated, as might be expected, that brand management was in general much more favourably inclined towards advertising. The largest differences of opinion were concerned with the necessity for advertising (if a thing is good, you don't have to advertise it), and its truthfulness (advertising presents a true picture of the product advertised), the vast majority of brand managers (91%) agreed that advertising is necessary even if the thing advertised is good. Less than half of the public agreed with this (48%).

With regard to the degree of truthfulness of advertising, significantly more brand managers than members of the public agreed with this (76% v. 34% respectively). Smaller differences were found in relation to the other statements.

(2) IN THE UNITED STATES

A survey of 2,400 (representing about 30% of subscribers) Harvard Business Review subscribers was undertaken in 1962 [117]. The major conclusions of this study were as follows:-

- (1) Almost everyone agreed that advertising was essential to business.
- (2) Businessmen strongly believed that advertising helped to raise the standard of living, to produce better products for the public and to speed the development of markets for new products. They felt that if advertising were eliminated, business would be less productive.
- (3) The businessmen said that what business spends on advertising is "just about right" but at the same time exhibited a singular lack of knowledge about the total amount spent on advertising.

- (4) The businessmen agreed that advertising persuades people to buy things they should not buy. Moreover, businessmen believed that people today paid more attention to advertising and were more influenced by it than in times past.
- (5) The businessmen felt that the quality of advertising was improving but that a number of specific defects remained, the chief of which were the content of irritating advertisements and those which insult the intelligence.
- (6) The advertising industry is required to adopt stronger and more stringent codes of practice than their own industries but in general, businessmen had little knowledge of any self-regulation by the advertising industry itself.
- (7) The main recommendations put forward relating to the advertising industry are self-improvement through stricter self-regulation and greater honesty and better taste in advertisements.
- (8) The businessmen believed that irresponsible advertising affected all business and that it was the responsibility of top management to stimulate improvements in advertising. However, although they strongly rejected Government regulation for advertising, at least half of them believed that if advertising could not keep its house in order, the Government would have to step in.
- (9) The advertising industry should pay attention to public opinion because in the end, the public had the most power to help or hurt advertising.

- (10) Finally, businessmen believed that a greater public knowledge of advertising's role and function in the economy was necessary and they reacted favourably to a public information campaign on advertising's behalf.

THE 1971 STUDY

The Harvard Business Review has up-dated the 1962 study in two follow-up studies conducted in 1971 [118] and 1976. In 1971 a questionnaire similar to that used in 1962 was posted out to a sample of 10,000 Harvard Business Review subscribers. 2,700 (representing about 27% of the sample) were returned. The findings of the study were compared with the 1962 study, and it was found that business, in general, continued to acknowledge the strong economic function of advertising, but were more inclined to question sharply the impact and role of advertising as a social force. Certain aspects of advertising attracted more intensive criticism [119].

- (1) The percentage of businessmen who thought that advertisements present a true picture of the product advertised declined sharply - from more than half to less than a third. However, the sample found people in advertisements were quite different from people in real life. Although businessmen agreed that advertising was on a higher plane than it was in the previous decade, in some areas (eg. advertisements that irritate and insult the intelligence), they think standards have slipped.
- (2) On most key issues, opinions moved some 5 to 10 percentage points towards an anti-advertising position. However, in qualification, the report stated that this could have been a function of the composition of the sample.

- (3) Advertising was still seen as having predominantly positive effects but a 15-20% decline was recorded in such issues as whether advertising results in better products, raises the standard of living and results in higher or lower prices.
- (4) In the social area, the perceived negative impact of advertising on public taste and on unhealthy effects on children showed an increase of 15 percentage points.

The authors suggested that the changes in attitudes that occurred between 1962 and 1971 were related to changes in the context in which businessmen assessed advertising. In 1971, there appeared to be a greater desire to evaluate business activity not only in business terms but also in terms of societal implications. Hence 66% of the respondents disagreed with the philosophy that "advertising's sole justification should be returning a profit to the advertiser."

About 49% of the respondents agreed that advertisers should be held responsible for the effects of the products which advertising promoted. Finally, the authors felt that an important related element within the changing environment was consumerism - about four out of every five persons sampled thought that "consumerism will lead to major modifications in advertising content."

The 1973 data show some improvement in businessmen's opinions of advertising's "truth quotient," but a majority still adopted an anti-advertising stance. One must look at the data derived from two versions of the question, as shown in Table (2-14) in order to get a clear picture, particularly of the strong degree of disagreement with the positive version of the statements provided.

Table (2-14): Perceptions of Truthfulness in Advertising

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Uncertain can't say	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Base:	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K
<u>Form of Statement:</u>	%	%	%	%	%
In general, advertisements present a true picture of the product advertised	2	27	8	45	18
In general, advertisements do not present a true picture of the product advertised	11	37	8	37	7

Source: Greyser, S and Diamond S "Consumerism and Advertising: A US Management Perspective," Harvard Business Review, March-April 1972, p6.

Note: N/K = Not known

On the matter of advertising's truthfulness, businessmen appear to take a somewhat stronger anti-advertising position than do the American public at large. An Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) 1974 study (based on a national probability sample of US adults age 18 and over) revealed that some 51% of the American public said they found advertising "believable," and 47% said "unbelievable." [120]

Executives' opinions as to the truthfulness in advertising were also probed in terms of perceived trends, ie. truthfulness in advertising today as against ten years ago, and today as against ten years from now. Table (2-15) shows these results:-

Table (2-15): Perceived Trends in "Truthfulness" in Advertising

	Vs. 10 years ago	Vs. 10 years from now
Base:	1588	1588
<u>Form of Statement:</u>	%	%
Much better today	9	4
A little better today	38	11
About the same	30	27
A little worse today	17	47
Much worse today	6	11

Source: Ibid, p6

As the figures suggest, there is a feeling of modest progress in the past decade, and an anticipation of considerably greater progress in the decade ahead. A point of interest is the fact that 23% of businessmen think that the level of truthfulness in advertising today is worse than it was ten years ago.

This same set of questions was asked with regard to four other aspects of the marketplace - product quality, quality of repairs and maintenance, manufacturer sensitivity to consumer complaints, and the consumer's lot in general. Relative to others, advertising's truthfulness is considered by executives to have shown less improvement than all except the quality of repair and maintenance services [121].

THE 1976 STUDY

In 1976, an advertising attitude study titled "Consumerism and Advertising: A US Management Perspective" was conducted by Greyser and Diamond [122]. The researchers summarised the findings of their study as follows:-

- (1) The consumer perception that the product performance did not live up to the product claims was cited by the executives as a very important cause in consumerism's growth. Businessmen ranked in second place. "consumers feeling a growing gap between product performance and marketing claims." Clearly, businessmen think that advertising's exaggeration of products is a very important contributor to consumerism's growth.
- (2) While citing "more informative advertising" as only a modest priority among all constructive company consumer programmes, they nonetheless favoured changes in advertising content and thought that advertisers should attempt to present product weaknesses as well as the product strengths in the advertising message. There was executive support for the general notion that marketers should make a sincere effort to point out the failings and limitations of their products as well as their strengths (62% agree). Indeed, this is an explicit call for more variation in the product claim with which the present study is concerned.
- (3) All executives agreed that consumerism was having and would continue to have a major impact on advertising.
- (4) The truthfulness of advertising was focused on by businessmen as a problem. In this regard a high proportion of executive opinion was in agreement with

the idea that advertising should include adequate information for "logical" buying decisions, whether or not consumers choose to use it.

In conclusion, then, with regard to the American businessmen's attitudes to advertising, it could be said that they did not have any intensive dislike of advertising. They stated that advertising was essential to business and showed respect for its economic role. However, they disapproved of its effect in the social area - taste, deception, and its effect on children. They called for codes of practice and for self-regulation within the advertising industry, with emphasis placed on a public information campaign on advertising. Finally, they felt that the consumer could hurt the advertising industry.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this Chapter, an attempt has been made to introduce advertising as a distinct form of mass communication, and to assess the public attitude towards it. The objective has been to review the literature which outlines the basic aspects of advertising, and its role in current marketing.

First, the definitions of advertising as a distinctive promotional form were discussed, then the boundaries of advertising which distinguish it from other forms of communication were drawn. Advertising was distinguished from other forms of mass communication such as publicity, public relations and sales promotion.

The discussion then turned to the content of advertising, in which three controversial issues were discussed; information versus persuasion, deception, and manipulation. In dealing with the first of them, two perspectives were presented. The first differentiated persuasive and informative advertising and identified relevant distinguishing criteria. However, the conclusion was that the dichotomy was false because all advertising has the same objective - persuading people to buy.

The second controversial issue was deception in advertising content. In analysing this issue, several views were discussed. It was concluded that the principal issue was that advertising does not provide a true picture of the products advertised, and this was the theme underlying most of the current criticism. The third issue discussed was the manipulation by advertising, and in particular, whether advertising can manipulate the consumer to make choice decisions against his best interests. It was argued that advertising alone cannot influence the individual's behaviour, and that factors such as family, peers, religion and the individual's resistance to persuasion are all important.

The hierarchy of effects models were mentioned as a theoretical framework of support for this argument.

In the light of the massive wave of criticism directed against advertising, it was found necessary to assess the public's attitude to it. Several surveys conducted in the UK and the USA were analysed, concluding with the drawing of some comparisons.

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CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUALISING THE PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

CHAPTER THREE**CONCEPTUALISING THE PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION PROCESS****INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, it was concluded that advertising is a mass communication form which aims at persuading consumers to buy the product or service advertised. Therefore, persuasive communication is the core of the advertising process.

It is assumed then that advertising effectiveness depends to a large extent upon persuasive messages. Thus, it seems appropriate to examine the persuasive communication process in order to obtain a better understanding of the mechanism through which advertising works.

The discussion in this chapter can be outlined as follows:-

- (1) Definition of communication.
- (2) Structure of the communication process.
- (3) Modelling the communication process.
- (4) Persuasive communication processes.
- (5) Communication approaches to persuasion.
- (6) Factors influencing the persuasive communication.
- (7) Cognitive dissonance and the communication process.
- (8) Summary and conclusion.

SECTION 1: DEFINITION OF COMMUNICATION

It has been argued that the nature of communication permits a wide variety of interpretations and so encompasses many divergent viewpoints. A search of the relevant literature reveals that there is no commonly accepted definition of communication, textbooks often providing a variety of definitions. This variation may be due to the fact that communication underlies all social activity, and that this universality makes it at the same time very familiar and yet difficult to define in any way that is not so general as to be virtually empty of meaning or incapable of representing the great diversity of possible connotations.

However, at a basic level, most writers agree that communication is "the transmission of a message from a sender to a receiver by means of a signal of some sort sent through a channel of some sort." [1]

In fact, this definition leaves us with too many unanswered questions. What type of message does the communicator (sender) wish to convey? Has he put it into a format that conveys his precise meaning? Through what medium is the message transmitted? Does his intended audience have access to this channel (medium)? Can the message surmount the psychological barriers that invariably surround all human receivers? Will the audience understand the message in the way the sender intended? And finally, how does the sender know if communication has taken place, and if it does, what kind of effect has it produced?

These questions have led scholars in the field to try to achieve more deeper insights into the dimensions and the implications of the communication concept.

Many attempts have been made to define the communication concept. DeLozier [2] indicated that the word "communication" is originally derived from the Latin term "communis," which translated means "common." Within this context, the word communication implies the meaning of sharing. In this sense, Schramm [3] defined communication as "the process of establishing a commonness or oneness of thought between a sender and a receiver." By this definition, sharing of thoughts is the central dimension in the communication process.

Three major conclusions can be derived from Schramm's definition: First, communication is a process and as such has components and interrelationships which can be modelled and examined in a structured manner. Second, there must be a transfer of information from the sender to the receiver, and this information is assumed to contribute to the development of the shared thought between the participants in the communication process. Third, communication is based on a relationship which may exist between two persons, or between one person and many others.

In a more general sense, Osgood [4] suggested that communication occurs when "one system, a source, influences another, the destination, by manipulation of alternative signals which can be transmitted over the channel connecting them."

As the definition suggests, the central element in the communication is that it is based upon the idea of influence or effect, rather than a transfer of anything. This implies that any communication attempt must have an intended effect expected by the communicator. The salient weakness of this definition is that it views the receiver as a passive participant in the communication process, an assumption which invites considerable criticism if communication is regarded as a mutual interactive process.

Shannon and Weaver [5] shared with Osgood the idea of influence. They indicated that the term communication is used in a very broad sense to include "all the procedures by which one mind may affect another."

In this definition Shannon and Weaver admit that influence is a two-way process, that is, that both source and receiver influence the process, but the outcome is the influence exerted from one side to the other. More than this, the receiver plays a determinant role in this outcome.*

Hanneman [6] viewed the communication process in a broader context, describing the communication process as follows:-

"A certain person (A) ("Source") communicates a certain message, through a particular channel to another person (B) ("receiver") with some type of consequent effect."

The author added:-

"This effect is recognised and interpreted by the sender (source), who responds accordingly to which the receiver responds accordingly as well."

Again, although Hanneman explicitly acknowledged that communication is an influence-bearing process, he emphasised the role of the receiver in the process. From Hanneman's point of view, the outcome of the communication is determined by the receiver's recognition and interpretation which influences the manner in which the communicator addresses the receiver.

* The view of Shannon and Weaver will be dealt with in more detail later in a discussion of their model.

Hanneman labelled this pattern of interaction a "communication transaction." However, it could be said that Hanneman's definition dealt with communication as a dyad relationship situation.

Dunn and Barban [7] viewed communication as a concept that "focuses on the process by which messages are transferred to a target audience." They indicated that some communication is intentional, but a great deal of it is not. They added that the essential element in communication is "the transfer of meanings which are influenced by the context in which they are spoken, by the relationship between the sender and receiver, and by many variables."

In fact, this view places the communication process in a very complicated context. As McQuail [8] stated:-

"When we act in a socially meaningful way, we are transmitting meaning to a participant or observer and usually engaging in a very complex exchange of meaning, even where this is not our conscious intention."

Ross [9] operationally defined communication as "a transactional process involving a cognitive sorting, selecting, and sharing of symbols, in such a way as to help another elicit from his own experiences a meaning or response similar to that intended by the source." This definition suggests two important ideas. First, that communication is a process of mutual influence aiming at the achievement of a shared set of thoughts and second, that communication has a persuasive dimension.

Considering the above variation in the formulation of definitions, it could be concluded that there are broadly two types of definition of communication. The first sees it as a

process by which a sender sends a certain message to a receiver who is expected to be influenced by the content of the message. Within the context of this type of definition, communication is viewed as an influence-bearing process. The second sees it as a negotiation and exchange of meaning, in which messages, people-in-cultures and "reality" interact so as to enable meaning to be produced or understanding to occur.

As stated by O'Sullivan and his associates [10], the aim of the first type of definition is to identify the stages through which communication passes so that each one may be properly studied and its role in and effect upon the whole process clearly identified. The second approach in defining communication is structuralist in that it focuses on the relationship between the constituent elements required for meaning to occur. Within the context of this approach, communication involves a mutual exchange of information or influence based on negotiation and reciprocity. In this sense, communication is a dynamic process of transaction which suggests that both receiver and source have an influential role in the communication process.

Our view is that communication is:-

a process through which a meaningful message (verbal or non-verbal), is transferred by a certain person, to another person(s) upon whom the content of the message may or may not have an effect. When the originator of the communication decides to communicate, he may choose to send his message directly in a face-to-face communication (personal communication), or through non-personal communication. Upon the reception and attention of the message, the receiver decodes the content of the message and interprets its conclusions according to his value system. To the extent that the conclusions drawn by the receiver are similar to those

intended by the source, the content of the message becomes a common-shared value between the source and the receiver of the message.

This view is sufficiently broad to include many kinds of communication situations and it acknowledges the basic elements of the communication process, the sender, the message, the channel (medium), and the receiver, as being capable of producing an expected effect of some sort. These elements will be thoroughly discussed within the context of the present study.

To this end, we turn to discuss the nature of communication as it is viewed by scholars in different fields. This will be the focus of the next section.

SECTION 2: STRUCTURE OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

In the previous section an attempt has been made to define communication. This section deals with the structure of the communication process, ie. its basic components.

Of significant importance is Lasswell's [11] description of the act of communication. This author contributed so much to structuring the thinking of a whole generation of communication scholars. His description contains his well-known formula for describing communication - who, says what, in which channel, to whom, and with what effect?

The first question refers to the communicator (source, sponsor, or presenter), the second to the message (its structure and content), the third to the media (channel), and the fourth to the audience. The final question "with what effect?" is not a separate factor but a result of the other factors.

Thus, it seems clear that in almost all communication, there are four basic components: a source, a message, a channel and a destination.

However, it should be noted that, while this separation "tends to mask the interrelated nature of the process element," [12] it is useful for the purpose of analysis.

THE SOURCE

The source of a communication is the initiator of the message [13]. In this sense, he is the point of origin of an act of communication. In this capacity he is not only an integral component of the communication process itself but also a vital influence on the impact of the communication message [14].

The communicator (source) need not be a single individual, but could be a group or collective entity (a newspaper, a legislative body, or a formal organisation). It is worth noting that a communicator is also a receiver although, in formally organised communication systems, the role of communicator and receiver may be separately defined. And even in informal communication systems the distribution of roles of sender and receiver of messages tends to be socially regulated and related to the general distribution of values and power in the particular social context [15].

The sources of communication can be classified according to the type of communication. Schiffman and Kanuk [16] distinguished between two basic types of sources: (1) sources of interpersonal communication, and (2) impersonal sources of communication. The former may be either formal or informal. Informal sources include family, friends, fellow employees, and the like, who speak with the receiver regularly or irregularly and may, in the course of the conversation, impart product or service information. Formal interpersonal sources include representatives of formal organisations, such as salesmen, company spokesmen, or political candidates.

On the other hand, impersonal sources of communication are usually organisations - either commercial or non-commercial - such as manufacturers, service companies or institutions who want to promote an idea, a product, a service, or an organisational image to the consumer. Such organisations generally use impersonal media and they sometimes use such impersonal media as direct mail or sales promotion techniques (eg. coupons, or sample distribution) to transmit intended messages.

It is worth mentioning that the source of communication may be identified, identifiable or anonymous. The first two will normally consist of an endorser who is usually a recognised

authority on the subject, a celebrity, a member of a peer group, or an originator (company). The anonymous source may be associated with message coming only from the company (originator). The endorser and the originator could be combined together to form what is normally classified as the source [17].

When the source decides to communicate, he begins encoding his message, ie. the source translates what he wants to say into words that will have the same meaning to the receiver. DeLozier [18] defined the encoding as "the process of taking a specific thought and putting it into a code." Within this context, the process involves matching thought with previously learned elements of a code for the purpose of expressing thought. Encoding, then, is the process through which the thought is symbolised in a way likely to be understood by the receiver.

While there is some confusion among scholars as to exactly how and when the encoding event takes place, it is useful to think of it sequentially [19]. It must be described in terms of searching, comparing, identifying and finally labelling.

It must be stated that much of the communicator's ability to communicate efficiently depends upon the extent to which the communicator's message contains the set of meanings which might be shared with the receiver. "If this occurred, communication would be perfectly congruent. However, complete congruence between the source and the receiver is unlikely, except in the case of very trivial messages. Thus, perfectly accurate communication will seldom or never exist." [20] Incongruence has been defined by DeFleur and Rokeach [21] as "any reduction in the correspondence between the trace configuration of the communicator (source) and those used in interpreting the message

on the part of the receiver."*

Thus, to establish the common-sharing meanings with the receiver, the source must find some way or ways to encode his message so that it will accurately convey his feelings to the intended audience [22]. He may use words, or pictures, or a facial expression, or some other kind of signal or code, but he must use some means that is familiar to the receiver and congruent with the realm of his own experience.

THE MESSAGE

The message is often considered the most vital component of all in the communication process. O'Sullivan and his associates [23] defined message as "that which is transmitted in the process of communication; the means by which the sender affects the receiver." They added that the message is seen as "an embryonic" content that exists before the encoding and after the decoding; encoding translates it into a form in which it can be transmitted, while decoding translates it back to its original state (provided that encoding, decoding and transmission have all worked at maximum efficiency).

"Message" is frequently used interchangeably with the term "text." Despite this frequent interchangeability, there are differences between the two terms and maintaining or even extending such differences is worthwhile. O'Sullivan and his associates distinguished between the two terms. They stated

* Incongruence will be dealt with in more detail in our discussion of noise in the communication process.

that the term "text" usually refers to a message that has a physical existence of its own, independent of its sender or receiver, and thus composed of representational codes (eg. books, records, letters, etc). By contrast, a gesture or facial expression sends a message, it does not produce a text. On the other hand, the term message tends to be used by those working in the communications field, by sociologists and psychologists and engineers, and is used with the simple definition of "that which is transmitted." Text on the other hand, is derived more from semiotics or linguistics, and thus implies the definition "that which is central to the generation and exchange of meaning." A text, then, consists of a network of codes working on a number of levels and is thus capable of producing a variety of meanings according to the socio-cultural experience of the reader.

Schiffman and Kanuk [24] defined the message as "the thought, idea, attitude, image, or other information that the sender wishes to convey to his intended audience." They added that in trying to encode the message in a form that will enable his audience to understand his precise meaning, the source must clearly recognise exactly what he is trying to say and why he is saying it; in other words, what his objectives are and what he expects the message to accomplish.

Within the advertising communication context, Percy and Rossiter [25] described the good message as one that reflects "a motivating strategy based upon a thorough understanding of the environment in which an advertised product or brand is used, as well as the attitudes, behaviour, and background characteristics of the target receiver."

In the same spirit, Ray [26] emphasised the importance of the message. He asserted that if the message idea is outstanding, then the effect of the other parts of the marketing communication mix will be multiplied.

Schramm [27] viewed the message within an intentional context. He stated that the message "is merely a collection of signs intended to evoke certain culturally learned responses, it being understood that the responses will be powerfully affected by the cultural experience, the psychological make-up, and the situation of any receiver."

In trying to answer the question, how a message can achieve the desired objectives, Schramm [28] proposed four major prerequisites for the message to succeed in arousing its intended response. These are:-

- (1) The message must be so designed and delivered as to gain the attention of the intended destination.
- (2) The message must use signs which refer to experiences common to both source and receiver, so as to establish the shared meaning.
- (3) The message must address itself to the personality needs of the receiver and suggest some means to meet those needs.
- (4) The message must suggest a way to meet those needs which is appropriate to the group situation in which the receiver finds himself at the time when he is moved to make the desired response.

In fact, much of the ability of the message to induce the intended response lies in its creative idea and its format (the way the message is stated). The balance between these two aspects is important and must be maintained in developing a realistic and effective message [29].

"The communication message must be developed within a sign system familiar to both source and receiver." [30] The sign system can take two basic forms. The most common is verbal, the other non-verbal. DeLozier [31] distinguished between the two forms, stating that the verbal form is "a formalised system designed by people over the ages," while the non-verbal form is generally less formalised and usually quite subtle. He added that the verbal form, known as language, has a formal set of rules and methods, and it normally starts with a basic set of cues, such as an alphabet, which is used to form a large number of words in a language.

However, there are many non-verbal signs which people use to express emotion and thought, such as smiles, tears, gestures and body movements. In addition, Geldard [32] discussed the area of tactile communication (communication by touch) and how it can be used to communicate precise and detailed information.

THE CHANNEL (MEDIUM)

Once a message is formed, it must be transmitted through a channel or medium of transmission. The channel is the link that links the source of the communication with his intended destination [33]. It is the path through which a message moves from the sender to its destination (audience). When the source wishes to transmit his message, he may choose a personal channel (personal selling or word-of-mouth), or impersonal channel (mass media).

Scholars who followed Laswell's [34] analysis in terms of who says what to whom, how, and with what effect, generally specify the "how" as referring to the channel - the media through which a message is presented.

Koontz [35] indicated that "communication channels occur in an almost infinite variety of types, and the communicator is often free to choose from among several channel types for a given situation."

Thus, there are so many different categories of media available today and so many media alternatives available within each category that individuals tend "to develop their own special media habits." [36]

Baker [37] suggested that because there are so many similar media, the channel-choice decision is a difficult one. However, he argued that "it is the message which must be selected first and this will help identify the most appropriate medium to reach the target audience."

In general, two basic types of channels can be distinguished: personal channels and non-personal channels [38]. The personal channels include all face-to-face communication situations, while non-personal channels embrace all media through which messages are transmitted without face-to-face communication, eg. the press, television, radio, etc.

Nevertheless, the channel-choice decision is regarded as an important one. This is because "it has implications for the type of encoding-decoding required, as well as the ultimate success of the communication effort. However, the channel-choice decision is not always the result of a rational logical process. Indeed, it is not always a conscious decision." [39]

Webster [40] argued that "different media have different levels of effectiveness as a function of the type of response desired from the receiver, and the stage in the product life cycle."

The issue of the selection of media has been investigated by scholars in the field, who concentrated on identifying a set of media objectives and strategies; however, "the bulk of a media planner's efforts go into the selection of media vehicles within the selected media." [41]

The criteria of media choice constituted the focus of the scholars' efforts. For instance, the proper selection of the media can be achieved by choosing a "channel that has direct access to the receiver, and is relatively free of distortion and static." [42] Also, DeLozier [43] suggested that the channel employed has an effect upon how a message is received. Therefore, channel-choice decisions should be made in view of the purposes and constraints involved in each situation.

Of significant importance is Schramm's [44] analysis of the criteria (variables) that are considered in the selection of media. The author offered six contrasting non-personal and personal variables which affect communication. These are:-

- (1) The senses affected - whenever anything is interposed in communication, some restriction is put on the use of the senses. It is therefore essential to understand how different senses are affected by different communication media. For example, television is an audio-visual medium in which both eyes and ears are utilised; radio is an audio medium in which only the ear is involved; and print media only involves the eye. Face-to-face communication can, of course, stimulate all the senses. Thus, media planners have to make a selection guided by these considerations.

- (2) The opportunity of feedback - this is of course maximal in face-to-face communication. However, it exists indirectly in mass media communication.
- (3) The amount of receiver's control. This is a more important characteristic in the mass media. While a receiver has more freedom of choice in relation to the mass media, he has somewhat less control in a face-to-face communication. In other words, a receiver exposes himself selectively to various mass media. Reading a magazine or newspaper, the receiver has the opportunity to choose which points of particular interest he wishes to study while he has less opportunity to do so in face-to-face communication.
- (4) The type of message - coding. As remarked by Schramm [45], this characteristic is concerned with the availability of non-verbal information to the receiver. Obviously, face-to-face communication offers the highest probability for the effects of non-verbal encoding of cultural remarks, gestures, or body movements. To a lesser degree, television would follow, then radio and the press.
- (5) Consideration of the multiplicative power of a media is less a conceptual than a practical aspect. All mass media, compared with face-to-face communication, have the ability to reach great numbers of people over vast distances.
- (6) Schramm's final point, that of the power of message preservation, is again a rather obvious classification criterion. In this regard, print media compared with the other media offers a certain permanence for a communication message.

Crane [46] suggested that there are at least seven dimensions characteristic of media-choice: audience selectivity, existence in space or time, permanence, intrusiveness, concurrent symbol systems, sensory modality, and universality. In practical situations, the first three would be considered by a media planner in one way or another. "Intrusiveness" and "concurrent symbol systems" would be more likely to be subsumed by all involved in media selection approval, ie. the advertiser and agency account, media, and creative personnel. It is worth briefly discussing each of these criteria.

Dealing with the selection of media vehicles, Crane suggested that the media planner must answer five questions in making the selection decision: exposure v. impact, reach v. frequency, continuity v. mass frequency, select v. mass audience, and the degree of choice. The author added that "answers to the first four questions should be available from the media objectives and strategy; yet, in addition, each candidate media vehicle would still need to be evaluated on its performance in delivering the answer to each question. The fifth question is more unique to the media vehicle selection decision."

Discussing the uniqueness of the fifth question, Crane reminded us of the notion that the more freedom a receiver has to reject or ignore a media vehicle, the more impact the vehicles he does select will be likely to have. Indeed, these general criteria advanced by both Schramm and Crane provide the media planner (source of communication) with sufficient knowledge which enables him to make his best decision about the media through which he wishes his message to be passed. However, too often "selecting the media vehicle involves a great deal of subjectivity." [47]

THE AUDIENCE

The audience is the target towards which the message is directed. Once a sender has placed his message into a channel and directed it towards his intended destination, the completion of the communication task is dependent upon the activity of the receiver. [48]

However, the term "receiver" is in many ways misleading [49]. It has a very restricted connotation, implying as it does a passive role, one defined primarily in terms of reaction or response. It also appears to represent a role defined largely in terms of the expectations of the communicator and hence lacking in autonomy, as if it could not exist apart from a sender.

The concept of the passive audience is no longer adequate. If we are able to understand the communication process, the concept must be extended beyond this view of the audience.

Ross [50] described the communication as a transaction process which involves "a commonality of experience and a mutuality of influence." Raymond Bauer [51] wrote about "the obstinate audience." He indicated that what people select from communication, and what they remember, often depends on the use they expect to have to make of the content. In other words, the audience simply would not act like a target. Within this context, a receiver selects among the stimuli available to him, selects from the content of the message what he chooses to accept, interprets it and disposes of it in a way that he considers appropriate. Within the context of communication as a mutual interaction process, the audience plays an active role in determining the outcome of the communication. "At the same time a source is sending a message, the source is being influenced by the actions of the receiver for whom the message is intended." [52]

Davison [53] emphasised the role of the audience in the communication process. His comment is worth stating in full:-

"The communicator's audience is not a passive recipient - it cannot be regarded as a lump of clay to be moulded by the master propagandist. Rather, the audience is made up of individuals who demand something from the communications to which they are exposed, and who select those that are likely to be useful to them. In other words, they must get something from the manipulator if he is to get something from them. A bargain is involved."

In fact, Davison did not contend that all exchanges are equitable, but that the inequities may be on either side. He only implied that neither the audience nor the communicator would enter into this exchange process unless each party expected to "get his money's worth."

The above discussion leads us to conclude that the audience has a crucial role in determining communication effectiveness. Without the audience, the message is really sent into a vacuum.

On the other hand, to communicate effectively, the source must encode his message in such a way that the audience can interpret (decode) it. Indeed, this is an important stage in the communication process. To the extent that the source is familiar with the audience he would be able to symbolise the message in a way that can be easily processed by the receiver. In other words, the receiver will be able to interpret the content of the message and draw the conclusions desired by the source.

The similarity of meaning which the source and the receiver will perceive in a message depends on finding an area where the perceptual field of the two people is sufficiently similar that

they can share the same meanings efficiently. [54]

Accordingly, "accurate communication can only occur when both source and receiver attach the same or at least similar meanings to the symbols" [55]. Thus, the shared language between people who belong to the same culture enables them to communicate efficiently. It follows that communication is not complete unless it is understood. So, when the source directs his message to an audience, he must be certain that the receiver understands what he is saying.

However, the communication process is always constrained by some barriers (physical, biological, social, psychological, cultural, etc.), which lead to a state of incongruence in the communication and hinder its successful completion. In the following part, we shall discuss the problem of incongruence and its major causes.

INCONGRUENCE IN COMMUNICATION

DeFleur and Rokeach [56] defined incongruence in communication as "any reduction in the correspondence between the trace configuration of the communicator and those used in interpreting the message on the part of the receiver." In other words, incongruence occurs when the meaning experience of the source differs from the meaning experience of the receiver.

The opposite state of incongruence is the perfect congruent communication, which is another way of saying "perfect accuracy." This latter term has been labelled "fidelity," which in a communication sense refers to the accuracy, clarity, or faithfulness with which the sender's thought is reproduced in the mind of a receiver [57].

However, perfectly accurate communication will seldom or never exist [58]. This suggests that communication is always disrupted by some factors (barriers) which reduce the similarity of meanings which exist between communicator and receiver, and lead to the state of incongruence [59]. Indeed, the shared understanding between the source and the receiver can be influenced by the degree of trust and confidence between them.

This mutual trust and confidence has a considerable effect on the communication process. "The key ingredient that allows communication processes to work is a relationship of mutual confidence and trust between information senders and receivers. When such a relationship exists, senders have a "feel" for when they are understood, and receivers know that questions are allowed and other forms of receiver response are encouraged, when the receiver feels they are necessary." [60]

It follows that the communicator must understand those personal characteristics of receivers that operate to facilitate or hinder the acceptance of communication messages. In this regard, Schiffman and Kanuk [61] named three types of barriers to communication which are related to the audience. These are: selective attention, selective perception, and selective appeal. These will be discussed in more detail in the next part - Barriers to Communication.

BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

DeLozier [62] stated that "fidelity and noise are at two ends of the same continuum and are inversely related. As noise increases, fidelity decreases, and vice versa." Noise in communication proceeds from several sources which constitute major barriers in the communication process. In general, noise can be either mechanical (physical) or psychological [63]. These two kinds of noise are to be discussed as follows:-

MECHANICAL (PHYSICAL) NOISE

Mechanical noise can result from causes such as dim light, disruptive sounds, static on a telephone or on a radio, malfunctioning circuitry, or any similar condition that interferes with the transferring of information. The best way for a sender to overcome this kind of noise is simply to repeat the message several times [64] or by improving technical preparation for the communication. No less a barrier to message reception is psychological noise.

PSYCHOLOGICAL NOISE (OR PERCEPTUAL SELECTIVITY)

Schiffman and Kanuk [65] distinguished between three kinds of barriers that serve to impair the reception of communication messages. These barriers are: selective attention, selective perception and selective appeal.

With respect to the first barrier - selective attention - it could be said that individuals tend to give their attention selectively to those messages that are in their area of interest or experience. For example, a woman whose youngest child has gone off to college might look for announcements of women's

vocational programmes or employment opportunities, while ignoring advertisements for new furniture [66]. People thus seek information about topics in which they are interested or which relate to their way of life and they ignore information concerning matters in which they have no interest. To the extent that the communicator can formulate messages in a context with which his target audience can identify or which will be of general interest to them, he can reduce the incongruence between himself and his audience.

Regarding selectivity of perception, a person will expose himself to those messages in which he is specifically interested, and avoid dissonant or discordant messages. People tend to seek information that agrees with their beliefs, attitudes and socio-cultural systems [67]. A person who has a positive attitude towards himself will reflect that attitude in his communication with other people in order to increase the likelihood of gaining a favourable response.

Another set of factors affecting the congruity of communication is the socio-cultural system within which the sender and receiver operate, i.e. a person's roles, role expectations, social class, family, reference groups, and sub-cultural backgrounds affect the way in which he sends or receives messages [68].

Finally, selective appeal. According to this barrier, individuals are motivated to satisfy their own needs, wants, and desires [69]. Research indicates that an individual selects only those stimuli from his environment which are consistent with his interests, needs and goals [70]. Thus, for the communicator to penetrate the perceptual arena of the receiver, he must formulate his message in such a way as to address the receiver's needs and wants. "Messages that address the receiver's specific problems and concerns or tell him how to fulfil his special needs generally receive his close attention; in contrast, messages not

related to the receiver's specific needs are usually ignored." [71].

In general, noise can occur in any component of the communication process. This can be attributed to various causes, the most important of which are summarised by Koontz and his associates [72] as follows:-

- (1) Inaccurate reception which may be caused by inattention.
- (2) Encoding may be faulty because of the use of ambiguous symbols.
- (3) Transmission may be interrupted by static in the channel, such as may be experienced in a poor telephone connection.
- (4) Decoding may be faulty because the wrong meaning may be attached to words and other symbols.
- (5) Understanding can be obstructed by prejudices.
- (6) Desired change may not occur because of fear of possible consequences of the change.

Having discussed the barriers which constitute the major sources of noise in the communication process, we now turn to the question of how to overcome these barriers and induce the state of congruity in communication. This will be the focus of the next section.

REDUCING INCONGRUENCE THROUGH FEEDBACK

The discussion above has described the barriers which usually impair the communication process and how they influence the outcome of the communication, ie. how they reduce the effectiveness of communication.

Feedback has been suggested as a means by which incongruence between the source and the receiver of the communication message may be reduced. Bettinghaus [73] defined feedback as "any information that the source gains from receivers about the probable reception of the message." Feedback is "just as important a concept in mass communication as it is in interpersonal (face-to-face) communication." [74]

In DeLozier's [75] view, the feedback element recognises the two-way nature of the communication process. It highlights the fact that in reality individuals are both senders and receivers and interact with each other continually. DeLozier also added that "The feedback element affords the sender of the original message a way of monitoring how accurately his message is being received. Upon receiving feedback the sender can determine whether the message hit the target accurately or must be altered to evoke a clearer picture in the receiver's mind. Thus, the feedback mechanism gives the sender some measure of control in the communication process."

DeFleur and Rokeach [76] stated that feedback is essentially "a reverse communication process initiated by the receiver and directed back toward the communicator. It may be largely non-verbal, largely verbal, or both." They added that feedback is usually provided on an ongoing basis in such a way that it can

have a substantial influence on message formulation by the source. Moreover, Hanneman [77] viewed feedback as representing the interaction between the source and the receiver. He labelled this process a "communication transaction."

In a more deliberative tone, Ross [78] discussed the term "feedback" as referring to "some of the transmitted energy being returned to the source." The author extended the concept of feedback to human communication. He argued that "we may think of feedback as useful in a self-correcting sense, or perhaps we should say audience-adapting sense. As our transmitted signal is bounced off our receiver, it feeds back information that allows us to correct and refine our signal." Although Ross was talking about feedback within the context of interpersonal communication, the concept of feedback can be generalised to apply to all kinds of communication.

Thus, as these writers suggested, feedback plays an influential role in completing the communication process effectively. It provides the source with the mechanism which enables him to take the tactical steps required to make his message acceptable to the receiver. Feedback therefore tells us how well we have done (or are doing) in our attempt to share thought with others. "It provides us with the information necessary to decide whether to modify our message or terminate further transmission." [79]. It is a means by which the communicator "can guide his further communication and try to repair the damage, if any." [80]

In almost all the communication situations in which incongruence between the communicator and the receiver exists, feedback is the mechanism by which the perceptual conflict (incongruence) between both people can be resolved. In other words, when a discrepancy exists between the intended and actual response, the discrepancy

serves as an external stimulus to the sender's perceptual field prompting him to continue transmitting messages to reduce the discrepancy [81]. In this sense, the feedback enables the communicator to discover the discrepancy (incongruence), and to modify his strategy in his approach to his audience.

When the communicator reduces incongruence by interpreting feedback cues correctly and adjusting message content to achieve greater accuracy, he is engaging in what is referred to as role-taking. In the present analysis, role-taking is "a process by which the communicator assesses which configurations of meaning for given symbols will arouse parallel configurations in the experience of the receiver." [82]. In more simple terms, role-taking means that the user of a significant symbol must make certain assumptions about those towards whom the symbol is directed. "Those who wish to communicate effectively (to influence the behaviour of others) through the use of significant symbols must anticipate and forecast what adjustive responses will be called out when that other person apprehends the symbol." [83]

Thus, in assuming the role of the receiver, the communicator must consciously predict the understanding of the receiver towards whom the communication is directed.

The main conclusion which can be drawn from the discussion above is that the greater the amount of feedback provided, the more effective the communicator's role-taking activity. This in turn implies that less incongruence will result from the communication.

The opportunity for feedback in interpersonal (face-to-face) communication is immediate and maximal. "It is the factor that makes personal selling so effective. It enables the salesman to tailor his sales appeal to the expressed needs and the observed

reactions of each prospect." [84]

However, feedback is just as important a concept in mass communication as it is in interpersonal communication. However, mass communication feedback does not have the timeliness of interpersonal feedback; instead, it is usually somewhat delayed and rarely direct. Indeed, it is inferential [85], that is, the source infers how effective his message was from the resulting action (or inaction) of the receiver.

In interposed situations, however, where feedback cannot be obtained, sources must develop delayed feedback techniques in order to help prepare subsequent messages [86]. Ideally, communicators should be able to structure the communication situation to allow for feedback during the presentation of a message.

A final point in our discussion of feedback is that decisions made about feedback may determine the structure of the overall presentation. Some of the aspects that are important to consider include the following:-

- (1) The intent of the communicator. If the aim is to arouse emotions or to attract attention to an issue, there is less need for high quality feedback than there is when the intention is to change the overt mode of behaviour of the audience members.
- (2) The type of receivers involved. In communication situations where the audience is friendly, and the purpose of the communicator is to reinforce existing attitudes, there is little need for elaborate feedback systems. On the other hand, if the audience which the communicator faces is hostile and the intention of the communicator is to induce a drastic change in their

attitude or behaviour, the communicator must have an elaborate feedback mechanism.

- (3) The presence of opposition. When there are opposing communicators operating within the situation, the necessity for feedback increases. Without feedback, it becomes difficult to judge the effect of the opposing arguments on an audience or to assess the strength of the attitude change that the opposition might have been able to generate.
- (4) The opportunity for additional methods of contact with the audience. If the audience does not understand the message the first time, repetition may be the only way of helping to compensate for a lack of feedback. This principle is usually employed in advertising where the sponsor cannot be sure that any message was received at its first presentation.
- (5) The degree of similarity between the source and the receiver. Communication is easier when the source and the receiver have similar characteristics and backgrounds. On the other hand, communication becomes far more difficult when the audience members have vastly different educational backgrounds, or belong to a different culture. The problem of communicating with such an audience is closely tied to the ability to use feedback.

However, the preceding discussion fails to convey the involved nature of the feedback concept, as it occurs in real human communication situations. As Wofford [88] stated "Effective feedback is not simply a matter of providing the physical channel. Just as is the case for the primary channel, consideration must be given to such matters as motivation,

emotional states, and the specific interpersonal relationships which exist between those who are attempting to communicate." In feedback too, there are such phenomena as semantic noise, intrinsic information, symbolic information, and so on [89].

Our view is that the opportunity to obtain feedback may be extremely important to the eventual success of any communication act. The communicator should take care in planning the situation in order to produce as far as possible the conditions that will be best suited to his objectives.

In the next section, an attempt to shed some light on the dynamics of the communication process will be made. To this end, the discussion now turns to examine some significant attempts to devise models of the communication process.

SECTION 3: MODELLING THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

The study of communication over the last three decades has produced a number of attempts to represent the basic elements of the communication process and the hypothesised relationships in a specific model. However, it is not proposed in this discussion to give an exhaustive account of such attempts nor to evaluate them. Instead, the major purpose of our discussion here is to indicate the major landmarks in the development of the conceptual thinking about the communication process.

Scholars have varied their approach in attempting to provide models of the communication process. As a result, models of this process assume many forms. They may be verbal, non-verbal or mathematical. The differences in the models provided can be attributed to the different uses intended by their creators [90].

Some models are useful for conceptualising a process, others for guiding research. For the purpose of the present study, the major attempts to model the communication process will be examined as follows:-

SIMPLE MODELS OF COMMUNICATION

At a basic level, most writers agree that human communication is to be considered as the sending of a meaningful message from one person to another. Such a simple view of the communication process includes by implication all the essential elements that comprise the communication process; a sender (communicator), the message, the receiver, and a relationship between them [91]. As depicted by such a model, the source (the sender) is a person or group of people having a thought to share with someone else. The second component in this model, the message, is "a symbolic

expression of a sender's thought" [92]. Finally, the destination (or receiver) is the person or group of people to whom the message is directed.

This unsophisticated viewpoint of communication represented by the above simple model, however, is not sufficient by itself to conceptualise the communication process. It is misleading in that it suggests that the message in human communication is "a separate and identifiable object, analogous with an act of speech or a thing clearly defined, as a message" [93]. The communication message is often not like this at all; as described by McQuail [94] "a message must include such things as laws, customs, practices, ways of dressing, buildings, gestures, gardens, military parades, flags ... and so on." The author added, "any cultural object, has by definition a meaning embedded in it and hence it can potentially "store" and communicate this meaning, often over long periods of time."

Baker [95] indicated, however, that the simple model of communication ignores the fact that it is necessary to convert ideas into a symbolic medium to enable them to be transmitted through a communication channel.

Also, the simple models portray the receiver as a passive and defenceless component in the communication process [96]. The principal limitation of the simple models is that they fail to recognise the crucial role that the receiver plays in determining the outcome of the communication act, either by rejecting the message totally through his selective exposure strategies (eg. selective attention) or by reacting in a manner that is not exactly in keeping with what has been desired or aimed by the communicator [97].

In other words, such models fail to illustrate the encoding processes in the mind of the communicator before initiating the message, the decoding processes by the receiver after he receives the message, and the barriers which may prevent the successful completion of the communication process.

Wofford et al [98] supported this notion by stating that the simple models "do not convey the intricacies of encoding or decoding messages, nor do they remind us of the effects of differences in channels and languages." There are also questions concerning the direction of communication as it is depicted in the simple models. Communication has been represented therein as a one-way oriented process in which the receiver is not taken into account. The proposed models also allow no opportunity for any feedback process, which is a very important component in an effective and successful communication act.

In Bauer's [99] view, the simple model in its one-way orientation is "one of the exploitation of man by man, it is a model of one-way influence: the communicator does something to the audience, while to the communicator is generally attributed considerable latitude and power to do what he pleases to the audience."

Thus, the approach suggested by the simple models for conceptualising the communication process is no longer a very satisfactory way of thinking about human communication. The criticism directed against these simple models therefore prompted the efforts of scholars to begin thinking of communication in a broader and more complex context. In the following pages, the discussion will deal with the significant attempts as a result of which the communication process has been modelled along broader lines. This will be brought out in our

discussion of the need to broaden the communication process model.

BROADENING THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS MODEL

Schramm [100] argues that the communication process has to be thought of as a relationship, an act of sharing, rather than something someone does to someone else. He stated: "neither the psychological nor the social model of the communication process is any longer sufficient by itself, rather, they must be combined and somehow comprehended together." In his view, the social aegis under which the message comes, the receiver's social relationship to the sender and the perceived social consequences of accepting it or acting upon it must be put together with an understanding of the symbolic and structured nature of the message.

Raymond Bauer [101] wrote about the "obstinate audience." His views contributed further to the idea of an active audience by showing that what people select from communication, and what they remember, often depends on the use they expect to have to make of the content. He concluded, "the audience simply would not act like a target."

These views and many others established a new era in communication thinking when communication researchers became concerned with "getting the message through," realising the importance of the psychological processes that might be triggered by present and stored perceptions of social relationships and role patterns, in such a way as to affect the response to any communication. In other words, this new era has been described

as the era of realism. In this regard, it is worth quoting Schramm [102] in full:-

"Since 1952, we have a renewed interest in dealing with the communication process as a whole. We have gained new insights into audience behaviour. We have gained new linguistic and conceptual tools for dealing with the message ... we have a greater interest in learning why communicators do what they do."

In the following pages, we shall briefly discuss the significant attempts to model the communication process.

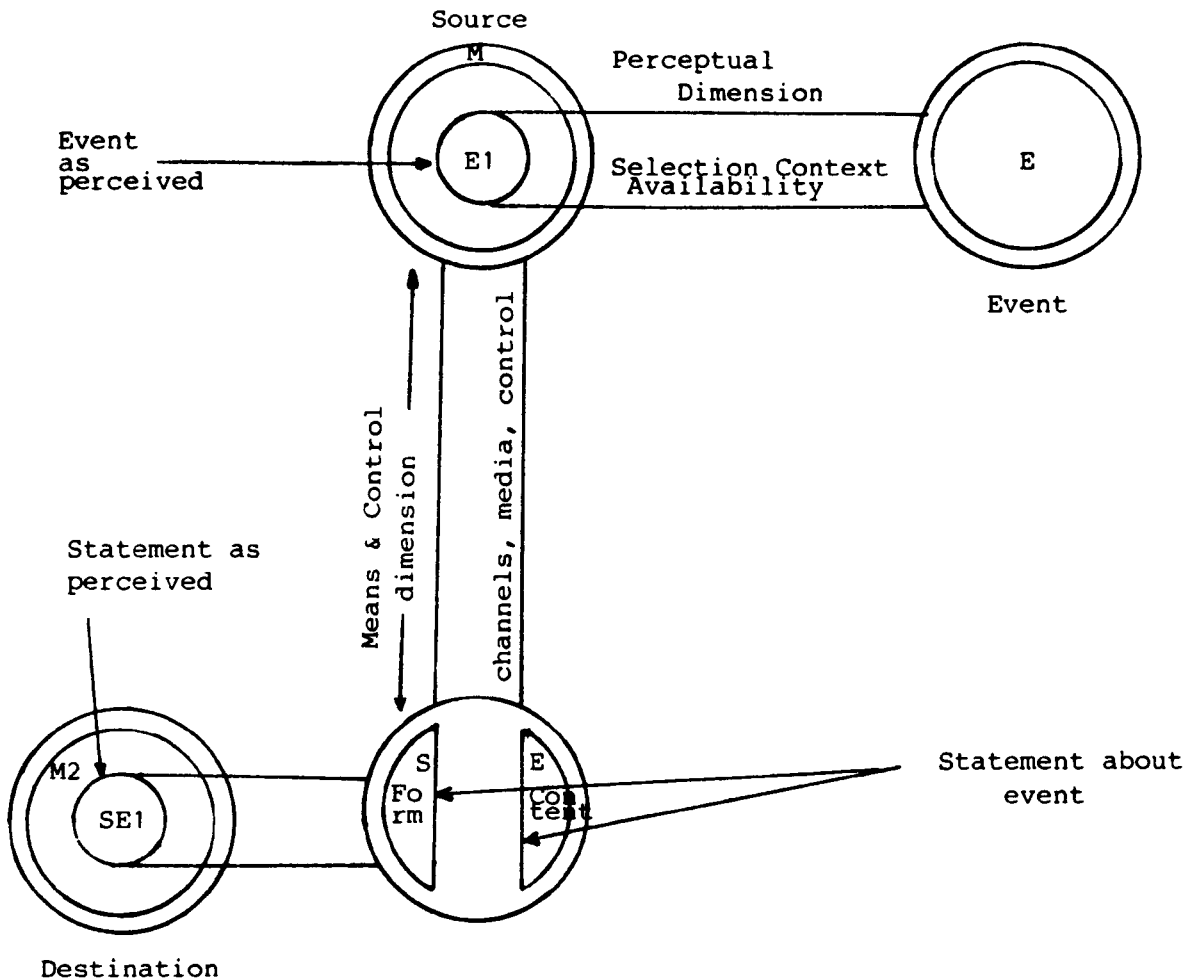
GERBNER'S GENERAL MODEL

Perhaps the most comprehensive attempt to specify all the component stages and activities of communication is Gerbner's [103] general model. The model depicts diagrammatically some of the issues of perception and representation which must be taken into account in any study of communicational activity as a dynamic and social process.

In its verbal version, the model is expressed as follows: "someone perceives an event and reacts in a situation through some means to make available materials in some form and context conveying context of some consequences." [104]

The following diagram shows the basic generalised graphic model of communication as proposed by Gerbner:

Figure (3-1): Basic Generalised Graphic Model of Communication



Source: George Gerbner, "Towards a General Model of Communication," Audio-Visual Communication Review, Vol IV, p27

The direction of the flow is from right to left in the diagram. As the diagram illustrates, an event (E) is perceived by someone (M), the event as perceived (E1) is the product of perceptual activity and thus the mediations and transformations of particular selective and contextual factors introduce the difference between (E) and (E1).

The vertical arm of the model shows the representation of the event by the perceiver to be partly a product of the available meaning systems, and of particular conventions of the use of such systems. These formal elements (S) combine with event-related elements (E).

Finally, the lower horizontal arm shows this representation, the statement about the event (SE), being perceived by a second person (M2). This perceptual activity will involve, as it did in the earlier case, a transformation such that the difference SE/SE1 will occur.

In general terms, the communication process which Gerbner treats graphically is a subject of very complex argument. However, McQuail [105] stressed a number of points in Gerbner's model. These points are summarised as follows:-

- (1) The great variability in the perceptions of an event by a communicating agent and also in the perception of a message about an event by a receiver. In general terms, this variability can range from an extreme "transactionist" position which stresses the structuring effects of the communicator's assumptions, point of view, and other related factors upon the perception, to such an extent that the event is "almost created in the act of perceiving," to a nearly opposite or "psychological" view which sees the world of material events and sounds as "in control." In this regard, Gerbner's model does not assume either extreme view, but does attempt to take account of the "creative interactional nature of the perceptual process, avoiding any implications of either solipsism or mechanism."

- (2) Content is always "meaningful" and the meaning of content cannot be derived solely from either the intentions of the transmitter or the perceptions of the receiver alone but is a "relational pattern" to be interpreted in the light of the whole sequence of events in a particular case of communication. While the model is essentially descriptive and taxonomic, it does something more than provide a framework for comparative study; it opens the way to more focused theoretical approaches and to a discussion of communication in normative terms.
- (3) Gerbner contrasted the open nature of human communication with the closed sequence of mechanical or automatic communication systems. Human communication is open in that events and objects in the environment do not automatically generate signals of communicative reactions and the whole process of communication is open at many points to the variable and unpredictable effects of perception and human choice. The analogy with a programmed device is misleading because human communication systems are not homeostatic and "feedback" has a different connotation.

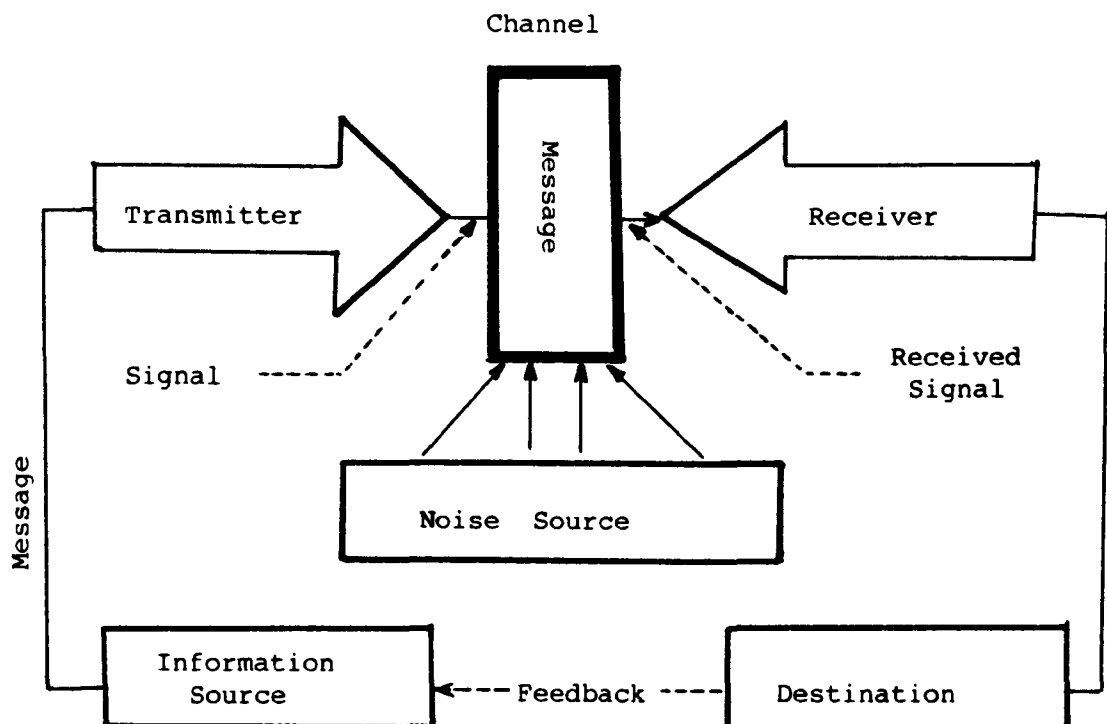
Finally, it is worth noting that the model carries implications for the study of mass communication since it suggests the difficulty involved in realising such professional goals as "neutrality" and "objectivity" where these are conceived as absolutes [106].

SHANNON-WEAVER MODEL

This model was developed to assist in the construction of a mathematical theory of communication which would apply to any situation of information transfer. The model is based on the assumption that the intervening steps between communication stimuli (the message) and response are less simple than they had generally been considered [107].

The model represented communication as an interactive process aided by a feedback link. It depicted the basic sequence of components which can be expressed in the following manner:-

Figure (3-2): Shannon-Weaver Model



Source: Shannon, C. and Weaver, W. *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, The University of Illinois press, Urbana, Ill, 1949, p5.

Although the model has a basis in electronics, it provides a useful analogy to what must happen when information passes between humans.

As the model illustrates, the communication is initiated by the source, from which a message is passed to a transmitter where it is encoded into a signal, which is transmitted through a channel between the source and the receiver. The channel is the new component in the communication situation as described by Shannon. The channel acts as an agent of the would-be communicator and of the audience. McQuail [108] pointed out that the effect of the presence of the channel in the system of communication is to extend the environment of sources to which the audience member can be oriented, to bring the sources into touch with the receivers which would be otherwise out of reach. In other words, the channel role accomplishes the task of selecting among the sources, or would-be communicators, those whose messages are believed most relevant to the needs of receivers or which meet some other criteria of selection.

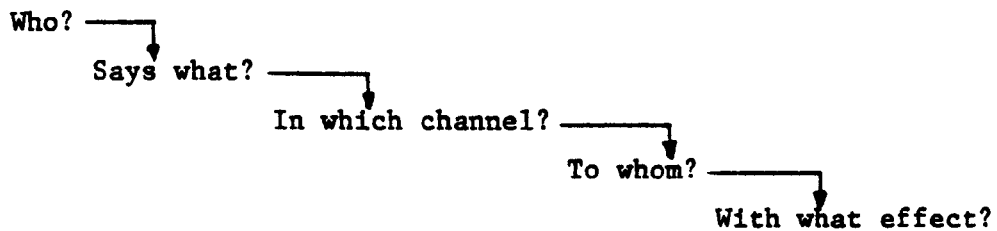
The most distinctive feature of the model is the feedback component which provides the model with the mechanism of interaction. However, a further modification of the model has been required to take account of the fact that communication, especially in large systems, has to be looked at as a flow of information or messages along a network, a chain or set of channels. From this perspective, McQuail [109] argued that "what is of primary interest is not the efficiency of the encoding and transmitting facilities in overcoming "noise" or the integration and articulation of the whole system, but the discontinuities in the flow of information and the process of selection which occur at various points."

However, although there is no single dominant model of communication which addresses itself to dealing with this problem, Lewin's [110] work, which gave rise to the concept of "gatekeeper," has been influential.

It is worth mentioning that the Shannon-Weaver model has presented two major contributions to communication research. First, it is considered to provide a useful analogy with what must happen in the human communication. Second, the feedback component recognises the two-way nature of the communication process. It pointed to the fact that in reality individuals are both senders and receivers and they interact with each other continually. Feedback, as the model illustrated, has a modifying and guiding effect on the encoding and transmitting processes in which the communicator engages when he intends to send his message. In this regard, as Baker [111] pointed out, "it is through feedback that the source learns how its signals are being interpreted."

LASSWELL'S MODEL

In his verbal model, Lasswell [112] introduced his well known format in which he posed the following questions:-



In this model Lasswell attempted to structure the thinking of a whole generation of communication scholars. He suggested that the scientific study of the process of communication tends to concentrate upon one or another of the five questions which his

model comprises.

By means of his model, Lasswell identified five major fields of research: (1) control analysis (which is concerned with the study of the source of communication). Researchers concerned with this field look into the factors that initiate and guide the act of communication, (2) content analysis which is concerned with the study of the message, (3) media analysis which is important for those who look primarily at the channels of communication, (4) audience analysis in which the researcher is chiefly concerned with the persons reached by media. Finally (5) deals with the impact upon the audience which is the concern of effect analysis.

In arguing about whether such distinctions are useful, Lasswell [113] suggested that this depends entirely upon the degree of refinement which is regarded as appropriate to a given scientific and managerial objective. He adds, "often it is simpler to combine audience and effect analysis, for instance, than to keep them apart."

On the other hand, with regard to the content analysis, the author proposed the subdivision of the field into the study of purport and style, the first - as he indicated - referring to the message itself, and the second to the arrangement of the elements of which the message is composed.

Although the model describes and analyses the elements of the communication process, it fails to describe the inter-relationships between these elements.

Ball and Byrnes [114] stated that "most verbal models are of limited usefulness, generally, they will fail to show the communication process, this failure is in part due to the static nature of the process."

The real value of this model lies in the area of research in which five critical questions are posed indicating key areas for analysis [115].

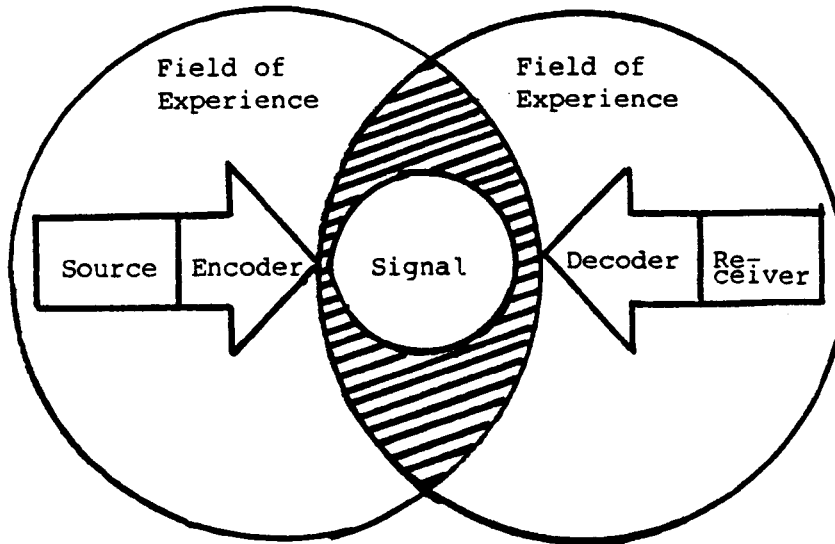
Broadly speaking, in their capacity as verbal models, the preceding three models contributed to explaining and describing the basic components of the communication process. However, they failed to describe the inter-relationships between these components. This gap was the subject of other attempts which illustrated the communication process in more depth. In the coming pages we will discuss three significant models which have been considered landmarks in communication thinking - Schramm's model, Ross's transactional model, and DeLozier's model.

SCHRAMM'S MODEL

One of the influential models which has considerable importance for communication thought is Schramm's. In his model, Schramm [116] introduced the concept of "sharing" as a central dimension in the communication process. He pointed out that communication between two persons (the sender and the receiver) is efficient to the extent that the domain where the field of experience of the two persons is sufficiently similar. Experience here represents the sum total of all experience a person has acquired from his surrounding environment and the groups to which he belongs during his lifetime.

Schramm's model is diagrammatically represented in Figure (3-3):-

Figure (3-3): Schramm's Communication Model



Source: Redrawn from Wilbur Schramm (ed), "How Communication Works," In The Process and Effects of Mass Communications, The University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Ill, 1965, p6.

In the figure above, the circles represent the field of experience of the source and the receiver and these circles intersect each other in the shaded area which represents the similarity between their fields of experience where they can communicate efficiently with each other. The signal in the model is language. It follows that if the source wishes to exchange meaning with the receiver (destination), he and the receiver must share the same language.

Schramm's model suggests several points of significant importance to understanding the communication process. These points are:-

- (1) Encoding and decoding are essential processes. Encoding is the process through which the source of communication puts his message in a symbolised form that can be easily interpreted and understood by the receiver, whereas decoding is the process through which

the receiver interprets the message by assigning the meaning (which is derived from his field of experience) to the symbols used in the message. Thus, it could be said that while encoding is a source-related process, decoding is a receiver-related process.

- (2) Schramm indicated that feedback and noise are important factors in determining the outcome of the communication process, ie. its success or failure. This idea was discussed earlier.
- (3) His model emphasised the role of the channel through which the message is transmitted.
- (4) He suggested that communication is a relationship between the participants. This idea has been ignored by almost all the verbal models which were discussed earlier.
- (5) The basic notion in Schramm's model is the sharing of common language between the participants in the communication process. This idea has been supported by a large number of writers [117]. They argue that sharing a common language and awareness are important factors in determining the efficiency of the communication process. They also emphasise that through systematic selection and the application of encoding rules, misinterpretation is minimised.

Thus, it can be concluded that, although Schramm's model is over simplified, it can be applied to all types of communication. Also, its conceptual implications have a significant importance for understanding the persuasive communication process. Our

judgement is that the perceptual similarity proposed by the model is a necessary condition for the persuasion to be induced.*

ROSS'S TRANSACTIONAL COMMUNICATION MODEL

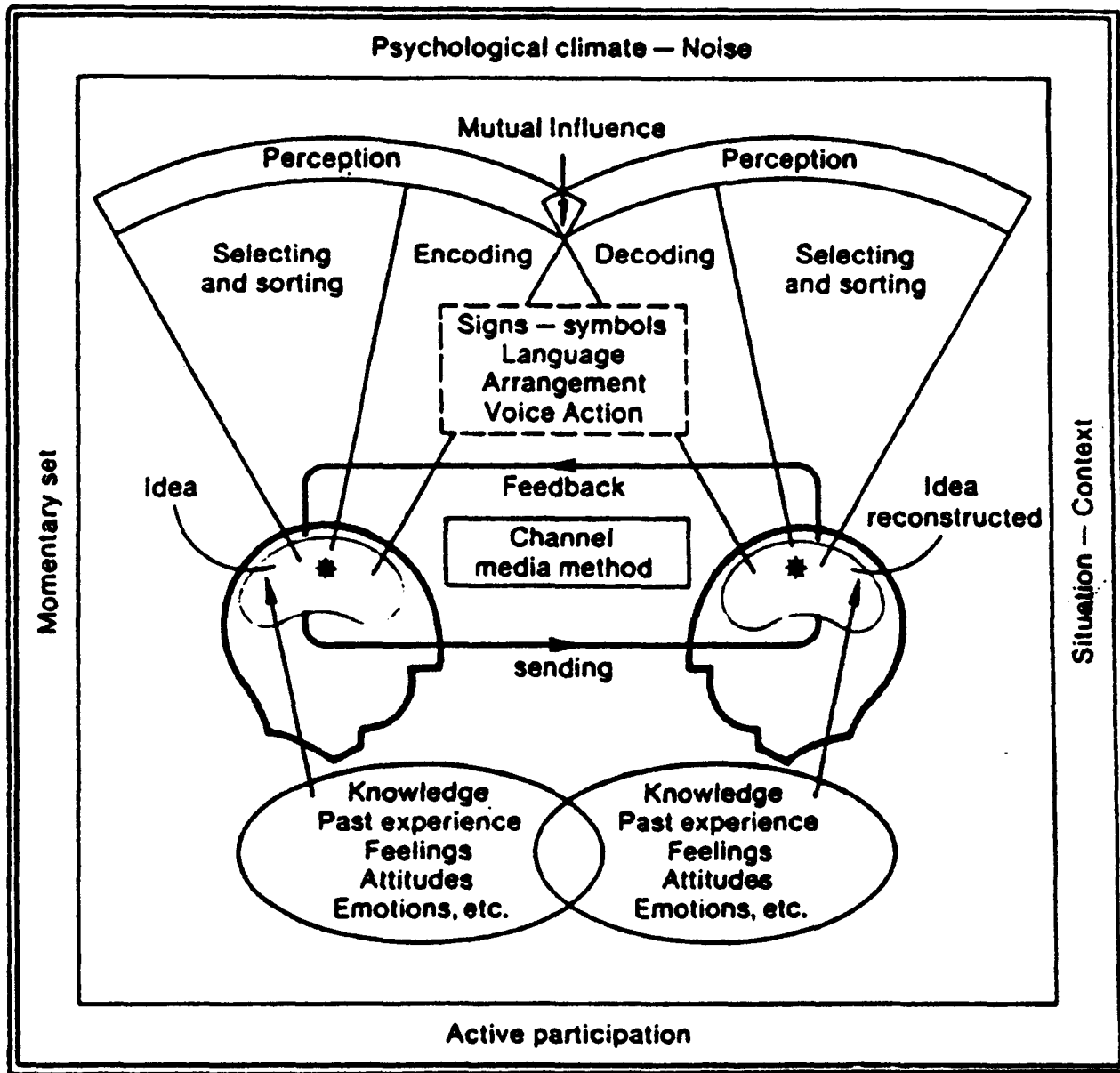
This model's focus is primarily directed at the process that involves the human organism and particularly his sign-symbol behaviour [118]. The model basically depends on the assumption that an individual is capable of being both sender and receiver. The basic elements in Ross's model can be illustrated in Figure (3-4).

According to the model, communication flows as a sequence of events as follows:-

- (1) A person (sender) wishes to communicate to another person (receiver).
- (2) From his brain, where his knowledge, past experience and feelings are stored, the sender initiates his meaningful message.
- (3) The sender then proceeds, figuratively, to sort his information and make a selection from among his storehouse of knowledge and past experience, choosing items that help him to refine and define exactly what he is trying to say. The sender must have a set of criteria to enable him to carry out this operation (sorting and selecting).

* This idea will be discussed in depth later.

Figure (3-4): Ross's Model



Source: Raymond S Ross, Persuasion: Communication and Interpersonal Relations, Prentice-Hall, Inc, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1974, p58.

- (4) The sender must then proceed to choose the codes for his message. In this process, the sender engages in an encoding activity in which he assigns what he perceives as adequate symbols to convey his message or intentions.
- (5) When the stimuli (the encoded message) strike the receiver's sensory receptors, the first stage of human perception, sensation, is completed. The second stage involves the interpretation of the message by the receiver. In this stage, the receiver begins to decode the signs, symbols, and language contained in the message. Ultimately, drawing upon his storehouse of knowledge and past experience, he derives a meaning from what was communicated by the sender. To the extent that this derived meaning is similar to the sender's intended meaning, mutual influence is achieved.
- (6) The feedback in the model calls for a period of consideration by both originator and receiver. For this reason it is thought to be useful in a self-correcting sense.

The transactional communication model emphasised the following points:-

- (1) The communication process is a two-way activity. As Ross [119] suggests, "It is a process involving a commonality of experience and a mutuality of influence." In this sense, the transactional communication process "has no beginning and no end; it is ever changing, dynamic and mutual."

- (2) The transactional model suggests that the encoding and decoding processes are essential in creating the common sharing of meaning between the sender and the receiver.
- (3) The model suggests the importance of a person's self-image as it is concerned with persuasion, human communication and interpersonal relations.

However, the model is essentially a dyadic one, so that the same general communication principles should apply with modifications to the audience and even to interpersonal, complex, coacting small groups.*

DELOZIER'S MODEL

DeLozier [120] developed his elaborate model from consideration of several models of the communication process. The major purpose of this model is, as is stated by DeLozier himself, "to guide our thinking about the communications process as a whole and marketing communication in particular."

The model attempts to answer such questions as: How is communication initiated? What are the critical factors that affect the communications process? And finally, What changes are likely to occur in a receiver as a result of receiving a message?

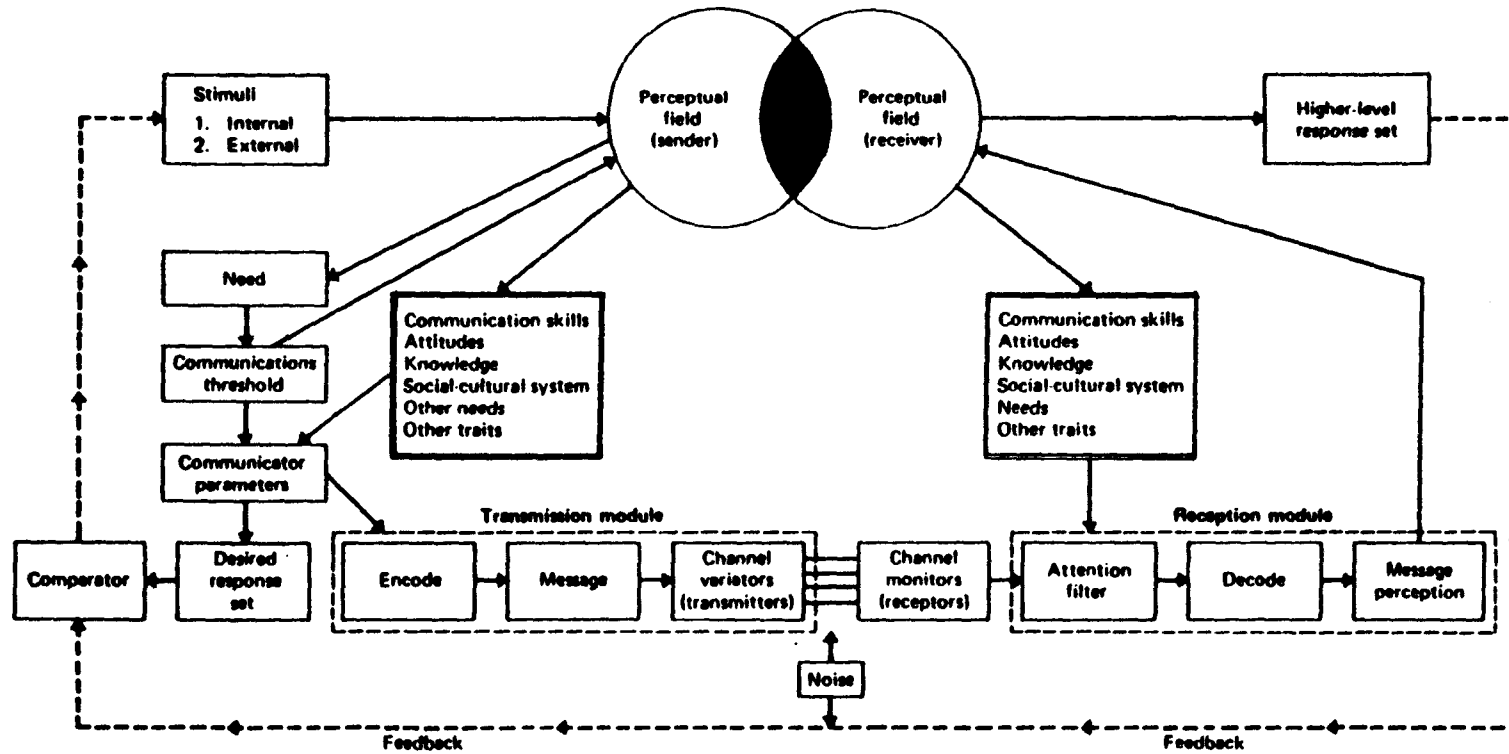
* For detailed discussion about the modified models of the transactional communication process, see Raymond S Ross, "Persuasion, Communication and Interpersonal Relations," Prentice-Hall Inc, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1974, pp55-60.

In other words, DeLozier's model deals with the communication process from a psychological point of view (without ignoring the other elements mentioned in Schramm's model). The author argued that the communication process as a part of human behaviour is goal-oriented, ie. the process begins with some reason for communication. In this model, "need" defines the objective of the communicator. Thus, it suggests that any communication process must begin with the determination of communication needs. In this sense, the communication process is initiated as a means of reducing tension arising from the need condition. Therefore, the model indicated the importance of the needs not only in affecting the source's formulation of his message, but also in influencing the receiver's response to it.

Bernard and Steiner [121] stated that "... people tend to select from the myriad stimuli to which they are exposed, those which appear to be relevant to their needs." Also, Newall [122] and Wills [123], among others, stressed the active role of an individual's needs in determining the outcome of the communication process. Within a marketing context, Chisnall [124] stated, "In marketing, consumer messages should be designed to offer attractive benefits from purchase of a particular product, and these satisfactions should be related to identified needs."

Figure (3-5) shows DeLozier's elaborate communication model. As the model illustrates, the important components of the communication process are: the sender, the transmission module, the receiver, and finally, the feedback. In addition, there are other important factors which influence the communication process, such as noise. For the purpose of clarification, we shall examine each of these components.

Figure (3-5): DeLozier's Model of Communication



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Source: M Wayne DeLozier, The Marketing Communications Process, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1976, p17.

THE SENDER

From DeLozier's point of view, when an individual becomes aware of his state of need, he is confronted with a decision-making situation, the tension level, which DeLozier labelled as the "communication threshold." [125] At this level, the act of communication follows as one of the alternative courses of action. Thus the communication emerges as a means through which the sender can reduce the state of tension arising from his need condition.

Before the sender proceeds to encode his message, several decision criteria (or communicator parameters) must be considered. DeLozier [126] cited eight criteria: (1) the message content, (2) the destination, (3) the message modulation, (4) the channel variation, (5) the temporal parameter, (6) the codification, (7) the desired response, and (8) the interaction. It is worth mentioning that these criteria are often acted upon quickly and routinely as a result of the sender's prior learning. In other situations, considerable thought and effort are required to act according to these criteria.

THE TRANSMISSION MODULE

Once the communicator (sender) parameters have been formulated, the transmission process begins. At this stage, encoding emerges as a very important process through which the communicator assumes a specific form and is translated into a code. This involves matching thought with previously learned elements of a code for the purpose of expressing thought.

Regarding the encoding process, DeLozier stated that the "... reduction in the accuracy of a sender's thoughts occurs during the encoding process, due to the limitations that a sign system (our language) places on the sender."

In his discussion of the transmission module, DeLozier emphasised the role of the channel as a link that determines the path through which the message is transmitted from the sender to an intended destination. Concerning the channel, the author indicated that two elements are involved: the "transmitter" and "noise." He pointed out that both elements have considerable influence, and to some extent control over how a message is received by the intended receiver. Furthermore, the channel is a potential source of message distortion in the communication process, so it is the responsibility of the transmitter to reproduce the sender's message faithfully while directing its movement through the channel to the intended audience.

The other element - noise - "usually happens through channel performance and reception of stimuli when the receiver decodes, filters or transmits the original message."

THE RECEIVER

Once a sender has placed his message signals into a channel and directed them towards his intended receiver, the completion of the communication process is dependent upon the activities in which the receiver engages when the message stimuli gain his attention. Here, the decoding process begins. DeLozier pointed out that this process "is where message stimuli are translated into thought. The process involves matching message signals with the appropriate referents contained within a receiver's perceptual field."

As the model suggests, there are two factors which affect the receiver's response to the stimuli: the stimuli characteristics, and individual factors (including experience, knowledge, attitudes, skills, level of understanding, conditions of sensory organs, and social-cultural system).

THE FEEDBACK

In DeLozier's model, feedback plays a crucial role. To know how accurately a message has been received and the effects it has created, the sender must have feedback from the receiver. DeLozier emphasised the role of feedback in achieving successful communication. He stated, "The feedback loop in the model represents a shift in the initial sender-receiver relationship. It tells us how well both of them did in sharing thought, and it provides the sender with the information necessary to decide whether to modify his message or terminate further transmission."

The major advantage of this model is that it is fundamental and relevant to both interpersonal and mass communication.

In conclusion, the preceding three models - Schramm's, Ross's and DeLozier's - share some basic ideas which can be summarised as follows:-

- (1) The three models emphasised the importance of encoding and decoding processes in the communication process. In this context, the models represent communication as a dynamic, mutual, interactive process.
- (2) The notion of "sharing" is the common thread in all three models. It emphasises the meaningfulness of the communication process and its human aspect. The models

underline the contextual meaning of the communication as a means of achieving commonality of thought, which has significant implications in obtaining consensus judgement, or at least majority judgement on the issues that confront modern societies.

- (3) Feedback represents a crucial component in the three models. By taking account of the feedback, the models suggest that the communication is a two-way influence-bearing process. This implies that both source and receiver have a similar potential for determining the outcome of the communication, ie. its success or failure.

Broadly speaking, it may be concluded that the three models have contributed, to a considerable extent, to the broadening of the communication concept. However, the broadening of the concept has stimulated a debate that is still ongoing. An overwhelming majority of communication scholars agree that the communication process itself is more complicated than any description of it. Schramm [127] supported this conclusion. He stated, "Most of the communication process is in the "black box" of the central nervous system, the contents of which we understand only vaguely."

Also, the multidimensional nature of the communication process means that any attempt to model it should be treated with great caution. When we describe communication, we are dealing with analogies and gross functions, and the test of any model is whether it enables us to make predictions - not whether it is an accurate representation of what happens in our perceptual field.

In order to examine in depth the concept of sharing in the communication process, the discussion now turns to deal with persuasive communication.

SECTION 4: PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

In this section we examine persuasive communication. This will help to provide the necessary background to our discussion of advertising as a persuasive communication process - the subject of the next chapter.

The first subject to be discussed in this section is the definition of persuasive communication.

DEFINITION OF PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION

In their dictionary of psychological and psychoanalytical terms, English and English [128] defined persuasion as "the process of obtaining another's adoption of a course of action, or his assent to a proposition, by an appeal to both feeling and intellect." The Random House dictionary says that persuasion implies "... influencing someone's thoughts or actions." [129]

In a more deliberative way, O'Sullivan and his associates [130] defined persuasion as an "intended change of opinion, belief, value or attitude in one person or group by an external agency." They added, "persuasion often implies a deeper process of attitude change as a result of communication, but excludes conformity which refers more to the internalisation of information."

Within the marketing context, Parkinson [131] stated that persuasive communication in its original sense could be taken to mean all forms of activities, from seller to buyers, which were aimed at persuading the buyer to buy the product (including advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, packing and so on).

Considering the content of the persuasive communication, Maile and Kizilbash [132], and Maile [133] indicated that persuasive communication refers to a situation in which a communicator (source) gives his position on an issue, accompanied by emotional and rational argument.

Beach [134] confirmed the active role of the emotions in persuasive communication when he argued that "emotional effect has its active role in persuasive communication, because to a great extent, people think with their hearts not with their minds."

Hovland, Janis and Kelly [135] stated that persuasive communication is concerned with the processes influencing attitude and opinion change. In the same spirit, Cunningham [136] indicated that "persuasive communications are any form of transmission of ideas, skills or impressions, through any senses for the purpose of either arousing or changing attitude, or both, and which may encourage some desired action."

Kotler [137] mentioned that "persuasive communication (or communication) is said to take place when a communicator consciously arranges his message and choice of channel, to have a calculated effect on the attitude or behaviour of a specific audience." Paisley [138] stated that persuasion is "the process which represents someone's intention to influence someone else's beliefs or behaviour, using communicated appeals."

Writing about persuasive speaking, Scheidel [139] said that it is "... that activity in which speaker and listener are conjoined and in which the speaker consciously attempts to influence the

behaviour of the listener by transmitting audible and visible symbolic cues."

Anderson [140] defined persuasion as "a communication process in which the communicator seeks to elicit a desired response." In the same spirit, Ajzen and Fishbein [141] pointed out that the majority of persuasive attempts provide individuals with information which, it is hoped, will induce them to behave in the desired manner.

Sandell [142] analysed the persuasion concept in depth. He pointed out that the attitude change, to qualify as a persuasive effect, has to be brought about primarily through indirect or vicarious experience with the object of persuasion; that is, by information about it, rather than by direct or self-experienced contact with it. Therefore the main means of persuasion is information about the object. According to the author's view, the persuasive information has to have a source and a medium.

Sandell added, "these are logical requirements in any flow of persuasive information, but at the same time they are not more than auxiliary to the real persuasive means, which are the constituents of information, its content (what is said about the object), and its message (the actual carrier of this information)." Finally, the author concluded that the source and medium may not themselves bring about any attitude change towards an object. Thus the only means to bring about specific persuasive effects, logically, are the message and its content. He argued that it could be said that a complex information source, or medium, cannot possibly influence the persuasive effect of the message; rather, the message will most likely produce some impression of the source or the medium.

Indeed, this analysis seems to be reasonable and has significant importance for our discussion of persuasive communication. It is also very close to our view that the message and its content is a crucial element in the persuasive communication process.

Perhaps the clearest definition of the persuasive communication is that of Bettinhaus [143] who stated that persuasive communication involves "a conscious attempt by one individual to change the attitudes, beliefs, or behaviour of another individual through the transmission of some message."

Each of the above and most other definitions of persuasion seem to agree that persuasion ought to be thought of as a conscious effort at influencing the thoughts or actions of a receiver. It primarily acts on the individual's attitudes, beliefs, values, or behaviour. This suggests that although persuasion always involves communication, it has a distinctive nature which distinguishes it from other communication forms - the intent of the source. This intent is to change or influence the behaviour of the receiver in a specific manner.

However, such definitions viewed persuasion as a one-way influence process in which the receiver plays a passive role, ie. the definitions did not take the receiver into account. This view is no longer adequate. If we are to understand the process of persuasive communication, our view of it must be extended so that it is regarded as an interactive process, in which both source and receiver are influenced by each other, ie. at the same time as a source is sending a persuasive message, the source is being influenced by the actions of the receiver for whom the message is intended.

In this regard, Bettinghaus [144] stated:-

"Messages are not sent in vacuums, although much of our research is conducted as if all possible effects were due to very simple causes. Both source and receiver are typically influenced by each other, as well as by the activities that take place long before the message is actually sent. The realities are that sources and receivers are interchangeable, that when I am trying to persuade you to my point of view, I am also trying to understand your point of view, and am exposed to your message to me. We are trying to persuade each other."

In the light of the above considerations and for the purpose of the present study we view persuasion as an intentional and conscious attempt to influence .designed and exerted by an individual agent (persuader), through a particular message to induce a certain degree of change in the mind of the receiver (including his attitudes, values, or beliefs) to cause him to behave in a manner intended by the persuader. Within the context of mutual interaction, the receiver has the capacity to accept or reject the persuasive message.

Indeed, this view emphasises several important points:-

- (1) Persuasion is a form of communication through which an attempt to influence attitudes, beliefs, or behaviours is exerted. In almost all persuasive communication attempts, the intent of the communicator is designed in such a way as to induce the receiver's response in the direction intended by the communicator.
- (2) Within the context of our view, persuasion is a mind influencing process. That is, its main purpose is to induce some change in the receiver's state of mind.

- (3) The influence exercised through persuasion is based upon the information provided in the persuasive message. In this sense, persuasive communication does not depend upon its coercive effect.
- (4) Persuasive communication is a mutual interaction process in which both source and receiver have the capacity to influence the outcome of the persuasion process.
- (5) The ultimate objective of any persuasive communication is to induce a change in the receiver's mind so that his behaviour assumes the direction intended by the source. In this sense, persuasive communication is an influence-bearing process aimed at channelling the receiver's behaviour in a particular way.
- (6) Common sharing is a basic concept in the persuasive communication process. Thus, the source must be able to establish such common sharing with the receiver in order to get through to the receiver's mind.

To this end, the key question to be asked is, how can persuasion be induced? To answer this basic question, the discussion now turns to examine some of the significant approaches to persuasive communication.

SECTION 5: COMMUNICATION APPROACHES TO PERSUASION

Generally speaking, two general approaches to persuasion can be distinguished: the psychodynamic approach, and the socio-cultural approach [145]. Each of these two approaches will be discussed as follows:-

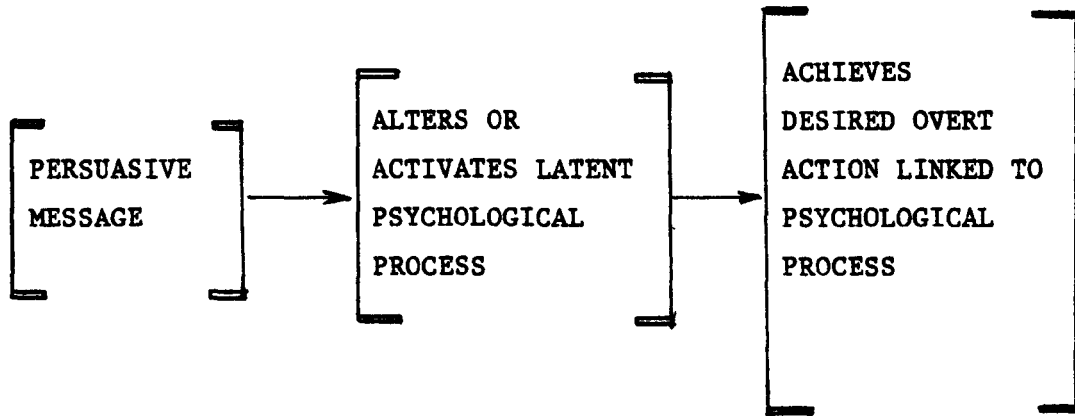
THE PSYCHODYNAMIC APPROACH

The psychodynamic approach to persuasion is based almost exclusively on the cognitive paradigm and the individual differences perspective on mass communication. The essence of this approach is that "an effective message is said to be one that has properties capable of altering the psychological functioning of individuals in such a way that they will respond overtly (toward the item that is the object of persuasion) with modes of behaviour desired or suggested by the communicator." [146]. In other words, it has been assumed that the key to effective persuasive communication lies "in modifying the internal psychological structure of the individual so that the psychodynamic relationship between latent internal processes (motivation, attitudes, beliefs, values, etc) and manifest overt behaviour will lead to acts intended by the persuader." [147]

Indeed, there have been many specific forms or variants of this general approach to persuasion, depending upon the particular psychological phenomenon under examination, and upon the presumed dynamic relationships thought to prevail between the psychological process and the overt behaviour patterns it supposedly activates. For example, extensive use has been made of persuasive communication to the effect "that there is a close relationship between attitudinal structure and the way people behave in overt social situations." [148]

This general approach can be graphically represented in Figure (3-6).

Figure (3-6): The Psychodynamic Model



Source: Melvin L DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach, Theories of Mass Communication, 4th ed, Longman, New York, 1982, p219.

The theoretical routes that fall within this general approach "have emphasised factors such as the comprehension, learning, and retention of issue-relevant information; the nature of a person's idiosyncratic cognitive responses to issue-relevant information, and the manner in which a person combines and integrates issue-relevant information into an overall evaluative reaction."
[149]

In the following discussion of the psychodynamic approach, we shall examine four basic routes through which persuasion can be induced. These are: the attitude-behaviour route, the value-attitude-behaviour route, the belief-attitude-intention-behaviour route, and the elaboration likelihood model.

(1) THE ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOUR ROUTE

One of the first psychologists to employ the term "attitude" was Herbert Spencer [150], who argued that "Arriving at correct judgements on disputed questions, much depends on the attitude of mind we preserve while listening to, or taking part in, the controversy." The first use of the attitude concept to explain social behaviour, however, must be credited to Thomas and Znaniecki [151] who viewed attitudes as individual mental processes that determine a person's actual and potential responses.*

Very early, then, social scientists assumed that attitudes could be used to explain human actions. Since they viewed attitudes as behavioural dispositions, with few exceptions, this assumption went unchallenged until the late 1960s. For example, in their introduction to social psychology, Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachey [152] argued that "Man's social actions - whether the actions involve religious behavior, ways of earning a living, political activity, or buying and selling goods - are directed by his attitudes."

These assumptions encouraged researchers to investigate the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. Most investigators turned their attention to studies of attitude formation, organisation, and change. The present discussion examines the attitude changing process as a way of changing behaviour.

* Other definitions of the attitude concept have been discussed earlier in Chapter 2.

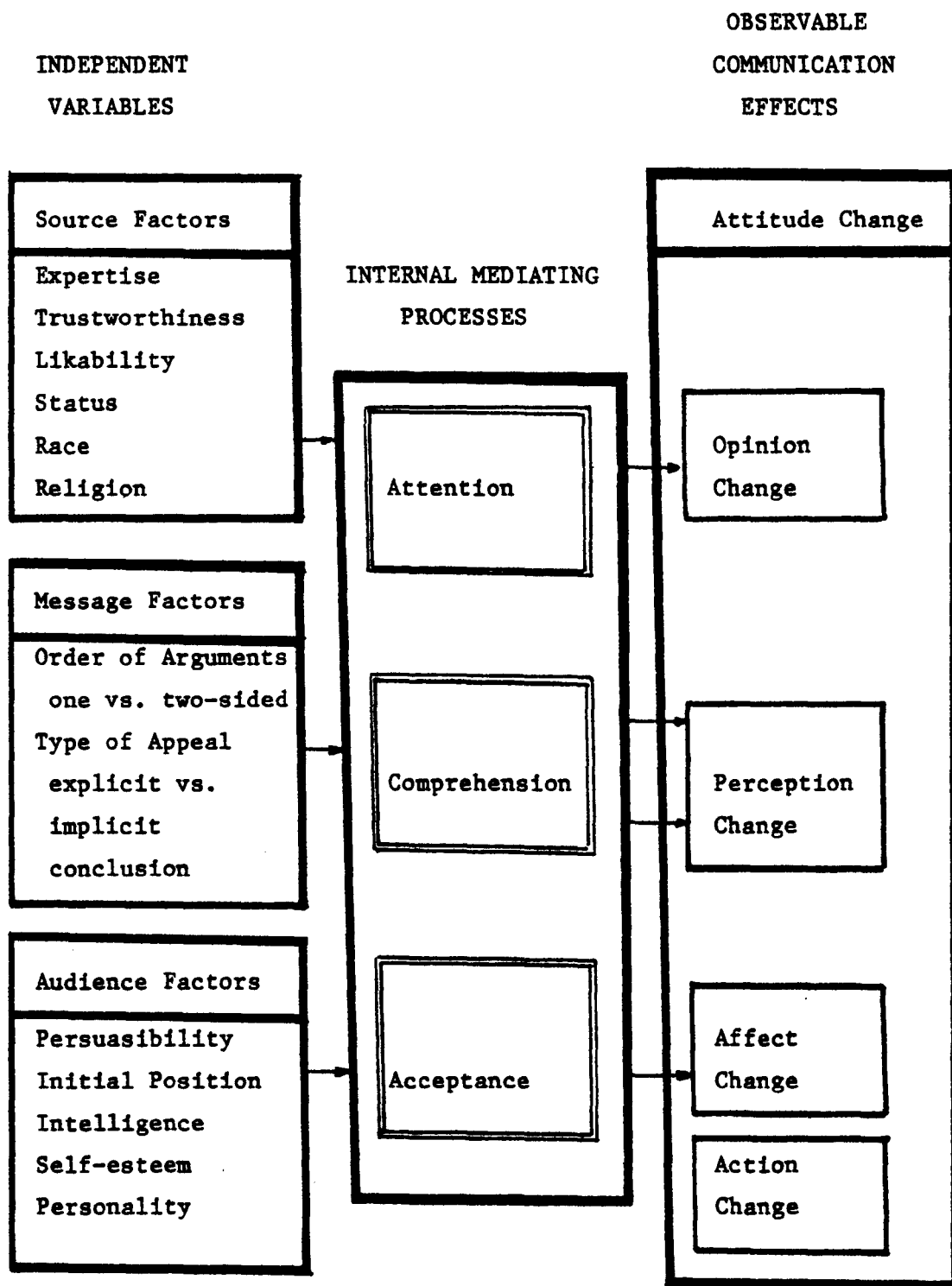
The best known attempt in this area is the Yale approach to persuasive communication and the research undertaken in the Yale tradition. For this reason, we shall examine that approach as an example of the attitude-behaviour route employed in persuasive communication.

The Yale approach was developed through the Yale Communication Research Programme under the direction of Carl I Hovland and his associates [153]. The basic assumption underlying this approach is that the effect of a given persuasive communication depends on the extent to which it is attended to, comprehended, and accepted.

The approach suggested that attention and comprehension determine what the receiver will learn concerning the content of the communication; other processes, involving changes in motivation, are assumed to determine whether or not he will accept or adopt what he learns. The effects of persuasive communication, then, depend on two factors: learning of message content and acceptance of what is learned [154].

In their extended research programme, Hovland and his associates investigated factors influencing the effectiveness of persuasive communication. Figure (3-7) summarises the major factors identified by the authors.

Figure (3-7): Yale Approach to Persuasion



Source: Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein, Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behaviour, Prentice-Hall, Inc, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1980, p220.

In an attempt to evaluate the contribution of the Yale approach in describing the persuasive communication process, it could be said that the approach did not provide much information about the factors influencing the effectiveness of a given message [155]. For instance, the approach has virtually nothing to say about the role of information in the persuasive communication. However, information is the essence of the persuasion process. Receivers are exposed to a persuasive communication in the hope that they will be influenced by the information it contains. The effectiveness of the message depends in large measure on the nature of this information.

It follows that the Yale approach provides little guidance as to the information that should be included in a message designed to change people's behaviour. Also, research in the tradition of the Yale approach has failed to provide much about the information role in persuasive communication. Indeed, "the concerted efforts of many investigators have produced an accumulation of largely contradictory and inconsistent research findings with few, if any, generalisable principles of effective communication." [156]. For example, communicator credibility has been found to increase persuasion in some studies but not in others. Studies on such message factors as fear appeal, order of presentation, and one-sided vs. two-sided messages have yielded equally inconsistent results: variations in order of presentation sometimes produce recency effects, sometimes primacy effects, and sometimes no effects at all. Chronic anxiety is sometimes found to have a positive relation, sometimes a negative relation, and sometimes no relation to the amount of persuasion exerted. Other variables, such as distracting subjects or forewarning them that they will be exposed to a persuasive appeal, have also led to inconsistent and contradictory findings.

This state of affairs "may be due to the fact that in the Yale approach, the term 'attitude' is used in a generic sense to refer not only to a person's affective feelings toward some object, but also to his cognition or beliefs about the object, and to his conations or behavioural tendencies and actions with respect to the object." [157]

With the accumulation of negative results came a growing concern for the validity of the attitude concept as a predictor of behaviour. DeFleur and Westie [158] and Deutscher [159] questioned the need for a construct that refers to a behavioural disposition. Instead, they proposed to view verbal and overt behaviour as different response systems and the relationship between them as empirical.

These concerns were reinforced by Wicker's [160] conclusion. In Wicker's words, "It is considerably more likely that attitudes will be unrelated or only slightly related to overt behaviors than that attitude will be closely related to actions."

By the early 1970s the low empirical relationship between attitude and behaviour could no longer be neglected. Abelson [161] simply concluded that attitudes cannot predict behaviour. For the most part, however, attitudes continued to be regarded as primary determinants of a person's response to an object. At the same time, there was a growing recognition among investigators that there is no one-to-one correspondence between attitude and any given behaviour.

(2) THE VALUE-ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOUR ROUTE

A far more specific psychodynamic formulation is Rokeach's [162] theory of value-change. According to this theory, values underlie attitudes and behaviour; therefore, change in a person's

values should lead to changes in related attitudes and behaviour.

The value-change approach is quite different from other psychological approaches to changing people's attitudes. Rather than present information about the harmful or beneficial consequences of a particular activity or object, Rokeach's approach uses a technique of "comparative feedback." According to this technique, individuals take a value test and are given factual information about their own values as compared to the values of other people. Individuals who discover that they have ranked certain values in a manner that contradicts their conceptions of themselves as moral and competent persons will experience self-dissatisfaction. Thus, it is self-dissatisfaction, not the employment of fear tactics or rational appeals, that sets the value-change process into motion and leads to a modification of personal value hierarchies. Rokeach suggested that "one way to remove this self-dissatisfaction is to increase the importance of the value in their personal value hierarchy." [163]. Thus, the feedback of comparative value information that causes self-dissatisfaction also points the way to regain a positive self-concept by appropriate value-change. In Rokeach's analysis, values underlie attitudes and behaviour, therefore, the change in a person's values should lead to changes in related attitudes and in turn behaviour [164].

Research involving the relationship between people's values and their actions is an area that is destined to receive increased attention, for it taps a broad dimension of human behaviour that could not be effectively explored before the availability of

standardised value instruments [165]. Rokeach's procedure* provides a promising instrument in this regard.

The procedure has been employed in several consumer behaviour studies. The first consumer study which employed this procedure examined the relationship between thirty-six values and subjects' evaluations of automobile attributes (style, amount of service required, amount of pollution produced, economy of operation, and quality of warranty) [166]. The findings revealed that specific values were associated with specific automobile attributes. For instance, the attribute "style" was found to be related to such values as "a comfortable life," "an exciting life," and "pleasure." The attribute "amount of pollution produced" was found to be related to the terminal value "a world at peace," and the instrumental values "helpful" and "loving."

The results of this study suggest that the Rokeach procedure can be used by advertisers to segment their audience by specific values and perceptions of specific product attributes. Such information would be useful in developing new message copy for specific target audiences.

* Rokeach's procedure is based on a self-administered value inventory which is divided into two parts with each part measuring different, but complementary, types of personal values. The first consists of eighteen "terminal" value items, which are designed to measure the relative importance of "end-states of existence" (ie. personal goals). The second part consists of another eighteen "instrumental" value items, which measure basic approaches an individual might follow to reach end-state values. Thus, the first part of the procedure deals with "ends" while the second deals with "means."

The procedure suggests that value-change effects are extremely unlikely unless the communicator has a valid guide as to how to construct and present persuasive messages [167].

According to the procedure, the communicator seeking to influence an audience's behaviour in favour of a certain product should first provide the members of that audience with information leading them to conclusions about the amount of importance they personally place on values related to that product as compared to specific categories of other people. For example, if a communication shows that people who place relatively low importance on values related to ecology are litterers, and air polluters, some portion of the audience, on coming to believe that they personally have a similar hierarchy of values, may experience self-dissatisfaction. Those who want to entertain conceptions of themselves as ecologically responsible would, according to the procedure, feel very dissatisfied with the fact that their value hierarchy paralleled that of ecologically irresponsible people. Those experiencing the self-dissatisfaction should then be significantly more likely to increase the importance of ecologically linked values within their own value hierarchy. Presumably, such value change would produce an increase in the frequency or likelihood of desired forms of behaviour.

(3) THE BELIEF-ATTITUDE-INTENTION-BEHAVIOUR ROUTE

This line of thinking is credited to Ajzen and Fishbein [168]. In their analysis, the authors stated: "Behaviour change is brought about by producing changes in beliefs. By influencing beliefs about the consequences of performing the behaviour, we can produce change in the attitude toward the behaviour, and by influencing beliefs about the expectations of specific referents we can affect the subjective norm. A change in the attitudinal

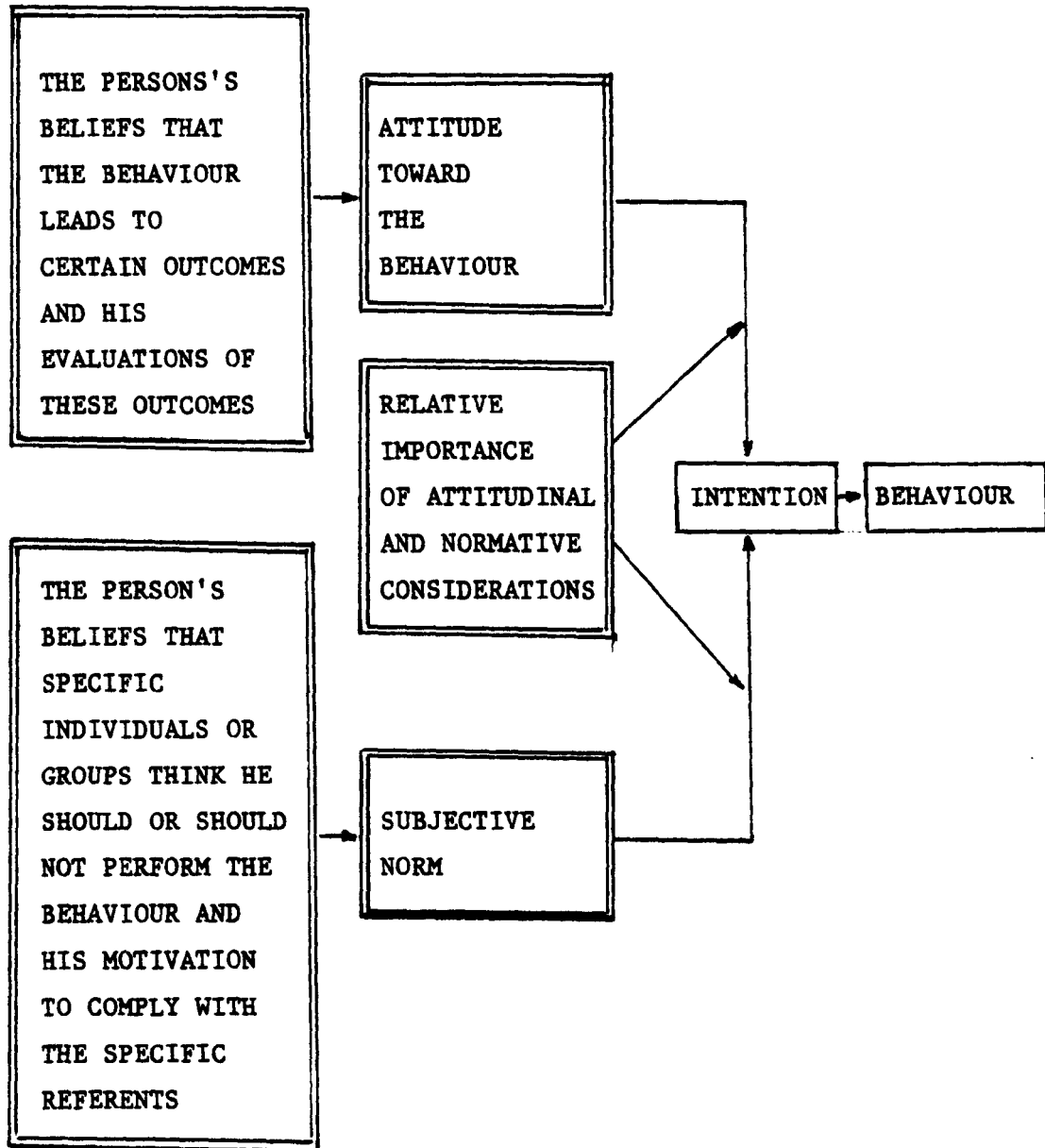
or normative component is likely to be reflected in the person's intention and behaviour; provided that the component affected carries a significant weight in the prediction of the intention."

The Ajzen-Fishbein model is based to a large extent on the notions of the theory of reasoned action which has been refined, developed, and tested by the two authors. Generally speaking, the theory is based on the assumption that human beings are usually quite rational and make systematic use of the information available to them [169]. The authors argued "that people consider the implications of their actions before they decide to engage or not engage in a given behavior." Figure (3-8) summarises the major factors determining the person's behaviour in the Ajzen-Fishbein model.

The figure shows how behaviour can be explained in terms of a limited number of concepts. Through a series of intervening constructs it traces the causes of behaviour back to the person's beliefs. Each successive step in this sequence from behaviour provides a more comprehensive account of the causes underlying the behaviour.

According to the model, the first step in predicting and understanding an individual's behaviour is to identify the behaviour of interest. Once the behaviour has been clearly identified, it becomes possible to ask what determines this behaviour. As the model suggests, most actions of social relevance are under volitional control and, consistent with this suggestion, "the person's intention to perform (or not to perform) a behaviour is the immediate determinant of the action." [170]. This does not mean that there will always be perfect correspondence between intention and behaviour. However, barring unforeseen events, a person will usually act in accordance with his intention.

Figure (3-8): Ajzen-Fishbein Model of Behaviour



Source: Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein, Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behaviour, Prentice-Hall, Inc, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1980, p8.

Note: Arrows indicate the direction of influence.

As the model illustrates, a person's intention is a function of two basic determinants: First is the attitude toward the behaviour (which simply refers to the person's judgement that performing the behaviour is good or bad, that he is in favour of or against performing the behaviour). Second is the subjective norm (which refers to the person's perception of the social pressure put on to perform or not perform the behaviour in question).

According to the model, attitudes are a function of beliefs. Generally speaking, there are two types of beliefs which influence attitudes: First are behavioural beliefs (which underlie a person's attitude toward the behaviour), second, are normative beliefs (which underlie a person's subjective norm). The latter type of beliefs refer to the person's beliefs that specific individuals or groups think he should or should not perform the behaviour.

In addition, the model recognises the potential importance of external variables (such as the demographic factors). However, they do not constitute an integral part of the model. Ajzen and Fishbein [171] justified this by stating, "One of the major disadvantages of relying on external variables to explain behaviour is that different kinds of external variables have to be invoked for different behavioural domains."

It follows that, in the final analysis, behaviour change is brought about by producing changes in beliefs. By influencing beliefs about the outcome and the consequences of performing the behaviour, change in the attitude toward the behaviour can be produced, and by influencing beliefs about the expectations of specific referents, the subjective norm can be affected. A change in the attitudinal or normative components is likely to be reflected in the individual's intentions and in turn his behaviour.

To provide their model with more operative power as a persuasion approach, Ajzen and Fishbein [172] proposed two possible strategies with regard to the beliefs that are singled out for change: influencing some of the beliefs that are salient in a subject population, or introducing novel, previously non-salient beliefs.

Applying the first strategy - influencing some of the beliefs that are salient in a subject population - the communicator can induce persuasion by assessing the salient beliefs held by the members of his target audience. For example, in the case of influencing blood donation behaviour, he can obtain a set of behavioural beliefs concerning the perceived consequences of donating blood (eg. "donating blood is painful," "donating blood helps save lives") and a set of normative beliefs with respect to this behaviour (eg. "my spouse thinks I should not donate blood," "my spouse thinks I should donate blood"). Thus, if the communicator wishes to induce more favourable attitudes toward donating blood, he could try to decrease the receivers' subjective probabilities that donating blood is painful. Alternatively, he could try to induce a more favourable attitude towards this behaviour by increasing the receivers' subjective probabilities that their spouses think they should donate blood.

If the communicator wishes to apply the second strategy - introducing novel, previously non-salient, beliefs - he might induce the receivers to believe that donating blood will assure them of access to the blood should they ever need it. Assuming that receivers positively evaluate having access to the blood bank, this communication should produce more favourable attitudes towards donating blood.

In conclusion, in the view of Ajzen and Fishbein, to influence the intention or the corresponding behaviour, it is necessary to change either behavioural beliefs or normative beliefs, or both. From the authors' point of view, a message can be effective in

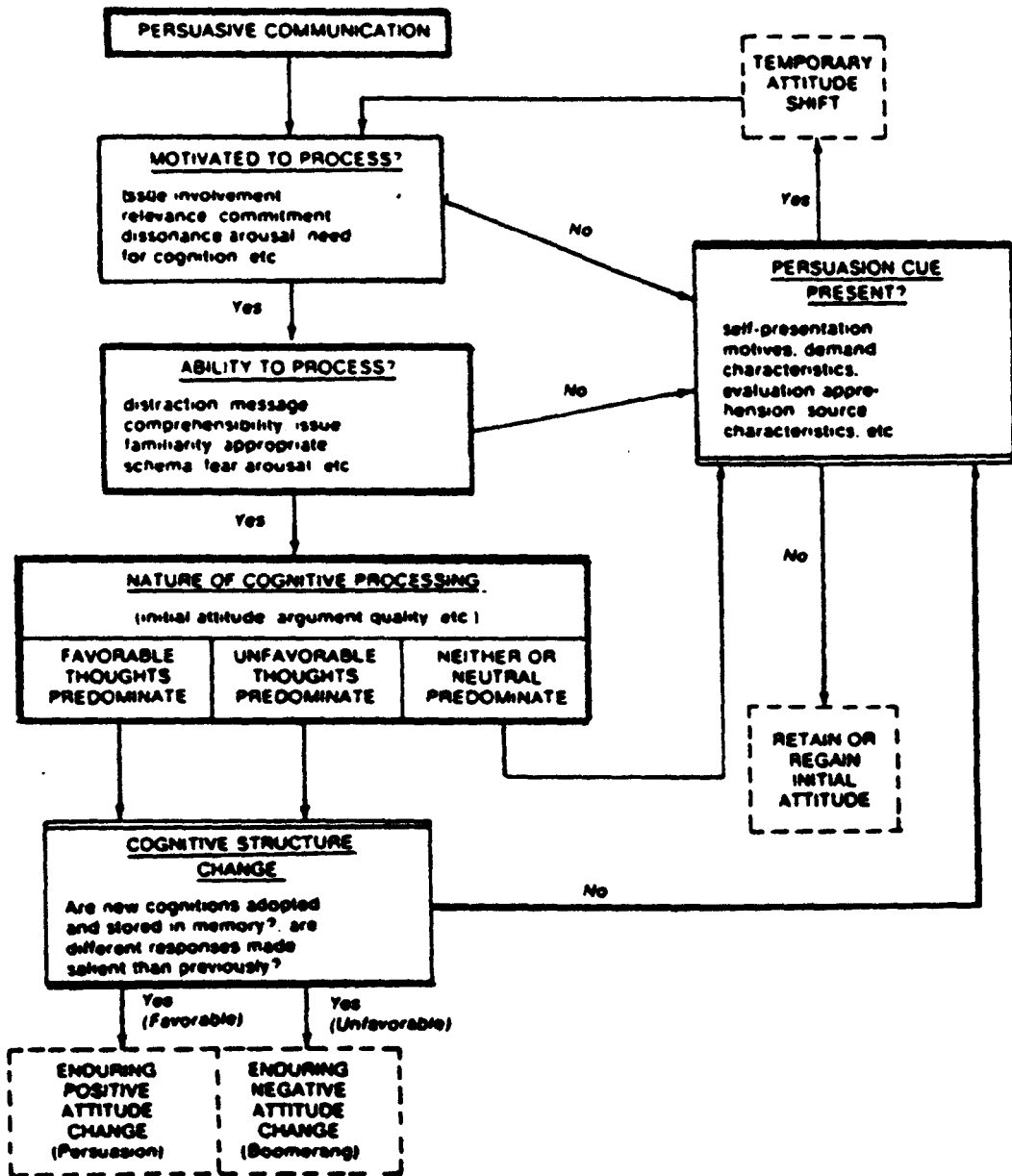
changing a behaviour only if it influences these primary beliefs, that is, the beliefs that, from a theoretical point of view, are functionally related to the behaviour in question. The authors stated, "To be effective, therefore, a persuasive communication designed to change intention or overt behavior should contain information linking the behavior to various positive or negative outcomes, or it should provide information about the normative expectations of specific referents."

(4) THE ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL

This model has been developed by Petty and Cacioppo [174]. The model is based upon the assumption that "different methods of inducing persuasion may work best, depending upon whether the elaboration likelihood of the communication situation (that is, the probability of message or issue-relevant thought occurring) is high or low. When the elaboration likelihood is high, the central route to persuasion should be particularly effective, but when the elaboration likelihood is low, the peripheral route should be better."

Because of its significant implications for advertising communication and for the purpose of the present study in particular, the discussion now turns to address the antecedents of the two routes to persuasion and to present some recent empirical support for the distinction between the two routes. Before doing so, we represent the Petty and Cacioppo model in Figure (3-9).

Figure (3-9): The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Attitude Change



Source: Richard E Petty and John T Cacioppo, "Central and Peripheral Routes to Persuasion: Application to Advertising." In Larry Percy and Arche G Woodside (eds), Advertising and Consumer Psychology, Lexington Books, D C Heath and Co, Lexington, Mass, 1983, p6.

The model begins by posing the question of whether or not a person is motivated to think about the communication to which he is exposed. Several variables have been shown to affect a person's motivation to think about a message. For example, it has been found that "messages on personally relevant issues elicit more scrutiny than messages with few personal implications." [175]. As an issue becomes more personally involving, it becomes more important to form a reasoned and veridical opinion. In other words, the greater motivation to think about a message when personal relevance is high results in people being better able to distinguish cogent from specious arguments in high rather than low-involvement messages.

Also, some people have been found to be more motivated than others towards thinking about messages. In a series of studies on the need for cognition, Cacioppo and Petty [176] found that "consistent individual differences exist in the propensity of people to engage in and enjoy effortful thinking. Some people tend to find tasks requiring extensive cognitive activity to be fun, whereas others prefer to avoid them."

Petty, Cacioppo, and Heesacker [177] found that other variables including the use of rhetorical questions in the framing of the message argument affect a person's motivation to think about a persuasive message. Also, the number of people presenting the message arguments, the number of people responsible for evaluating the message, and whether the advocated position is pro or counter-attitudinal have been found to affect a person's motivation to think about the persuasive communication.

However, the model suggests that having the motivation to think about a persuasive message is not sufficient to ensure that the central route will be followed. A person must also have the ability to think about the issue-relevant information presented.

The ability to think about a message has been found to be related to a number of variables. For example, the ability to think about a persuasive message is highly correlated with the extent to which a message is accompanied by distracting stimuli. Petty, Wells and Brock [178] supported this conclusion. They stated that in these circumstances "the ability to think about a message is decreased and people are less able to differentiate strong from weak arguments." On the other hand, the ability to think about a message is related to the number of message repetitions. Cacioppo and Petty [179] found that then, "people have a greater opportunity to think about the arguments presented and to show a greater differentiation of cogent from specious arguments." Other variables that influence the person's ability to think about the message include "factors such as the medium of the message, presentation, the complexity of the message, and the amount of prior information and experience with the issue." [180]

Once a person has been motivated and able to think about a persuasive communication, two kinds of cognitive responses can be generated: favourable, or positive, thoughts (pro-arguments) and unfavourable, or negative, thoughts (counter-arguments). As the model illustrates, the most important determinant of the nature of the cognitive responses elicited resides in the quality of the arguments presented in the persuasive communication. "Arguments that point to desirable consequences for the message recipient or significant others tend to elicit primarily favourable thoughts, whereas arguments that point to undesirable consequences for the message recipient or significant others (even though the arguments are worded to favour the advocacy) tend to elicit primarily unfavourable thoughts." [181]

Krugman [182] supported this notion. He argued that "the more the desirable consequences are elaborated upon, the more favourable connections the person may make to his or her own life and the more persuasion that will result."

Similarly, the more undesirable consequences are elaborated upon, the more negative connections the person may make to his or her life, and the less persuasive the message will be.

Another important determinant of the cognitive response is the initial attitude on the topic. Sometimes the arguments contained in the persuasive message may be quite ambiguous, or the message may contain no arguments that can be elaborated upon. In this situation, it is unlikely that a person's cognitive response will be guided by the quality of the arguments. Instead, a person's thoughts may be guided by his initial attitude towards the advocacy [183].

Petty and Cacioppo [184] argued that "if the communication advocates a position that is pro-attitudinal, further thought about the issue may lead the person to retrieve from memory a variety of favourable thoughts or to generate new positive implications of the advocacy, but if the communication advocates a position that is counter-attitudinal, further thought about the issue may lead the person to retrieve from memory a variety of unfavourable thoughts or to generate new negative implications of the advocacy."

In their final analysis, Petty and Cacioppo [185] outlined two distinct routes to persuasion. The central route occurs when a person is both motivated and able to think about the merits of the advocacy presented. Depending upon whether the advocacy elicits primarily favourable or unfavourable thoughts, either persuasion, resistance, or boomerang may occur. Attitude change induced through this route tends to be relatively permanent and predictive of subsequent behaviour. On the other hand, when a person is either not motivated or is unable to evaluate the merits of an advocacy, then he or she may follow the peripheral route to persuasion. Under this route, it is not assumed that the message recipient will undertake the considerable cognitive

effort required to evaluate the merits of the advocated position. Instead, people's attitude may be affected by positive and negative cues or simple decision rules or heuristics that allow them to evaluate the advocacy quickly. The accumulated research on persuasion has identified a large number of such cues and heuristics that can influence attitude change [186]. These peripheral changes, however, tend to be relatively temporary and not highly predictive of subsequent behaviour [187].

Thus, according to the elaboration likelihood model (ELM), the elaboration likelihood of the persuasive communication situation is the major determinant of the persuasive route to be followed, (ie. whether the central route or the peripheral route). When the elaboration likelihood is high, the central route to persuasion should be particularly effective, but when the elaboration likelihood is low, the peripheral route should be better.

The elaboration likelihood model is important for the understanding of the dynamics of the persuasive communication process. In general, the model is important for two reasons:-

- (1) Unfortunately, none of the unique theories of persuasion has yet provided a comprehensive view of attitude change. For example, cognitive response theory made the assumption that people usually are interested in thinking about and elaborating incoming information or self-generating issue-relevant thoughts on a topic [188]. Clearly, the elaboration likelihood model constitutes a general framework for understanding the attitude change process. The model considers that attitudes do not always change in a thoughtful manner. It specifies the variables that increase as well as decrease the likelihood that extensive cognitive

activity will accompany attitude change.

- (2) The model has significant implications for advertising communication, where there is considerable potential in terms of applicability. In this regard, the model suggests that in evaluating or designing an advertisement for a particular product, it is extremely important to know what information dimensions are crucial for people who desire to evaluate the true merits or implications of the product. The elaboration likelihood model is considered a comprehensive guide for advertising decision-makers upon which they can depend in designing and constructing their persuasive messages. Since the central route to persuasion is rather difficult (because the message receiver first must be motivated and able to think about the issue or product-relevant information provided), the peripheral route sometimes may be an effective advertising strategy [189].

Although an extensive social-psychological literature has accumulated with respect to many variables thought to be potentially useful as modifiers of overt action, psychological theories of motivation, perception, learning, and even psycho-analysis have suggested ways in which attitudes, opinions, self-conceptions, perceptions of source credibility and many other variables are related to persuasion [190]. However, further evidence is needed to support the psychodynamic approach of persuasion. In this regard, DeFleur and Rokeach [191] argued that "systematic and valid assertions are needed to predict which variables under what exact circumstances can be used to manipulate what specific people toward what definite patterns of action when messages incorporating those variables are brought to their attention." Not only is the evidence as yet incomplete concerning the utility of this approach to persuasion, "but those

who employ this strategy sometimes make unrealistic assumptions. For example, some experimentalists have been willing to assume that if their communication was demonstrably able to change attitudes or opinions, then patterns of overt behavior would be correspondingly changed. Such an assumption is unwarranted." [192]

But the fact that the validity of the psychodynamic approach of the persuasion process has as yet not been fully verified does not mean that the approach is incorrect. Research on persuasive communication provides us with findings which indicate the conditions under which effects can occur, and specify the mediating factors which are involved. Those findings can be mentioned briefly as follows:-

- (1) There is agreement that effects, where they occur, most frequently take the form of a reinforcement of existing attitudes and opinions. Klapper [193] supports this conclusion. He states "communication research strongly indicates that persuasive mass communication is in general more likely to reinforce the existing opinions of its audience than it is to change opinion." This conclusion is consistent with and partly follows from evidence showing:-
 - (a) that "people tend to see and hear communications that are favourable or congenial to their predispositions." [194]
 - (b) that "people respond to persuasive communication in line with their predispositions and change or resist change accordingly." [195]
- (2) It is clear that effects vary according to the prestige or evaluations attaching to the communication source.

As Berelson and Steiner [196] put it, "the more trustworthy, credible, or prestigious the communicator is perceived to be, the less manipulative his intent is considered to be and the greater the immediate tendency to accept his conclusions."

- (3) The more complete the monopoly of mass communication, the more likely it is that opinion change in the desired direction will be achieved. [197]
- (4) The importance to the audience of the issues or subject matter will affect the likelihood of influence. Berelson and Steiner suggested that "mass communication can be effective in producing a shift on unfamiliar, lightly felt, peripheral issues - those that do not matter much or are not tied to audience predispositions."
- (5) The selection and interpretation of content by the audience is influenced by existing opinions and interests and by group norms. [198]
- (6) It has become clear that the structure of interpersonal relations in the audience mediates the flow of communication content and limits and determines whatever effects occur. In this regard, Katz [199] stated that "ideas seem to flow from radio and print to opinion leaders and from them to the less active sections of the population."

Thus, it could be concluded that there is a need to consider many other variables besides individual personality characteristics in developing theories of the effects of the media. There are also dangers inherent in constructing simple cause and effect-types of theory.

This conclusion is consistent with the call by Berelson [200] to give specific attention to the fact that "variations in the stimulus material and variations in the social settings or other related conditions, as well as in the psychological structures of members of the audience, could be expected to have an impact upon the kinds of effects produced."

In spite of its simplicity, Berelson's statement has served as a guide for new directions in trying to understand the persuasive communication process. In the following part of our discussion, we examine a somewhat more complicated alternative approach - the socio-cultural approach.

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL APPROACH

The discussion above indicated that the psychodynamic approach is insufficient to induce persuasion, and it is by no means the only one through which an attempt has been made to achieve practical results. Another approach referred to as the socio-cultural approach [201] to persuasion has emerged from the experimental research on persuasive communication. This approach is based upon the use of socio-cultural variables as a basis for appeal in persuasive communication. In this part, we examine the basic ideas underlying this approach.

Social and cultural variables have been widely recognised by communication researchers and other social scientists as playing an important role in determining the way in which people adopt new ideas. However, the way in which such variables can be deliberately incorporated into messages to facilitate persuasion has not received much attention. For instance, existing theories of persuasion and the adoption of innovation see group interaction and cultural variables mainly in terms of obstacles

to inducing persuasion or adoption [202]. The reason for this "may have been the almost overwhelming preoccupation with the psychodynamic model." [203]

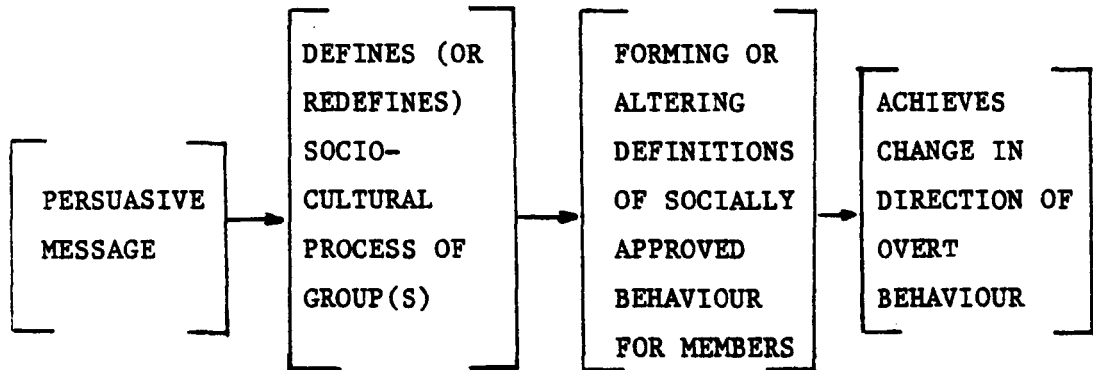
Much basic research in behavioural science indicates that socio-cultural variables are important sources of influence from which individuals gain definitions of appropriate behaviour in a group context. They are important sources from which the individual derives interpretations of reality as well as being significant forms of social control. Asch [204] has pointed out that "the influence of norms plays a powerful role in guiding, defining, and modifying the behavior of individuals, somewhat independently of the state of their internal predispositions."

• Sociological studies have supported this conclusion [205]. They have indicated the way in which such variables as organisational membership, work roles, reference groups, cultural norms and primary group norms can play a crucial role in shaping and channelling overt action in ways that are to some extent uninfluenced by internal psychological predispositions. It follows that it must be recognised that the behaviour patterns of a given individual can seldom be accurately interpreted on the basis of individual psychological variables alone. "Individuals almost always act within a social context that they take into account when making decisions about their behaviour." [206]

• Thus, the socio-cultural processes present in a given individual's situation of action are important determinants of the directions that such action will take, or indeed, whether action will occur at all. Moreover, the more frequently occurring situation ~~would~~ be one in which socio-cultural variables modify the way that psychological processes give rise to overt action [207].

Figure (3-10) represents graphically, the socio-cultural approach to persuasion.

Figure (3-10): A Graphical Representation of the Socio-cultural Approach



Source: Melvin L DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach, Theories of Mass Communication, 4th ed, Longman, New York and London, 1982, p225.

- The socio-cultural approach to persuasion is based upon the assumption that "communication can be persuasive to the extent that it provides individuals with new and seemingly group-supported interpretations - social constructions of reality - regarding some phenomenon toward which they are acting." [208]
- This assumption suggests that one of the main functions of groups is to provide shared definitions for their members by means of which they can interpret and act with respect to realities to which they as individuals have only limited direct access at best.
- This generalisation has often been called the reality principle, and the interactional process by means of which such definitions are achieved has been referred to as consensual validation.

Talking about the significance of these two concepts for persuasive communication, DeFleur and Rokeach [209] indicated that "the persuasive messages presented via the mass media may provide the appearance of consensus regarding orientation and action with respect to a given object or goal of persuasion." That is, such these messages can present definitions to audiences in such a way that listeners are led to believe that these are the socially sanctioned modes of orientation their groups hold toward given objects or situations.

In specific terms it can be suggested that the communicator can stress the way in which a specific role is defined (so as to include the use of the object of persuasion). In this context, messages can demonstrate how adoption of the communicator's goal is normative in the group within which this role lies.

Bettinghaus [210] proposed some of the ways the persuasive communicator may improve messages by taking account of the reference groups to which receivers belong. These are:-

- (1) The communicator can focus attention on a reference group that is favourable to the message. Thus, the probability that the receiver will utilise the group named as a reference group by which to judge the message is increased.
- (2) Different groups have different values as reference groups to the receiver. The communicator can use the probability that a particular group will be either an important or relatively unimportant group to the individual in designing the content of the persuasive message.

- (3) Many membership groups set certain standards of conduct for their members. These standards can be used to increase the probability that receivers will take desired actions and can be invoked to enhance the likelihood that the receiver will respond appropriately.
- (4) Sometimes a favoured reference group can be quoted directly in the persuasive message. Thus, the receiver who belongs to a particular organisation may respond favourably if the communicator uses a quote by another individual within the organisation.

Although the sociological approach has been widely used, especially in certain charity drives, commonly called "united appeals" or "community funds," and so forth, the influence of the reference group (which constitutes the basic assumption underlying the socio-cultural approach) is constrained by some factors which make the approach unlikely to be applied. For instance, Schiffman and Kanuk [211] pointed out that the credibility, attractiveness, and power of the reference group are important determiners of the influence of the group on the consumer conformity.*

In conclusion, although both psychological and socio-cultural approaches seemed to capture two widely used models of persuasion through mass communication media, there are still numerous other methods and techniques by which persuasion can be induced. However, for the purpose of our study, we consider that the two general approaches sufficient to provide a broad framework for conceptualising the persuasive process.

* This issue will be discussed in more detail later within our discussion of the reference group.

In order to deepen our understanding of the persuasive communication process, an attempt to examine the major factors which influence the effectiveness of persuasive communication will be undertaken in the next section.

SECTION 6: FACTORS INFLUENCING PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION

Perhaps the simplest way to examine the factors which influence the persuasiveness of communication is to classify them according to the basic components incorporated in the communication process, each of which could affect the communication and its persuasive power. This basis of classification has been supported by Robertson [212], who stated, "... persuasive communication and its effectiveness are a function of source, message, and channel (media), and the interaction of these with the characteristics of the audience."

Within the context of this classification, factors influencing persuasive communication will be examined. Four categories of these factors can be identified:-

- (1) Source-related factors.
- (2) Message-related factors.
- (3) Receiver-related factors.
- (4) Media-related factors.

There are many different factors within each of these categories, but for the purpose of the present study the discussion will focus on the most significant factors.

(1) SOURCE-RELATED FACTORS

The effectiveness of a communication is largely influenced by the person or group perceived as originating the communication. Hovland and his associates [213] supported this conclusion. They stated, "The effectiveness of a communication is commonly assumed to depend to a considerable extent upon who delivers it." In the brief discussion that follows, we will examine the significant factors which are related to the source of communication and which have an influential role in determining the effectiveness of the communication. These factors can make one communicator more persuasive than another.

The most generally studied source factors may be grouped together in three subclasses on the basis of a target receiver's motivation for accepting the message being offered [214]. Researchers have suggested several factors that are related to the perceived source and that add to the persuasive impact of a communication message. Some of those researchers, such as Bauer [215], have suggested prestige, likeability, and dynamism of the source as major factors that determine its persuasiveness. Triandis [216] suggested familiarity and hostility as additional distinctive features of the persuasive source. The theorist who is most often credited with working out the general question of the analysis of source factors in the fullest detail is Kelman [217]. In his creative tricomponential analysis, the author distinguished between three component valences: credibility, attractiveness, and power. These factors, with others, are discussed below.

1.1 CREDIBILITY*

Credibility has been defined traditionally in terms of the source's attributes, which are perceived by the receiver as relevant to the topic being communicated. "It reflects the extent to which the message (via the source) is perceived by the receiver as being correct, and more particularly on the receiver's perception of the source as knowing what is correct and being motivated to communicate what he knows." [218]

Kelman [219] viewed source credibility as the factor which "induces the internalisation state in the individual receiver. When the communicator is perceived by a receiver as a credible one, the latter will accept the influence of the communicator because the induced behaviour is congruent with his value system. The receiver adopts the behaviour because he finds it useful for the solution of a problem, or because it is congenial to his own orientation, or because it is demanded by his own values."

Because of the importance of credibility in persuasive communication, researchers have attempted to examine more carefully the dimensions which shape this concept. These dimensions will be discussed at length in Chapter Six.

1.2 ATTRACTIVENESS

Kelman [220] considered the source's attractiveness as the tool by which the psychological state of identification is induced. In his view, "identification can be said to occur when an individual (receiver) adopts behaviour derived from another

* Source credibility will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

person (communicator) or a group because this behaviour is associated with a satisfying self-defining relationship to this person or group." By self-defining relationship, Kelman meant "a role-relationship that forms a part of the person's self-image."

The role-relationship established through identification is governed by the response-matching principle formulated by Argyle [221]. This principle states: "During social interaction it is very common for an act by (A) to be followed by a similar act from (B)." Argyle suggested that this principle involves two distinct processes - imitation and reciprocity.

It must be noted that a reciprocal role-relationship can be maintained only if the receiver and the communicator have "mutually shared expectations of one another's behaviour. Each party will tend to behave in such a way as to meet the expectations of the other. In other words, the receiver will tend to behave in line with the requirements of this reciprocal relationship." [222]

Kelman [223] pointed out that "the acceptance of influence through identification should take place when the person sees the induced behaviour as relevant to and required by a reciprocal role-relationship in which he is a participant." It follows that to the extent that such role-relationship with the source of the communication is established, the receiver attempts to be like the source. The essential source factor involved for this process is attractiveness.

Thus, it could be said that to the extent that the receiver finds the source attractive, the receiver will tend to adopt a position similar to that advocated by the source and consistent with the role-relationship, as perceived by the receiver, between the receiver and the source.

The attractiveness concept is often dealt with within a dyadic relationship context. Crane [224] pointed out that attractiveness may have some influence in personal selling, but it has little influence when advertising is used in buyer-seller communication. However, this view represents a minority opinion. "Identification with the source is a common ploy in advertising." [225] For example, when the source of the advertising message is a well-known personality, such as a sports or show business star, the "receiver can easily manifest strong evaluative judgements toward a product or brand found attractive because it is identified with an attractive source." [226]

As with source credibility, source attractiveness has been the concern of researchers who devoted considerable effort to examining the basic dimensions of this factor. For instance, evidence has been established that similarity, familiarity, and liking are important components of source attractiveness. Triandis [227] pointed out that "these three components are interrelated, perhaps even in a causal way." He described this relationship as circular. In his view, "similarity may lead to familiarity, and from there to liking, or liking may lead to familiarity to liking."

Burke [228] in his "strategy of identification," pointed out that "the source begins the persuasive effort by showing the receiver that they both have similar needs. Once similarity has been established, it is assumed then, that the probability of persuasion by the communicator increases."

McGuire [229] reviewed a number of studies addressing the issue of similarity between source of communication and receiver. The author raised two significant points: The question of whether demographic or ideological similarity has a greater effect on liking of the source, and the possible importance of the similarity in determining the pattern of the source-receiver

relationship. Concerning the latter point, McGuire argued that "if the importance of the message does affect the relationship, this would tend to support the idea that attitude similarity tends to function as a reinforcer rather than a cue for liking. On the other hand, if the message subject has no effect on the relationship then similarity would seem to be operating as a cue for liking." [230]

Concerning the question of whether demographic or ideological similarity has the greater effect on the liking construct, McGuire [231] stated that "it is unanswerable at the present time; however, from a practical viewpoint it is a real concern." He argued, "even if, the demographic dimension accounted for more of the variance in a particular experiment, one would not know if this was because similarity on the demographic dimension is indeed more powerful in determining liking, or because the particular points chosen on the demographic dimension happened to be farther apart than those picked on the ideological dimension."

Perceived familiarity is another important component of source attractiveness. Politz [232] wrote some years ago about the familiarity principle. He stated that "something that is known inspires more confidence than something that is unknown."

McGuire [233] indicated that "given a wide range of different stimuli, the more frequently they were presented, the greater they were liked and the more positively they were evaluated." However, Percy and Rossiter [234] argued that "if McGuire's formulation is correct, liking is a nonmonotonic function of familiarity, so there would be a limit to the number of times one would wish to expose a particular source."

The final component of source attractiveness is liking. One of the principles underlying balance theories [235] is that people tend to agree most with those whom they like. Within the context

of those theories, liking of the source will enhance the source's persuasive influence on the receiver.

However, empirical research yielded contradictory findings regarding the relationship between liking and persuasiveness. For instance, in a study to examine this relationship, McGuire [236] established some evidence that supported the relationship. However, in a study conducted by Zimbardo and his associates [237], those who complied with a request from a disliked source and actually did as advocated, which was to eat fried grasshoppers, increased their liking for them significantly more than those who were exposed to the liked source. Non-compliance with the source was associated with boomerang effects in which grasshoppers became even more disliked.

Despite the apparent relevance of these findings to advertising, Zimbardo et al's study does not easily transfer to this context, for two reasons. First, the source in the study was a personal communicator. Second, the perceptual association was between the source and the receiver's own behaviour, while in most cases "the perceptual associations are between the source and the message." [238]

In conclusion, the perceived liking component of the source attractiveness is not a sufficient condition for effective persuasive communication. More empirical research concerning this issue is thus required, especially where the findings are to be extended to an advertising context.

1.3 SOURCE'S PERCEIVED POWER

Persuasive communication was defined earlier as an attempt to influence by the communicator in order to induce a change in the receiver's attitudes, beliefs or behaviour. Our view is that any attempt to influence must be based on some kind of power, and without it, the communicator will be unable to induce the intended change.

In this sense, Jaques [239] defined power as "the rate of induction of behaviour in others. It is the quality of an individual (or a group) which enables him to influence other individuals either singly or collectively by channelling and directing their behaviour in such a way as to help him to fulfil his aims. It is that quality which gets others to act, to work, to do things on one's behalf."

Parsons [240] discussed influence as a concept distinct from power. He defined influence as "a generalised mechanism by which attitudes and opinions are determined, particularly in the process of social interaction in its intentional forms." Of particular significance to Parsons's concept of influence is his attention to the intentional use of influence to induce a desired response from others. Parsons suggested that "an actor can seek to gain compliance from another either by affecting the intentions of this other or by manipulating his situation in a way favourable to himself." [241]

From McQuail's [242] point of view, "communication can be employed positively by rational argument or negatively by activating commitments on the part of the receiver of influence. In this version, influence is reduced to the single category of persuasion."

Our position is that persuasive communication implies some sort of influence, and this influence must be based on some sort of power. Within this context, it is unlikely that the concept of power can be separated from the influence, since the former represents the means and the latter represents the end.

In his analysis of the perceived power of the source of communication, McGuire [243] distinguished three major dimensions of perceived power as a source of the communicator's persuasiveness. These are: (1) perceived control, (2) perceived concern, and (3) perceived scrutiny.

According to McGuire, the first dimension refers to the extent to which the communicator can administer positive or negative sanctions. The author suggested that the more control perceived by the receiver, the higher was the likelihood of a positive response to the persuasive communication. Perceived concern occurs when "the receiver estimates how much the source cares about whether or not the receiver conforms." Finally, perceived scrutiny refers to "the receiver's judgement of how likely it is that the source will be able to observe whether or not the source's position is accepted."

1.4 STATUS-PRESTIGE DIMENSION

The effect of the status and prestige of the source of communication on persuasiveness has been examined by a number of researchers.

For example, Haiman [244] indicated that the difference between a college sophomore and the Surgeon-General of the United States is a perceived difference in the status of the two role positions. On the other hand, DeLozier [245] stated that "a source who is perceived high in prestige is more persuasive than

one perceived low in prestige." However, this statement generally holds true only when the source is communicating on a topic related to his role position. DeLozier added, "when a source occupying a status position in one role addresses an audience in another role position, he becomes less persuasive. For example, a nuclear physicist may be very persuasive when addressing the local PTA on the safeness of a nuclear power plant in the community, but much less persuasive when speaking as a father to the PTA on the topic of proper dress rules for students in the school."

The status-prestige dimension is a very important factor in inducing persuasion, even in those communication situations where supporting arguments are not provided. Hovland and his associates [246] supported this idea. They argued that "sometimes a communication presents only a conclusion, without supporting argumentation, and its acceptance appears to be increased merely by attributing it to a prestigious or respected source."

Kelman and Hovland [247] emphasised the importance of "prestige suggestion" in establishing an emotional relation between the influencer (source) and influencee (receiver). They suggested that "it seems probable that an emotional reaction to the communicator may have a double-barrelled effect. On the one hand, it may have a facilitating effect where it serves to focus attention on what he says and to exclude irrelevant influences in the environment. On the other hand, when the focusing is upon the communicator per se - upon his person, dress, style of speaking, mannerisms, and so on - an emotional reaction may interfere with the acquisition of his content and hence with his effectiveness as a communicator." Thus, it can be said that the source's prestige and status have an influential role in determining the effectiveness of the source as a persuasive communicator.

To sum up, the persuasive effect of the source of communication is a function of different related factors such as his credibility, attractiveness, power, status and prestige. The factors represent the major dimensions of the source's influential character and in turn determine his effectiveness in any given persuasive communication.

However, the source is not the only component of the communication process, and the persuasive influence may come from other sources, including those related to the message. In the part that follows, we shall examine some of these message-related factors that influence persuasive communication.

(2) MESSAGE-RELATED FACTORS

This part deals with message-related factors which influence persuasive communication. DeLozier [248] outlined the message factors influencing persuasion as follows: those related to (1) the message structure, (2) the message appeal, and (3) the use of the message code. The author added that "the blend of these three sets of factors determines how effective a message will be for a given audience."

However, Percy and Rossiter [249] discussed message-related factors within the context of three categories: (1) those related to message structure, (2) those related to message appeal, and (3) those related to message content.

Using these two views as a basis, we shall examine message-related factors in two basic groups: (1) the message structure and (2) the message appeal. Within the context of these two groups, the most significant factors will be discussed.

2.1 STRUCTURE-RELATED FACTORS

DeLozier [250] defined the structure of the message as "the organisation of elements in a message." In other words, it is concerned with the manner in which the message elements are structured.

Message structure can be broken down into several components: the message format, the message organisation, the message sidedness (or variation), the order of presentation, and the conclusion drawn. Each of these components (factors) will be briefly discussed.

2.1.1 MESSAGE FORMAT

Message format refers to the combination of elements of which the persuasive message consists. Ajzen and Fishbein [251] believe that any persuasive message must consist of two parts: (1) the set of arguments, and (2) the factual evidence designed to support these arguments. However, when the aim of communication is to induce some sort of behavioural change, as is the case in persuasive communication, the message will also contain one or more recommended courses of action.

Burgoon and Burgoon [252] cited three elements that must be present in any persuasive message. These are: (1) a claim, (2) a warrant, and (3) the data. From the authors' point of view, a claim "tells us what a source wants a receiver to believe or do." A warrant is "a general belief or attitude which justifies acceptance of the claim." Finally, the data represent "specific beliefs and attitudes about the existence of objects or events."

Ray [253] suggested that "two basic assumptions must be considered in constructing a communication message: the first is that acceptance of the supporting evidence will result in acceptance of the arguments, and the second is that acceptance of the arguments will lead to a change in the conclusion."

2.1.2 MESSAGE ORGANISATION

From the discussion above, it seems clear that a persuasive message must contain the basic elements which provide it with the mechanism for inducing the intended change in the receiver's attitudes or beliefs. As a result, it is important to examine the way in which those elements are presented in an organised context.

In his book "The Uses of Argument," the British philosopher, Stephen Toulmin [254] developed a pattern of message organisation which is based upon an analogy between the legal claim situation and the general persuasive communication situation. In developing his pattern of argument, Toulmin began at the simple stage of the argument presentation leading to the more complex stage as Figure (3-11) shows.

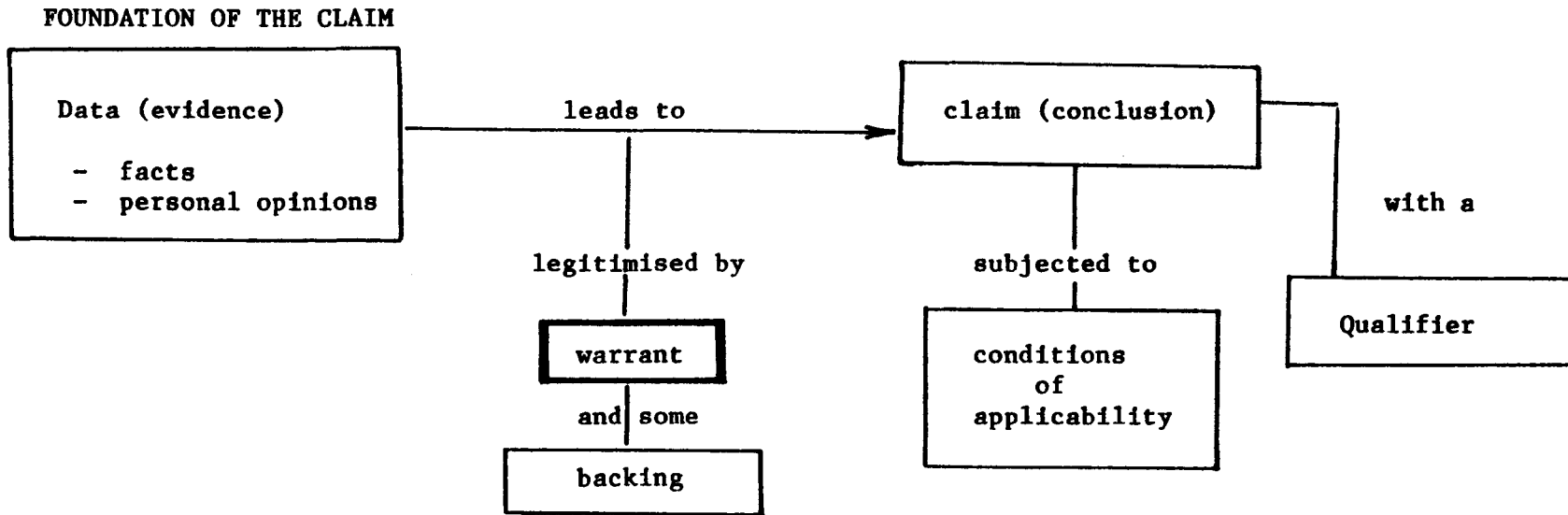
As the model illustrates, the Toulmin pattern of argument consists of six steps (components), the first of which is data (or evidence). In Toulmin's view, this refers to "any kind of data, observations, personal opinions, case histories, or other material that are relevant to the issue under consideration." This component represents a basis for the next component, namely the claim or the conclusion the establishment of whose merits is being sought. "It is the statement that the persuasive communicator wishes the audience to believe, or the action that is desired." The third component is the warrant which links the data (evidence) and the claim. It is a statement showing the reasoning - why people ought to accept the communicator's claim (conclusion). Concerning this component, Toulmin comments:-

"To present a particular set of data as the basis for some specified conclusion commits us to a certain step; and the question is now one about the nature and justification of this step." [255]

Thus, by adding the warrant component, it is expected that there will be more justification for the data being accepted as leading to a conclusion or claim. In this sense, the purpose of the warrant statement is to legitimise the data as a basis for the conclusion.

The fourth component is the qualifier, which normally means the use of some instrument that softens or modifies the claim. This

Figure (3-11): Toulmin's complex model of argument



Source: Stephen Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1958.

component is necessary for the communicator to show explicitly the extent to which the case fits the issue in question.

The fifth component of the Toulmin model is the condition of exception or reservation to the claim. This component simply sets out any limitations or restrictions that the source of communication wishes to place on the conclusion's claim to be valid and justified. In other words, the condition component sets the exceptional conditions which might be capable of defeating or rebutting the otherwise warranted conclusion. In this sense, refutation in the communication message represents a direct application of Toulmin's fifth component.

Finally, there is the component of backing of the warrant. It includes any additional supporting facts which can serve as further data, or can be cited to confirm or rebut the applicability of a warrant.

One of the advantages of the Toulmin model is that "it allows even very complex arguments to be analysed and placed into an effective message form. Also, the various kinds of pattern of organisation that the Toulmin model allows can easily be adapted to much longer messages." [256]

Other patterns of message organisation have been introduced by several researchers, the most popular of which are the following two: the first is the psychological organisation pattern developed by Monroe and Ehninger [257]. This suggests that there is a succession of steps that would lead the audience to follow the same path as he might psychologically be expected to follow by himself. Specifically, this approach suggests five psychological processes (steps). These are: (1) attention, (2) need, (3) satisfaction, (4) visualisation, and (5) action.

2.1.3 MESSAGE SIDEDNESS*

One of the most important issues which is often discussed within the context of message structure is message sidedness (or variation). The question of whether the persuasive message should present one side or both sides of an argument has been the subject of much investigation. For almost all persuasive communication situations, there are those in opposition as well as those in favour (support) of a proposed change [258].

Before proceeding further in our discussion of message sidedness, it is worth defining what is meant by the one-sided and the two-sided message. Fortunately, DeLozier [259] defined the one-sided message as "a message in which only one view is presented. The entire message is slanted toward the communicator's position. The weaknesses in the communicator's position or the strengths of the opposing view are never mentioned." A two-sided message, on the other hand, is "a message in which the communicator advocates one position, but at the same time admits to some weaknesses in his stand or to the strengths of the opposing view. Although the two-sided message presents two sides of an issue, the communicator's position always prevails as the stronger of the two sides."

With regard to the persuasive effect of one versus two-sided messages, the research on the issue has yielded inconclusive results. However, it could be said that this research has produced some useful conclusions concerning the extent to which

* This issue will be extensively discussed in Chapter Six.

one-sided and two-sided messages can be effective. These conclusions have been summarised by Bettinghaus [260]:-

- (1) Two-sided messages seem to be more effective for audiences at higher educational levels, although the differences obtained are not supported in all studies.
- (2) Two-sided messages seem to be more effective when the audience initially opposes the communicator's position.
- (3) Two-sided messages seem to be preferable when there is a possibility that the audience will be exposed to subsequent counter-arguments (which oppose the source's position).
- (4) One-sided messages are more effective when the receiver is already in agreement with the position advocated by the source, provided that the receiver is not likely to be exposed to later opposing messages.
- (5) Prior attitude and commitment may interact with sidedness, tending to conceal the potential effects of message sidedness.

These conclusions will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

2.1.4 ORDER OF PRESENTATION

The persuasive effect of the order in which a message is presented has been studied within two approaches. One approach was primarily concerned with the order of major arguments within a primarily one-sided message. The other approach was concerned with messages that are usually two-sided and involve questions of

differences in persuasibility depending on which side is presented first.

Within this context, one can ask three major questions:-

- (1) In presenting a one-sided message, should the communicator present his most important points at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of his message?
- (2) In presenting a two-sided message, should the communicator use a pro-con or con-pro order?
- (3) If two opposing messages are presented, does the first communicator or the second communicator have the advantage?

Addressing the first question - where to place the strongest arguments - Ross [261] distinguished between three order strategies: (1) a climax order strategy, (2) an anticlimax order strategy, and (3) a pyramidal order strategy. According to Ross, "A climax order places the most important materials last; an anticlimax order arranges the most important materials first; and a pyramidal order places the most important materials in the middle of the message, with less important materials both first and last."

As a means of judging the effectiveness of each of these three strategies, it could be said that the findings yielded by research are confusing and require considerable interpretation if they are to make much sense. [262]

However, DeLozier [263] summarised some useful generalisations provided by the research, as follows:-

- (1) Where an audience has a low level of interest in the materials being presented, the anticlimax order strategy tends to be the most effective.
- (2) Where an audience has a high level of interest in the materials being presented, the climax order strategy tends to be the most effective.
- (3) The pyramidal order strategy, on the other hand, is the least effective.

Concerning the first two generalisations, the assumption is that the effectiveness of climax versus anticlimax order may depend on the contribution of either order to the arousal or maintenance of attention. This view has been supported by Hovland and his associates [264]. They stated, "at the one extreme where the audience has little interest in what is being said, one would expect that placing the strongest and most interesting material at the beginning would be more effective since it would arouse the listener's interest and motivate them to learn what was being said."

Such a tendency has significant implications for advertising. As DeLozier points out, "people seldom read or hear more than the first few words of an advertisement." [265] This emphasises the need for good headlines or subheadlines in the advertising message.

It has been suggested that in any case, an advertiser should not place important material in the middle (pyramidal order) of his advertising message, because material in the middle is attended to the least, is the least well learned, and therefore is the

least persuasive [266].

With respect to the second question - should the strongest argument be presented first or last in the two-sided message? - it could be suggested that the question involves the issue of recency-primacy. Before proceeding to further discussion of this issue, it is necessary to define each of these two conditions of message order.

Perhaps the most useful definition is that offered by DeLozier [267], according to whom "a recency effect is observed when the material presented last produces the greater effect. A primacy effect is demonstrated when the material presented first produces the greater effect."

This definition suggests that the primacy-recency issue is primarily concerned with the first (prime) position or last (more recent) organisational position as distinct from the worth or strength of the argument. In other words "the issue of primacy-recency is usually concerned with opposing communication presented in alternative sequences." [268]

As with the problems of climax-anticlimax orders, no convincing general law of primacy has emerged. However, the studies conducted in this area provide us with sets of factors which affect the primacy and recency effects. Because these factors are useful in the development of the persuasive message, we shall examine some of them.

Rosnow and Robinson [269] reviewed some of the studies in this area, suggesting that some variables, such as non-salient, controversial topics, interesting subject matter, and highly familiar issues, tend to produce primacy effect. In contrast, salient topics, uninteresting subject matter, and moderately unfamiliar issues tend to yield recency effects. However, the

authors argued that "simple order effects are not always the most important factors operating in any communication situation."
[270]

In advertising, a number of studies have been reported dealing with the contribution of various factors to primacy-recency effects, and whether information presented first in a persuasive message is more effective than information presented later in positively influencing advertising response. Percy and Rossiter [271] reviewed some of those studies and identified five major factors mediating the primacy-recency effects in advertising. Table (3-1) summarises the typical reactions occasioned by each of five factors on the order of message point presentation in advertising communication. These factors are: receiver attention, consistency of meaning, message point contrast, message point weighting, and forgetting.

Percy and Rossiter [272] also pointed out how these factors operate. For instance, with respect to receiver attention, the authors stated "As is the case with most advertising communication, receivers have a low level of interest in the message topic, and, as such, may be hypothesised to attend only to the first part of a message (such as the headline in print advertising) without attending to what follows. If this were the case, a primacy effect would be predicted."

Regarding the third factor - message point contrast - the authors argued that "when the various message points contained in persuasive communication are open to several possible interpretations, each with a different evaluative implication, those points presented first could provide a context for the evaluation of those that follow, then it would argue for a primacy effect where the most favourable or important message point would be presented first in hopes of influencing the evaluation of the less favourable or less important points that follow." [273]

Table (3-1): Factors influencing order effect

Order factor	Response	
	Reaction stimulus	Effect
Receiver attention	(a) low level of interest (b) strong belief set	primacy recency
Consistency of meaning	initial points provide - context for evaluating - subsequent message points	primacy
Message point contrast	initial points provide low level of comparison	recency
Message point weighting	inconsistency among message points are noticed	primacy
Forgetting	back-to-back advertising	primacy

Source: Larry Percy, and John R Rossiter, Advertising Strategy: A Communication Theory Approach, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1980, p122.

With respect to the consistency of meaning factor, Percy and Rossiter pointed out that "in a case in which message points are indefinite or inconsistent in meaning with the message as a whole, it has been noted that a primacy effect obtains because an evaluative mood is established. A recency effect is expected where there is a consensus as to meaning." [274] Therefore, to the extent that early points in a message provide a level of comparison, other message points will be judged as less favourable when preceded by acknowledged favourable points than when they are preceded by message points generally felt to be unfavourable.

Dealing with the message point weighting factor, the authors pointed out that "when a number of message points are presented in a single communication, certain inconsistencies may be perceived by the receiver. When such inconsistencies are noticed by the receiver, the receiver may tend to give certain message points less weight than others in the overall evaluation of the message. To the extent that order of presentation is affected by such weighting, one would expect a primacy effect."

Finally, there is the factor of forgetting. In a study by Miller and Campbell [275], two messages were presented to subjects, one immediately after the other. Although no response was elicited until a week later, a strong primacy effect was evident. However, this factor "may be less of a concern with advertising communications (owing to their generally short length)."

Perhaps the most creative attempt to discuss the primacy-recency persuasive effects, is McGuire's [276]. The author offered three theoretical explanations for these effects. These are: learning theory, perceptual theory, and intention-to-persuade.

Looking at primacy-recency effects from a learning theory perspective, Miller and Campbell [277] have shown that attitude

change resulting from either a primacy or recency effect of ordering may be explained in terms of an underlying learning process. They added that initial learning is enhanced by primacy because of proactive inhibition, which could interfere with the learning of subsequent communication. Retention, however, should be maximised by recency, since it is closer to actual attitude or behaviour change within the buyer response hierarchy. "Following this logic would also suggest that primacy tendencies should be more manifest when the second side follows immediately after the first, while recency tendencies should be more acute as the time between message presentation increases, or when yielding or attitude change is measured immediately following the second message." [278]

When a perceptual theory is used in explaining the order effects, one would be led to conclude that primacy effects are more efficacious. The reasoning here would be derived from the perceptual theory hypothesis that early exposure to a situation tends to provide a specific frame of reference against which subsequent situations are perceived and understood. This hypothesis has been emphasised by Sherif's [279] early work in this area. He found that "belief sets appear to be formed quickly during one's early exposure." It follows that any primacy effect associated with new information should indeed be strong, but will become less pronounced as the message content becomes more familiar.

However, "both the learning theory explanation and that of the perceptual theory predict better communication efficiency through primacy effects, but learning theory bases its prediction on a lower likelihood of learning the later message, while perceptual theory bases its prediction on a general likelihood of distortion in the second message." [280]

The final theoretical explanation of primacy-recency effects offered by McGuire is the intention-to-persuade argument which was advanced earlier by Hovland and his associates [281]. He suggested that "a receiver's awareness of an intention-to-persuade on the part of the source will be less likely to occur when the receiver is first exposed to a persuasive message than after hearing a second argument, especially when the receiver is being presented with a message dealing with essentially trivial or unimportant matters in a situation that is not initially perceived as being argumentative." [282]

Although McGuire considers each of these conceptual frameworks in the light of two message sources, each arguing for different sides on a given issue, the reasoning can be extended to apply equally to the order of presentation within a single message as in the case of a single message presenting two sides, or when two opposing advertising commercials are seen, one immediately following the other. However, "research evidence underscores the need for close examination of the situation in which a message will be presented." [283]

Thus, it can be concluded that message strategies associated with order may be important to many persuasive communication situations.

2.1.5 DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Another question regarding the effective structure of a message is whether a conclusion should be explicitly drawn for the audience or be left implicit?

Indeed, "the answer is not a simple one and may depend upon various conditions." [284] However, the research on the issue suggests the following conclusions:-

- (1) In general, a communicator is more effective in changing opinions in the desired direction if he draws a conclusion for his audience. [285]
- (2) The degree of sophistication of members of the audience concerning the issue presented is likely to be an important factor. For less intelligent people the communicator will achieve greater opinion change in the desired direction if he draws a conclusion; by contrast, for highly intelligent people, drawing a conclusion or leaving the conclusion to the audience produces about the same degree of change in opinion. [286]
- (3) If receivers perceive that the communicator has an intent to manipulate or something to gain by stating his conclusion, or if people might feel an insult to their intelligence by having a conclusion drawn for them, the communicator would be more effective if he leaves the conclusion to be drawn by the receivers themselves. [287]
- (4) If the communication message deals with highly personal or ego-involving issues, the communicator may be more effective if he allows his audience to draw a conclusion themselves. By contrast, for impersonal issues, statement of a conclusion by the communicator is generally more effective. [288]

- (5) The kind of issue addressed by the message has been found to be an important factor in determining whether a conclusion should be drawn implicitly or explicitly. For highly complex issues, the communicator is more effective when stating a conclusion for his audience. By contrast, for simple issues the approach makes little difference. [289]

However, application of these conclusions must be exercised with caution. For instance, some writers believe that some ambiguity in an advertisement permits the consumer to interpret the message and the product's benefit in a way which is most meaningful to himself, thereby allowing the market concerned to define itself. However, this belief runs the danger of consumers inferring product benefits which the product cannot deliver, leading ultimately to consumer dissatisfaction [290].

If an advertising message or the product being advertised is technically complex, it may be advisable to draw a conclusion for the consumer. This view has been supported by Howard and Sheth [291]. The authors argued that "conclusion drawing would be warranted under these circumstances to help the consumer comprehend what the product can do." Likewise, conclusion drawing may be counterproductive when the market is highly knowledgeable about a product and when the product or message is uncomplicated.

The discussion now turns to deal with those factors which influence the persuasiveness of the message and which are related to message content.

2.2 MESSAGE APPEAL (OR TONE)

This part deals with the question that arises when considering the types of persuasive appeals available in message construction, i.e. whether the communicator should appeal to his audience's moral principles, emotions, or intellect. Message appeal is an important dimension of the persuasive message. It refers to "content stimulus that arouse motives to accept the opinions recommended in persuasive communication." [292]

For the purpose of the present study, the discussion deals with two kinds of appeal that can be used in alternative approaches to persuasion. These are: (1) the emotional appeal, and (2) the rational appeal. Each of these will be examined in relation to persuasive communication.

2.2.1 EMOTIONAL APPEAL

Percy and Rossiter [293] pointed out that emotional appeals involve "creating an appropriate feeling in the receiver by appealing to his feelings, values, or emotions, by associating strong affective cues with the product or brand." Within a marketing context, Kotler [294] defined emotional appeals as those which are "designed to stir up some negative or positive emotion that will motivate product interest or purchase."

With regard to emotional appeals, two kinds can be distinguished: (1) the fear appeal, and (2) the pleasant appeal.

2.2.1.1 FEAR APPEAL

The use of fear appeal in persuasive communication has been extensively investigated and reported in the communication literature. "Essentially, the message built around a series of fear appeals tries to frighten the individual into thinking a certain way or into acting a certain way." [295]

One of the earliest studies in this area is that by Janis and Feshback [296]. The findings of their study revealed a negative relationship between the intensity of fear appeals and their ability to persuade, that is, strong fear appeals were found to be less effective than mild fear appeals. The researchers concluded that high levels of fear in the message seemed to produce an avoidance reaction, which negated the effects of the persuasive material. They explained their results by indicating that high fear appeals produced high anxiety, and as a result, receivers paid little attention to the content of the messages, and a great deal of attention to their own state of anxiety. However, Karlins and Abelson [297] disputed these findings, claiming that the conclusions were unwarranted and the persuasive effect of fear appeal depends on the situation under examination.

In an attempt to reconcile the contradictory findings of fear appeal studies, Ray and Wilkie [298] concluded:-

"Neither extremely strong nor very weak fear appeals are maximally effective. It seems that appeals at a somewhat moderate level of fear are best. A simple explanation for this might be that if an appeal is too weak, it just does not attract enough attention. If it is too strong, on the other hand, it may lead people to avoid the message or ignore the message's

recommendations as being inadequate to the task of eliminating the feared event."

The authors also suggested that the difference in research findings was attributable to the different definitions of high and low fear appeals along some "fear continuum."

In conclusion, the findings of research on the issue of the persuasive effect of fear appeals appear to be conflicting. Therefore, additional research is needed. What have been offered are just general conclusions but not generalisations that can be applied to all situations.

2.2.1.2 PLEASANT APPEAL

Percy and Rossiter [299] indicated that "a pleasant message appeal could be reflected in the general mood of the communication or in some specific element of style, such as humour." The use of humour in persuasive communication has been investigated over the past several years. However, its effect on persuasion is not clear.

Although early research by Lull [300] provided no empirical evidence relating to the persuasive impact of humour, supporting evidence was obtained by Gruner [301], who found that source credibility can be enhanced by the use of humour, particularly when dealing with topics of low interest.

Other supporting evidence on the effect of humour in inducing persuasion was provided by Osterhouse and Brock [302]. They found that humour in a communication message appeared to reduce counter-arguing and to increase attitude change as well as producing a corresponding persistence of such change.

However, the effectiveness of humour as a persuasive technique in advertising appears to be somewhat doubtful. Existing research suggests some tentative generalisations which were summarised by Sternthal and Craig [303] as follows:-

- (1) Humorous messages attract attention.
- (2) Humorous messages may impair comprehension.
- (3) Humour may distract the audience, thereby reducing counter-argumentation and increasing persuasion.
- (4) Humorous appeals appear to be persuasive, but the persuasive effect at best is no greater than that of serious appeals.
- (5) Humour tends to enhance source credibility.
- (6) Audience characteristics may confound the effects of humour.
- (7) A humorous context may increase liking for the source and create a positive mood, which may increase the persuasive effect of the message.
- (8) To the extent that a humorous context functions as a positive reinforcer, a persuasive communication placed in such a context may be more effective than a serious appeal.

However, humour remains a very popular ingredient of marketing communications, including sales pitches.

Humorous message appeals have been adopted by the Scottish Health Education Group for its first 'general lifestyle' advertising campaign in 1978. In Baker's [304] view "this was a deliberate decision, based not on the notion of distraction but on the accepted psychological explanation of laughter as a means of releasing tension."

Thus, it seems clear that additional research on the issue is required before more definite conclusions can be reached concerning the effectiveness of humour in persuasive communication.

2.2.2 RATIONAL APPEAL

Kotler [305] described the rational appeal as "one that requires the receiver to deduce the desired conclusion from a message based upon certain general principles presented or implied within the message that the receiver accepts as true; or it may require the receiver to induce the desired conclusion as a result of believable evidence in the arguments presented."

McGuire [306] considered rational (or logical) appeals as those that "argue for a truth of a given belief by presenting evidence in favour of the likelihood of the antecedents from which a belief follows being true."

The effectiveness of the rational appeal in inducing persuasion is always analysed in comparison with emotional appeals. However, research findings on the relative effectiveness of emotional versus rational appeals in the persuasive message are inconclusive.

Hartman [307] used the two kinds of appeal during the 1936 American elections. He concluded that emotional appeal was a

better vote-getting message than rational message. Supportive evidence for Hartman's study was provided by Lewan and Stotland [308].

In contrast, other experimental findings either supported the relative persuasive effectiveness of rational appeals [309] or failed to report any difference between the two kinds of appeal (ie. emotional and rational) [310].

This variation in the findings of the research on the issue can be attributed to the difficulty of identifying the effective content stimuli; the classification of different contents as "emotional" or "rational" appeals has not been based on clear-cut operational definitions [311]. Another reason for the variation can be the receiver's inability to recognise when an emotional appeal is being used [312]. Ray [313] also pointed out that "it is impossible to clearly define the words emotional or rational, nor is it possible to discriminate clearly between them. What may be emotional to one person may be rational to another."

Other writers [314] believe that the distinction between emotional and rational is a false dichotomy. They argue that in terms of psychological judgement, both logical (or rational) and emotional appeals are not at opposite ends of a single continuum, but tend to be almost orthogonal dimensions.

(3) RECEIVER-RELATED FACTORS

In the discussion above, we examined those factors which are related to both source and message and which influence the extent to which a receiver will be persuaded by the message. This part continues the examination of the receiver by exploring those factors which influence how susceptible or resistant a receiver will be to a communicator's persuasive message.

The discussion here is based on the assumption that communication is a mutual interactive process which implies that both receiver and source have a determinant role in the effectiveness of persuasive communication [315]. Within this context, a receiver has an active role to play in the communication process. Davison [316] made this approach clear when he stated:-

"The communicator's audience is not a passive recipient - it cannot be regarded as a lump of clay to be molded by the master propagandist. Rather, the audience is made up of individuals who demand something from the communication to which they are exposed, and who select those that are likely to be useful to them."

In every communication situation, the receiver's response is influenced by several factors which play major roles in determining how receptive, how accepting, or how resistant a receiver will be to a persuasive message.

To facilitate the discussion in this part, we will examine these factors within four major categories: (1) personality factors, (2) demographic factors, (3) the reference groups effects, and (4) the situational factors. Each of these categories will now be discussed briefly:

3.1 PERSONALITY FACTORS

Personality characteristics have probably been studied more than other factors in their relation to persuasion [317]. In this part, an attempt to examine some significant personality factors and their relationships with susceptibility to persuasion will be undertaken.

3.1.1 INTELLECTUAL ABILITY

Intelligence has always been expected to correlate with susceptibility to persuasion. Percy and Rossiter [318] suggested that "the more intelligent a receiver, the more resistant to a persuasive communication." They argued that the more intelligent the receiver is, the more arguments he possesses in support of beliefs and attitudes.

Hovland and his associates [319] defined a person's intellectual ability as being made up of three basic interacting components: (1) learning ability (the mental ability to acquire information and remember), (2) critical ability (which enables a person to assess the rationality of messages and thereby to accept or reject a message on a logical basis), and (3) ability to draw inferences (which is the ability to interpret messages and derive sound implications based on the facts contained in the message).

Early research reported by Hovland and his associates [320] failed to establish any empirical evidence for a relationship between intelligence and susceptibility to persuasion. However, when the effect of intelligence was assessed within the context of various message approaches, two strong relationships emerged:-

- (1) Persons with high intelligence will tend to be more influenced than those with low intellectual ability

when exposed to persuasive communications which rely primarily on impressive logical arguments.

- (2) Persons with high intelligence will tend to be less influenced than those with low intelligence when exposed to persuasive communications which rely primarily on unsupported generalities or illogical arguments.

Ross [321] indicated that no evidence has been found for a relationship between intelligence and persuasibility. However, he argued that "various intellectual abilities related to intelligence such as thinking and concentration, which affect how a person attends to communication, do suggest relationships to persuasibility."

With regard to advertising communication, McGuire [322] suggested that the more intelligent the receiver, the greater the likelihood that he will adequately and correctly comprehend and encode the content of the advertising message. Moreover, when a persuasive message has an element of subtlety or involves fairly complex material, one would expect it to be more likely that a more intelligent receiver would be persuaded.

3.1.2 SELF-ESTEEM

Ross [323] defined self-esteem as "the value a person places on himself." People with low self-esteem "are believed to be more susceptible to persuasion because they lack confidence in their judgements and therefore tend to rely on the opinions of others. People with high self-esteem, on the other hand, are confident and sure of their own ability to make judgments and are therefore much less susceptible to persuasion." [324]

Self-esteem is perhaps the most studied personality characteristic in connection with persuasion or influence. Empirical research on the effect of low versus high self-esteem on the individual's susceptibility to persuasion yielded conflicting results. While some studies indicated that individuals with low self-esteem are more persuasible than those with high self-esteem [325], other studies [326] suggested that self-esteem is a complicated variable, in which the relationship between the message and all parties to the situation must be taken into account if an accurate prediction is to be achieved.

A study which has direct implications for advertising is that of Cox and Bauer [327]. These researchers found that susceptibility to persuasive messages may be an inverted U-shaped function of the level of self-esteem. The researchers asked women to choose between two brands of nylon stockings which, unknown to the subjects, were identical. After making their choice, the subjects listened to a tape-recorded presentation ostensibly made by a salesclerk favouring one of the brands. The researchers found that women subjects with medium self-confidence had the greatest opinion change whereas at the two extremes, women with both low and high self-esteem were low in susceptibility to the persuasive message. The researchers explained their results by suggesting that "the women whose self-esteem was low acted in an ego-defensive manner, ie. they rejected the salesclerk's persuasive message to protect their ego."

3.1.3 DOGMATISM

Rokeach [328] defined dogmatism as "a personality trait that measures the amount of rigidity a person displays toward the unfamiliar and toward information that is contrary to his own established beliefs." The author used the terms "closed-minded" and "dogmatic" as synonymous, stating that they "refer to the

ways in which individuals tend to approach people, ideas, beliefs, and messages."

The effect of dogmatism on the individual's susceptibility to persuasion has been the subject of a number of studies. In a study conducted by Bettinghaus and his associates [329], the findings revealed that more open-minded individuals tended to evaluate messages according to their own criteria, rather than on the recommendations of trusted authorities. The implications of this study for persuasive communication are clear. They suggest that open-minded individuals have greater ability to evaluate the ideas in a message apart from the sources or supporters of those ideas. Thus, a persuasive message which argues for change in the social order ought to be more successful with receivers who are open-minded than with those who are closed-minded.

Although people cannot simply be categorised as either dogmatic or open-minded, because most lie along a continuum between these two points [330], the open versus closed-mindedness typology provides an analytical classification which advertisers should consider when they design their persuasive messages.

3.1.4 AUTHORITARIANISM

Basically, this personality characteristic "is concerned with the relative power and status of others, as well as personal power and status. Moreover, an authoritarian type of person tends to identify with others who have power and who hold leadership positions." [331]

Our concern here is to examine how this type of personality reacts to the persuasive attempts of communication.

In this regard, psychologists have conducted research on individuals who possess in varying degrees what has been termed the "authoritarian personality." The emphasis in this research has been on the reaction of certain personality types to situations involving persuasive communication. A study which seems applicable to the general study of persuasive communication was conducted by Harvey and Beverly [332]. They found that high authoritarians changed in the direction of the position advocated by a high status source to a significantly greater degree than did low authoritarians. They also found, however, that the high authoritarians could not reproduce the points made in the advocated message with the same degree of accuracy as the low authoritarians. The reported attitude change seemed to be the result of the perceived status and power of the source, rather than the strength of the message itself [333].

However, Bettinhaus argued that merely possessing a highly authoritarian personality does not necessarily mean that a person will be more persuasible. As he stated, "Authoritarianism seems to be linked to the use or nonuse of authorities, and is not necessarily related to persuasion in all situations. Understanding authoritarianism as a personality factor and using those particular kinds of messages which emphasise the endorsement of trusted authorities ought to result in more successful persuasion." [334]

Thus, with respect to the relationship between the authoritarian receiver and his susceptibility to persuasive communication, two major conclusions can be drawn:-

- (1) An authoritarian personality tends to be more susceptible to persuasive messages attributed to communicators who are themselves authority figures than to persuasive messages from anonymous sources.

- (2) A non-authoritarian personality tends to be more susceptible to persuasive messages attributed to anonymous sources than to those attributed to authority figures.

These conclusions have significant implications for advertising communication. They suggest that highly authoritarian consumers may be more willing to accept products or services than non-authoritarian consumers if the advertisements containing these products or services are presented (endorsed) in an authoritative manner.

In conclusion, the personality traits discussed above are some of the more important traits related to persuasibility. The main purpose of this brief discussion was to explore the importance of personality factors in relation to the communicator's attempt to persuade receivers to accept his views on a given topic. For advertisers, the usefulness of understanding consumers' personality characteristics is considerable. Certainly, through identifying and exploring personality characteristics in purchase behaviour, different messages could be designed to appeal to various market segments. However, it must be stressed that further research is required on the exact nature of the relationship before precise practical guidelines can be offered.

The discussion now turns to examine another group of factors which relate to the receiver and which influence his susceptibility to persuasive communication - the demographic factors.

3.2 SEX AND PERSUASIBILITY

One of the variables which has been extensively investigated in its relationship to persuasibility is sex. A number of studies have suggested differences between males and females in the ways in which they react to persuasive communication.

In an early study, Janis and Field [335] suggested that men and women differ in persuasibility, with women in their study being more persuasible. However, the differences between the two sexes were small, though significant.

Scheidel [336] was also interested in examining the effect of sex on the receiver's susceptibility to persuasive communication. He reported that "(1) women were significantly more persuasible than men, (2) women transfer persuasive appeal significantly more than men, and (3) women retained significantly less of the speech content than did the men."

However, "research findings concerning women and persuasibility do not present evidence that the sex difference in persuasibility is due to physiological differences, rather the difference is explained in terms of typed roles played by men and women." [337] Also, Faison [338] pointed out that "there seems to be a cultural factor that affects the relative persuasibility of the two sexes. Females are often placed in roles as housewife or mother, where culture dictates an acceptance of others' opinions."

3.3 PERSONAL SITUATIONAL FACTORS

In the discussion above, an attempt was made to examine the effect of the receiver's personality traits and sex on his persuasibility. However, there are also some personal situational factors which have a potential effect on the

individual's susceptibility to persuasion, such as his initial attitude toward the subject matter advocated in the persuasive message, the level of involvement, the perceived interest, the selective exposure and membership of a reference group. Each of these factors are discussed below.

3.3.1 THE INITIAL ATTITUDE

The effect of the person's initial attitude on his persuasibility has been a major concern of scholars. Theoretically, assimilation-contrast theory^{*} (or social judgement theory) as developed by Sherif and his associates [339] is considered to be the main theoretical means of explaining the effect of the receiver's initial attitude on his persuasibility. The theory suggests that people accept attitudes and beliefs which fall within their latitude of acceptance (assimilation) and reject those which fall within their latitude of rejection (contrast).

Generally speaking, if the change recommended in the persuasive message is too extreme, the opposite effect will result and the message will be rejected as too extreme. On the other hand, if the position suggested by the persuasive message is not too highly discrepant (ie. moderate) from that held by the receiver, assimilation will result.

Thus, according to assimilation-contrast theory, the perceived discrepancy (the degree of variation between the position proposed in the communication and the receiver's attitude or opinion) becomes the crucial factor affecting the degree of

* Assimilation-contrast theory is discussed in several places later in this thesis.

influence exerted by a persuasive communication upon attitude [340].

The above account, however, is oversimplified. According to Sherif and Hovland, the important discrepancy is not the discrepancy between communication and attitude or opinion, but between communication and latitude of acceptance [341].

This notion has been supported by Percy and Rossiter [342]. The authors argued that:-

"A persuasive communication is assumed to put pressure on the receiver to change an attitude or behaviour toward the object of the message. The greater the pressure, the greater the likelihood of change, provided the advocated position is not perceived to fall within the receiver's latitude of rejection; at that point, change in position should decrease with the magnitude of the original discrepancy. For example, suppose one knows that the position of a group of target receivers on use of a particular type of product is quite favourable. This favourable position would be considered by Sherif and Hovland as the receiver's "anchor" or point of reference in the perception of any persuasive attempt dealing with that category of behaviour."

However, empirical research on the effect of discrepancy between the communication and the receiver's initial position on his attitude change has yielded contradictory findings.

Most of the studies found that the greater the discrepancy between the communication and the receiver's initial position, the greater the change [343]. However, Cohen [344] found that the greater the discrepancy, the less the attitudinal change

obtained. In addition, Freedman [345] and Insko, Murashima and Saiyadain [346] found a curvilinear relationship between discrepancy and change. These contradictory findings suggest that discrepancy seems to interact with other variables such as source credibility and ego-involvement [347].

In a recent study conducted by Cacioppo, Petty and Sidera [348], the researchers attempted to examine the effect of discrepancy on the receiver's persuasibility. They identified two groups of students who were attending a major Catholic University. Some of the students tended to think of themselves as more religious than legalistic in moral orientation, whereas others viewed themselves as more legalistic than religious. Subjects received a pro-attitudinal message that employed either a religious or a legalistic perspective on the issue. In evaluating the arguments, the students rated the arguments that were consistent with their self-schemata as more persuasive than the arguments that were inconsistent.

Thus, the effect of the discrepancy on the receiver's susceptibility to persuasive messages is not totally supported with hard evidence; therefore, the generalisations of assimilation-contrast theory provide a rationale that can be followed in any persuasive communication. It follows that the more a position advanced by a persuasive message is perceived to be a receiver's own stand, the more likely it is to fall within his latitude of acceptance [349].

It could be concluded that the person's initial attitude may be one of the most important variables which determine whether favourable or unfavourable cognitive responses are elicited by a persuasive communication.

3.3.2 LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT

Although there is no universally accepted definition of the involvement construct, researchers agree that "the idea pertains to the degree to which individuals behave actively rather than passively with respect to a certain object or subject matter."
[350]

In terms of marketing communication, involvement was defined by Lastovicka and Gardner [351] as "the activation of extended problem-solving behaviour when the act of purchase or consumption is seen by the decision-maker as having high personal importance or relevance. This can take place when the product itself is perceived as reflecting on one's self-image, as might be the case with some clothing, jewelry, or cosmetic items."

The above two definitions share the notion that involvement is an extended form of problem-solving, because there is an active search for and use of information involved. However, the second definition is more comprehensive, because it does not simply define involvement, but rather sets out the conditions under which the involvement can be activated, namely, personal importance and relevance.

Involvement was a major concern of assimilation-contrast theory. It stated that "the latitudes of acceptance and rejection vary in size according to the degree of ego-involvement. With an increasing degree of ego-involvement, the latitude of acceptance decreases and the latitude of rejection increases." [352]

Indeed, this is an important assumption because it allows for the prediction that with a high level of involvement, the likelihood of rejecting the persuasive message will increase, and with a low level of involvement the likelihood of accepting the persuasive

message will decrease.

Despite the considerable supporting evidence provided by empirical research on the relationship between the receiver's involvement and his susceptibility to persuasive communication [353], there is some evidence that such a relationship does not exist. For instance, Miller [354] found that involvement of high school students in their attitudes toward the amount of mathematics and science in the high school curriculum had no effect on latitudes of acceptance or rejection.

If the manipulation of the involvement factor was adequate, the findings of Miller's study are fairly damaging to assimilation-contrast theory. Unfortunately, two pieces of evidence suggested that "the manipulation of involvement variable was adequate. First, an after-assessment of attitude toward the curriculum issue obtained from various Likert items demonstrated that the involvement procedure did succeed in creating extreme attitudes. Second, a before-after assessment revealed that the communication content presented to both groups of students was more persuasive in the group uninvolved on the issue." [355]

It is worth noting that the findings of the research conducted in the context of consumer behaviour are consistent with the assumption of assimilation-contrast theory on the relationship between ego-involvement and the likelihood of acceptance (reverse relationship). There is growing consensus that a highly involved consumer will have a narrow latitude of acceptance, and wide latitude of rejection around beliefs on salient attributes [356].

However, in the context of advertising, findings of some research demonstrated that both content-processing involvement and message modality affected the influence of cognitive processes on acceptance of the message [357].

In a most significant study conducted by Woodside [358], the researcher reported the following findings:-

- (1) Increases in consumer involvement with the offers in advertisements produced increases in the number of thoughts generated about such offers.
- (2) Increases in consumer involvement with the offers in advertisements produced increases in consumer recall of the advertisements, and recall of the central message. However, the results did not support the proposition that advertisement involvement and advertisement comprehension are related.
- (3) Increases in consumer involvement with the offer in the advertisement did not produce increases in consumer's attitudes, attentions, and choice of the brands advertised.
- (4) The significant and nonsignificant relationships between advertisement involvement, thought processing, attitude, attention, and choice measures were fairly consistent.
- (5) Thought production increased positive attitudes and intentions to buy.

The implications of this study are important for persuasive communication in general and advertising in particular. The results of the study revealed that consumer involvement with advertisement messages is likely to generate thoughts relating to the advertisement offers. Consumers were also likely to connect advertisement-message generated thoughts to their personal experience and "if consumers generate such thoughts, their attitude toward purchase, intentions to purchase, and choice of the brand advertised are likely to increase." [359]

However, as the researcher himself acknowledged, "the results reported in the study are tentative findings. Readers should not draw conclusions until these findings can be supported by further empirical research."

Finally, it could be concluded that the findings of empirical research on the effect of the receiver's involvement on his persuasibility provided no hard evidence concerning the nature and the direction of this relationship. Therefore, until empirical research can provide more solid, valid and reliable conclusions, the existing findings should be generalised with caution.

3.3.3 PERCEIVED INTEREST

Berelson and Steiner [360] concluded that a person's interests make him susceptible to messages which appeal to those interests. The authors stated that "communications that are thought to represent some particular interest or characteristic of the audience are more influential on opinion than general undifferentiated sources. Thus, communications directed to a particular audience are more effective than those directed to the public at large."

Indeed, this conclusion can be expanded to include audience goals and needs. To induce the receiver's action, the behaviour suggested in a persuasive message should be perceived as a means of satisfying certain needs or motives, or of solving problems [361]. Therefore, to the extent that the message is relevant to the receiver's needs and interests, the receiver will be more likely to classify the message as uniquely relevant, and accept it.

Also, the behaviour recommended in the message should be perceived by a receiver as a means of achieving his goal or solving his problem. This view has been supported by Cartwright and Zander [362] who suggested that "it is possible for O to influence P by giving him - with no strings attached - something he needs to accomplish an objective."

Moreover, in the advertising context, where many messages are competing with each other (particularly in the case of comparative advertising), the message which a person perceives as the best one to help him attain his goal(s) is the one which will be chosen [363].

It seems clear that the receiver's selectivity is closely related to the perceived interest. So a thorough analysis of an audience's or a market's interests, goals, and problems can lead to an effective formulation of persuasive message appeal.

At this point, the discussion now turns to deal with those factors which are related to media (channel).

(4) MEDIA-RELATED FACTORS

Communication channels (or media) are "the means through which a single or multiple source conveys a message to one or more receivers, and might be thought of in broad terms as either interpersonal means or mass media vehicles of communication." [364] Thus, according to the definition, a persuasive message can be conveyed either through interpersonal means or the means of mass media.

Interpersonal channels tend to be two-way, face-to-face interactions, such as word-of-mouth communication, while mass media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and television, are frequently very diverse and spread out [365].

It should be noted that in the interpersonal communication situation, the source and channel can be the same individual. Alternatively, the individual who is the communication channel may only be a mediator, as is the case in a multi-step communication in which an advertiser seeks out opinion leaders as target audience receivers in the expectation that they will then communicate the advertiser's message to other individuals. On the other hand, with mass media the source is usually perceived as distinct from the channel [366].

In the rest of this section we shall deal with those factors that affect the relative effectiveness of various media as vehicles of persuasive communication. These factors are discussed below.

4.1 TYPE OF MEDIA

A question frequently asked concerns the relative effectiveness of the various types of media for persuasive communication. "The comparison between a spoken and a written message has been a topical issue since the times of classic Greece." [367]

Since that time, the question of whether one medium is more effective than the others has been the primary concern of many researchers; however, the conclusion that always emerges is that "no one medium is always better than another. Each medium has certain strategic advantages, and therefore, there are differences that influence the decision as to when and how they should be used." [368]

This conclusion has been supported by McLuhan [369]. He asserted that "the advent of each new medium has not represented simply a new tool for artists or advertisers. Rather, each new medium has had a profound effect on society - changing the cultural values and patterns of life."

At a general level, Rogers [370] compared the relative effectiveness of mass media and interpersonal communication. He argued that "mass media variables are effective in changing cognitions, or one's knowledge about a subject, but interpersonal channels of communication tend to be more effective when the goal of a communication is to change attitude."

In regard to the relative effectiveness of the different types within the mass media, differences have been observed. For instance, McLuhan [371] compared the effectiveness of the printed word and pictures in communication. He stated that "the medium of print is limited in its effect because it is linear. One word comes after the other, imposing an order of presentation of ideas to the reader. The use of letters to stand for ideas has the

effect of distilling much of the emotionality of an idea. The word flag, for example, is less emotional than the picture of a flag, fluttered and singed, waving proudly from a battered staff after a battle. In psychological terms, a picture contains more relevant cues than a printed word."

Moreover, McLuhan suggested that the linearity of print is particularly restrictive for younger people who have grown up with television. According to McLuhan, "Younger people are less interested in linear thinking. They rely more on visual messages, which to them create greater involvement or excitement." [372] On the other hand, Faison [373], pointed out that "although the introduction of television reduced the time people spent on other media, their total time devoted to all media actually increased."

However, the conclusions of the two researchers are not contradictory, since McLuhan's conclusion was directed towards younger people. However, "situational considerations often have a mediating effect on the time spent with each particular medium by the receiver. The more appealing under the circumstances, the more time a receiver will spend with it, and hence its effect on overall allocation of the receiver's time will be greater." [374]

Unfortunately, attempts to assess the relative effectiveness of different media by studying their normal effects on actual readers, listeners, or viewers have faced serious difficulties. Percy and Rossiter [375] expressed these difficulties as follows: "It is difficult to distinguish whether it is receiver characteristics or media characteristics, for example, that would be responsible for differences in attraction to a medium overall or in various situations."

Moreover, Lazarfeld [376] argued some time ago that only after it is known who each medium reaches, and why people are attracted to it, does it make any sense to compare the effects of media.

Also, the difficulty involved in comparing the effects of different types of media was expressed by White [377]. He stated that "It is, therefore extremely difficult, a priori, to demonstrate that a single medium is successful, let alone that one medium is superior to another. No one has devised a research method, short of market trials, that can compare different media - and even such tests have their pitfalls."

Thus, it seems clear that no medium is necessarily more effective than another under all conditions. This does not mean, of course, that media in general have no effective role in persuasive communication.

However, the comparison between different media has yielded some worthwhile findings when the relationship between media and other factors, such as source credibility and receiver involvement has been explored. One of the factors that influences media effectiveness is the trustworthiness of the communication source. Andreoli and Worchel [378] found that television is the better medium for credible communicators, whereas sources of lower credibility were more persuasive in print. One explanation of this finding is the difference in involvement. Bogart [379] and Wright [380] found in separate studies that there is greater cognitive effort, or involvement, when a message is presented in print rather than broadcast.

Another aspect of involvement was investigated by Krugman [381]. He showed that involvement is affected by the method of viewing, adding that "print requires an actively scanning eye: TV is viewed with a focused or passive eye." Also, "brain wave patterns demonstrated that much more cognitive activity is associated with print. When viewers watch TV, they can sit back and let the stimuli pour over them with little work involved."
[382]

In another study, Krugman [383], suggested that television requires more right-brain activity involving the perception of images, whereas print requires more left-brain activity involving linear thinking including speech and reading.

Although Krugman's studies did not demonstrate any relative effectiveness of one single medium over another, they provided some indication as to when each of the different types of media might be more effective. The studies thus offer some basis for audience segmentation.

4.2 MEDIA INPUT CONTROL

The amount of receiver control is a more discriminating characteristic of mass media [384]. Whether a receiver is reading a magazine or newspaper, he has more control over the communication situation than in other mass media communication situations such as radio or television. He has the opportunity to pace himself, to study points of particular interest, or re-read an entire piece if it is desirable or helpful. In contrast, the receiver who listens to radio or a viewer of television has no such control [385]. These differences are not important for simple messages, but complex messages can be comprehended more effectively when presented in print where the reader can control the input [386].

Concerning the relative effectiveness of different types of mass media relating to the persuasiveness of the message, Percy and Rossiter [387] suggested that "the more control exercised by the receiver, the more effective is learning; the more control exercised by the source of the message, the more effective is persuasion."

However, the authors added, "to maximise one stage of message processing adversely affects another. For example, choosing a print media would tend to increase the probability of learning through more receiver control, but lessen the probability of persuasion (which would be more likely if a broadcast medium had been chosen)."

Again, while these propositions might theoretically be accepted, there are no hard empirical findings to support them.

4.3 MEDIA PRESTIGE

There are many possible vehicles for conveying the communication message within the particular type of mass media; for example, in every major market there are many radio stations and a variety of magazines. "Attitudes toward these vehicles differ widely."
[388]

In the context of persuasive communication, it is important to know whether the prestige or reputation of the medium being used influences attitudes toward the subject of the persuasive messages.

In advertising, an experimental study conducted by Fuchs [389] indicated that the prestige of the medium can have an important effect on attitudes toward the advertisement. The results revealed that advertisements in high-prestige magazines can be more effective than those in low-prestige magazines.

In summary, the three media-related factors mentioned in the discussion above represent the most significant factors that may influence the relative effectiveness of an individual medium regarding its effect on the persuasive communication.

To this end, we discussed four essential dimensions of persuasive communication (source, message, receiver and media channels). In our discussion of the factors influencing persuasive communication, we examined a wide set of factors which are related to these four dimensions in their connection with persuasive communication. The main purpose of this discussion was to provide a comprehensive framework which might be useful in designing any persuasive message. Indeed, this framework would help advertising message developers in tailoring their messages in such a manner as to achieve the desired ends.

In order to complete our discussion of persuasive communication, we now deal with the question of cognitive dissonance within the communication process.

SECTION 7: COGNITIVE DISSONANCE AND THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

An important factor influencing the effectiveness of communication in establishing the common sharing of meaning, and in turn, inducing persuasion, is cognitive dissonance. Therefore, the discussion in this section deals with cognitive dissonance as a major determinant of the effectiveness of the communication process, and covers the following issues:-

- (1) Nature and causes of cognitive dissonance.
- (2) Dissonance and the choice process.
- (3) Reducing dissonance in communication.

Each of these issues is discussed below.

(1) NATURE AND CAUSES OF COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

The concept of cognitive dissonance was introduced by Festinger [390]. The basic assumption of the cognitive dissonance theory is that two cognitions that are inconsistent with one another will produce a state of discomfort or dissonance.

It follows that dissonance represents a state of psychological tension which is said to exist when an individual receives two pieces of information which do not fit together psychologically [391].

Festinger [392] stated that, "in the absence of other forces, it may be assumed that a person avoids listening to a persuasive communication which disagrees with his point of view. And, if he is induced to choose to listen to the persuasive communication, he will experience dissonance."

In this sense, dissonance is related to the selective exposure principle, which states that "people tend to see and hear communications that are favourable or congenial to their predispositions; they are more likely to see and hear congenial communications than neutral or hostile ones." [393]

It follows, therefore, that any threat to this principle will produce the state of dissonance. However, although a considerable body of empirical research questioned the validity of the basic assumptions of cognitive dissonance theory, these assumptions are widely accepted [394].

In general terms, DeLozier [395] stated three basic reasons for dissonance. These are:-

- (1) Logical inconsistency - dissonance occurs when the effect does not follow its logical expected cause, in any cause-effect relationship. A dramatic example is that of "an individual who is standing in the rain without an umbrella or rain gear, but not getting wet."
- (2) The inconsistency between an attitude and behaviour or between two behaviours by the same person.
- (3) The disconfirmed expectation. Dissonance produced by this condition is most likely to occur during postpurchase evaluation."

However, as DeLozier added, dissonance is greatest when the alternatives from which a consumer has to choose are very similar to each other.

Consistent with this notion, Baker [396] pointed out that "... it is clear that in any choice situation there is a potential for dissonance, as recognition of choice implies alternative solutions to a perceived need. In many consumer purchasing situations these alternatives are very similar and the propensity for dissonance is correspondingly greater."

Narver and Savitt [397] indicated that "cognitive dissonance can arise when expectation is not fulfilled in one or two ways: (1) undesirable elements in the product that were known before purchase but were outweighed by want-satisfying elements when the decision was made, and (2) the introduction of new information after the purchase was made."

Engel and Blackwell [398] cited seven post-choice reasons for dissonance. These are :-

- (1) A certain minimum level of dissonance tolerance is surpassed. Individuals can live with inconsistency in many areas of their lives until this point is reached.
- (2) The action is irrevocable.
- (3) Unchosen alternatives have desirable features.
- (4) A number of desirable alternatives are available.
- (5) The individual is committed to his decision because of its psychological significance to him.
- (6) Available alternatives are qualitatively dissimilar - that is, each has some desirable unique features.
- (7) Perception and thought about unchosen alternatives is undertaken as a result of free will with little or no outside applied pressure.

It seems clear that in almost all choice situations, there is a level of dissonance involved. Therefore, it would be useful to discuss dissonance in the choice decision process. This will be the focus of the next part.

(2) DISSONANCE AND THE CHOICE PROCESS

It is worth mentioning that Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance is a theory of post-action attitude formation [399]. For this reason, most of the researchers in the consumer behaviour field discussed the implications of the cognitive dissonance concept in a postpurchase situation [400].

Schiffman and Kanuk [401] argued that the consumer, as a part of his postpurchase analysis, tries to reduce any "lingering uncertainty or doubt" that he might have about his choice by convincing himself that his choice was a wise one. Chisnall [402] emphasised the notion of postpurchase dissonance. He pointed out that a consumer "may experience some doubts as to the wisdom of his choice, particularly when the qualities of rejected alternative products are brought to his notice." He added, "The product to which he is now committed may fail to live up to his expectations in some way or other. Its negative features may begin to cause him nagging doubts; he is, in fact, experiencing post-decisional dissonance."

Also, Engel and Blackwell [403], in their model of high-involvement decision process behaviour, posited dissonance as the alternative outcome to satisfaction. They pointed out that "post-choice doubt is motivated by awareness that one alternative was chosen and the existence of beliefs that unchosen alternatives also have desirable attributes."

However, it has been reported that dissonance may occur in any stage of the decision making process. Baker [404] emphasised this notion when he stated that "... dissonance can occur at any stage of the purchase decision, though most interest has been shown in the postpurchase situation, when commitment has been made to a particular choice, and is likely to be most acute in the case of a major decision."

In the same spirit, Rogers and Shoemaker [405] stated that dissonance can occur in any decision regarding an innovation. It may occur: (1) when the individual recognises the problem (or need) to be solved. Therefore, he seeks information concerning the available alternatives which may provide a solution to his problem or need, (2) after that the individual may be motivated to adopt the innovation. Here, dissonance may occur as a result of his beliefs and actions, and (3) after the decision to adopt an innovation has been made, the individual may seek further information to validate his choice decision.

The notion that dissonance exists in all stages of the choice decision process (ie. pre/postpurchase decision) was also confirmed by Linden and his associates [406] and Walster and Walster [407].

Despite this variation of view concerning when dissonance occurs, our view leans towards supporting the all-stages dissonance notion (ie. dissonance occurs in all stages of the choice decision process). However, we have four major reservations. The first is that the dissonance which may occur in the pre-decision stages happens under conditions of perceived uncertainty and a certain level of perceived risk, for example, at the stage of evaluation of alternatives, when the alternatives in question possess an equal amount of desirability [408] and/or each alternative option has some desirable unique features [409]. However, post-decisional dissonance occurs under the certainty

condition, where the individual realises that a degree of the perceived risk has already occurred, at least, as far as he perceives. Second, the level of dissonance is assumed to be related to the degree of the individual's involvement in the decision situation. It could be expected that the higher the involvement is, the greater is the potential dissonance produced if the individual's expectations relating to the outcome of the decision are not confirmed. Third, the amount of dissonance produced in the pre-decision stages is assumed to be less than the dissonance in the post-decision stage. This variation can be attributed to the level of the individual's commitment to and responsibility for his action. While this commitment is very limited in the pre-decision situation, it is greater in the post-decision situation.

Finally, in the information search process which follows the experience of dissonance, there is a high perceptual selectivity involved. While this selectivity in the pre-decision dissonance tends to be rational because the individual attempts to reduce the perceived risk associated with his choice, the selectivity of the information search in the post-decision dissonance tends to be biased, because the individual attempts to expose himself only to the information which supports his choice and avoids information which contradicts it [410].

Now, given that cognitive dissonance represents a state of conflict and psychological tension which has to be avoided or at least reduced to a state of equilibrium, the question here is, how can an individual remove or reduce the state of dissonance? This is what we shall consider in the following section.

(3) REDUCING DISSONANCE IN COMMUNICATION

Cognitive dissonance theory argues that the human psyche is always seeking to maintain a state of mental "consonance" or equilibrium. Anything that upsets this state is unacceptable or uncomfortable and has, therefore, to be changed [411]. Accordingly, an individual "strives towards consistency (consonance, agreement, equilibrium) within his cognitive structure (set of beliefs about people, products, events, etc) and endeavours to reduce tension so as to make life pleasant." [412]

Consistent with these views, Baker [413] pointed out that " ... clearly, dissonant cognitions create a state of psychological tension, which the individual seeks to avoid, reduce or eliminate." Thus, the change (reduction) in the dissonance level is necessary and inevitable, but the question is, how can this be achieved? Indeed, several ways to reduce dissonance have been suggested in the literature, the following being the most significant.

3.1 RATIONALISATION

The choice decision is a goal-directed process through which the individual expects to achieve a desired end (eg. satisfaction). If this desired end has not been achieved, because an individual has received new information which casts doubts on his decision, dissonance occurs. Indeed, this dissonance implies a frustrating experience which an individual becomes keen to eliminate. In this regard, one psychological defence strategy that might be adopted is rationalisation [414] through which the individual tries to assure himself of the correctness of his decision. If dissonance has been experienced, the individual's perception that his decision was irrevocable (ie. in a situation where there are

other unchosen desirable alternatives) may make him try to increase the perceived attractiveness of the chosen alternative, and/or to downgrade the desirability of those not chosen [415]. In addition, "a consumer may rationalise his decision by concluding that all alternatives are essentially identical, even though this was not felt to be true during the prepurchase deliberations." [416]

There is supportive empirical evidence in the marketing literature that confirms the existence of these defence mechanisms used by consumers in order to reduce dissonance. In a study conducted by Loscuito and Perloff [417] a chosen record album was demonstrated to have been reranked as more desirable than the unchosen alternative, which was downgraded in desirability. Similar findings have been reported by a number of researchers [418].

3.2 SELECTIVE EXPOSURE

In Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance, selective exposure plays a central role as a primary mechanism for dissonance reduction. In this sense, cognitive dissonance theory argues that when dissonance is present, an individual will actively avoid situations and information which would be likely to increase dissonance [419].

Accordingly, a consumer in a dissonant situation will endeavour to reassure himself by seeking information in support of his choice, and also by avoiding sources of information which are likely to reduce his purchasing confidence. For example, "a consumer may actively collect data which reflects disadvantageously on the alternative choices, and/or may selection information favourable to his chosen alternative." [420]

Consistent with this conclusion, Schiffman and Kanuk [421] pointed out that "a consumer attempts to reduce postpurchase cognitive dissonance by seeking out advertisements that support his choice and avoids those of competitive brands." Thus, the selective exposure principle has an augmentative effect in postpurchase evaluation. For this reason, various studies have indicated that advertising should be aimed at present users as well as potential users of brand(s) in order to sustain and provide reassurance concerning some purchasing decisions which have already been made by the consumer.

In a study conducted by Riesman and Larrabee [422], the researchers concluded:-

"A great deal of advertising, contrary to what one might expect, is read after rather than before the car is bought, and serves to repersuade the reader that he has been wise and practical."

However, the findings of this study did not confirm that dissonance reduction is the motivation for postpurchase search for information. As Engel and Blackwell [423] explained, "it is equally possible that a new owner will be set to notice advertisements simply because of the fact that an important new product has entered his or her life. This is a common phenomenon unrelated to dissonance."

Thus, it could be concluded that the validity of selective exposure as a dissonance-reduction approach has been shown to be rather unsatisfactory and therefore needs further investigation.

3.3 INDUCING SIMILAR DECISIONS BY OTHERS

A consumer who experiences the feeling of postpurchase dissonance may tend to persuade other people - especially those with whom he is in regular contact - to make purchasing decisions similar to that with which he is dissatisfied. In addition, a consumer may turn to others who are satisfied with the same choice he made [425].

3.4 DISTORTING DISSONANT INFORMATION

Another approach through which an individual can reduce post-decisional dissonance is by distorting information that is not consistent with his needs, values, beliefs, and so forth [426]. This conclusion has been supported by Groot [427]. The author pointed out that if the dissonant information is too powerful to be ignored or avoided, it can be distorted.

3.5 ATTITUDE CHANGE

A final possible strategy by which an individual can reduce post-decisional dissonance is by changing his attitude [428] to the level that achieves balance in the individual's cognitive structure. When an individual fails to reduce the dissonance by one or more of the above strategies, he would be more likely to alter the attitude, opinion or belief which led him to make what he perceives as an unsatisfactory decision so that it is no longer in a "dissonant relationship" with his behaviour or another cognitive element.

Taking the foregoing discussion into consideration, one may suggest that the above strategies provide two broad types of dissonance-reduction mechanisms. In the first, an individual

tries to defend his choice preference criteria and assure the correctness of his decision. This type contains the first four strategies. In applying one or more of these strategies, the individual is directed by a tendency to augment and reassure his self-concept. Since a choice decision reflects on the individual, he tries to sustain his self-concept by justifying his choice. This conclusion is supported by the notion that "specific goal-objects are often chosen because symbolically they reflect the individual's own self-image." [429]

In the second, the individual tries to reduce the dissonance by changing his perceptions (including some aspects of his self-perception, attitude, etc).

While these dissonance-reduction strategies involve the individual who experiences the dissonance (ie. the receiver of the communication), dissonance in the communication process can be reduced by the communicator through obtaining perfect and complete knowledge about the intended audience, especially about "the existing levels of awareness, attitude and buying action" since they "are factors in the target audience, and help to define the targets more specifically." [430]

Also, knowledge about the personality, predispositions and needs of the audience is considered necessary to reduce dissonance in the communication process [431].

Consistent with this conclusion, Webster and Wind [432] stated that the "buyer's personality, perceived role set, motivation and learning are considered the basic psychological processes which affect his response to the buying situation, and marketing stimuli provided by potential vendors."

Star and his associates [433] reported that "any attempt to satisfy consumer's needs will have scant opportunity to do so

unless target customers: (1) are aware that the product exists, (2) understand what it is assumed to do for them, and what the product benefits are compared with alternatives, and (3) have at least some idea of where or how to obtain it."

Considering the above conclusions, one may argue that dissonance in the communication process can be reduced in the following ways:-

- (1) Getting more information about the intended audience.
- (2) Providing the intended audience with accurate and adequate information about the product's features and its concealed benefits.

It follows, therefore, that dissonance theory does have some rather interesting implications for advertising, implications which suggest that advertising is most persuasive if it reinforces ideas and notions that already exist about brands, rather than changing such notions.

A final comment in this regard is that the more the advertising is able to reduce consumers dissonance, the more persuasive it will be.

SECTION 8: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this chapter was to conceptualise the persuasive communication process. Because persuasion always involves communication, it was found appropriate to begin our discussion in this chapter with defining the term 'communication,' discussing the structure of the communication process and discussing some communication models which contributed to the development of communication thought. In addition, a comprehensive discussion of the major features of persuasive communication was conducted. The discussion focused on the definition of persuasion and approaches to persuasion, and then examined factors which influence the persuasive communication process.

In defining communication, several definitions were examined. The discussion of these definitions led us to conclude that communication is a process through which a meaningful message is transferred by one person to another person(s). For the communication to be effective and successful, the process must result in establishing a common sharing between the source of the message and the receiver.

Concerning the structure of the communication process, we discussed the basic components: source, message, channel, and receiver. In addition, the major processes involved in the communication process were discussed, these being encoding, decoding, feedback and noise. Within the context of this structure, the communication process may be described as follows: the source is the initiator of the message. He may wish to communicate a certain feeling, an attitude, a belief, or fact to another person or persons. To do so, he will first try to find some way to encode his message (ie. put his message into some form of symbolic expression), so that it is conveyed accurately to his intended receiver. He may use words or pictures, or

facial expressions or some other kind of signal or code, but he must choose such means as are familiar to the receiver's perceptual experiences, if he wishes him to understand and comprehend what he intends to convey. It was concluded that, to the extent that the meanings and texts of the message are familiar to the receiver, the message will be more likely to be shared between both source and receiver, and in turn, the message will be understood. The source must then choose an appropriate channel to convey his message. To facilitate its delivery, the channel must have direct access to the receiver and must be relatively free of distortion and noise.

After receiving the message, a receiver begins to engage in a decoding process which plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of the communication act. In our discussion of communication, the issue of incongruence was dealt with as a state in which the meaning experience of the source differs from the meaning experience of the receiver. In addition, the discussion dealt with feedback as a means by which this state of incongruence can be reduced.

It was concluded that the more feedback is available in the communication situation, the less incongruence will result. In other words, more feedback helps better understanding between the source and the receiver.

Having reached this level of analysis, the discussion then turned to deal with some communication models which were the focus of the third section. The major purpose of that section was to trace the development of the communication thought. The discussion yielded three major conclusions:-

- (1) The simple models of communication are not able to provide an adequate explanation of the communication process. Moreover, they suffer from their inability

to identify and explore the interrelationships between the different components of the communication process. For example, the simple models do not clarify satisfactorily the psychological processes involved, such as the encoding and decoding processes, during the communication process. Also, the simple models ignore the different effects of different types of media.

- (2) Because of the deficiencies of the simple models, various attempts to broaden the communication process model have been made. To this end, several models were introduced, the most important being those by Schramm, Ross, and DeLozier.

Schramm's model is considered to be a general model which may be used to explain all communication situations and processes (including personal and impersonal communication). The primary concerns of this model are processes such as encoding, decoding, feedback and noise. These processes account for the effectiveness of communication. On the other hand, Ross's transactional model conceptualises communication as a two-way interaction process which involves a commonality of experience and mutuality of influence. The importance of this model stems from its emphasis on the fact that both source and receiver have a determinant role in the effectiveness of the communication. However, the model shares with Schramm's model the emphasis on encoding and decoding as essential processes for establishing the common-sharing meanings between source and receiver. The most significant idea introduced by the transactional model is the relationship between the person's self-image, human communication, and interpersonal relationship.

The third significant model of communication was DeLozier's which deals with communication as a goal-oriented process, that is, it begins with a person's need determination. The importance of the model stems from its psychological orientation. In addition, DeLozier emphasised in his model the notion that efficiency of communication is a function of several factors related to source, message, media, and receiver.

- (3) The main conclusion to emerge was that successful and effective communication must be able to establish a sharing of meanings between the source and the receiver. In our view, establishing such a position is a prerequisite condition for persuasion. The discussion therefore turned to the concept of persuasive communication.

Three major issues of persuasive communication were considered: defining the persuasion concept, the approaches to persuasion, and the factors which influence persuasive communication. With respect to the first issue, several definitions of persuasion were examined. It was concluded that persuasion ought to be thought of as a conscious attempt to influence the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of the intended receiver. Two general approaches as to how this might be achieved were then considered: the psychodynamic and socio-cultural. Within the psychodynamic approach, several routes were examined. The socio-cultural approach was introduced as a complementary framework, given the inability of the psychodynamic approach alone to explain how persuasion can be induced.

In Section Six, an attempt was undertaken to examine the factors which influence persuasive communication. To facilitate this, the factors were classified into four distinctive categories:

(1) source-related, (2) message-related, (3) receiver-related, and (4) media-related. It was concluded that persuasion is a complex function of all these factors.

Finally, the discussion dealt with the cognitive dissonance and the communication process. Within this context, the nature and causes of the dissonance, dissonance and the choice process, and the different approaches to reducing dissonance in communication were all examined. It was concluded that dissonance has a crucial role in the communication process. The most effective communication is that which induces a minimal level of dissonance. It follows that the persuasive communicator should be able to establish a common sharing and in turn persuade the receiver if he has complete knowledge of the receiver's personality characteristics and provides him with sufficient and adequate information of the type he seeks.

It is worth pointing out that the conceptual framework set out in this chapter may provide advertising strategy developers with many significant conclusions, the most important of which are:-

- (1) Advertising should be understood as a two-way communication process in which both advertiser and receiver play an important role in determining the outcome of the process. The receiver should not be regarded merely as a target of source intentions and manipulation; he has the ability to accept or reject the claim of the advertiser on the basis of criteria which he develops by himself or through his interaction with the different reference groups to which he may belong.
- (2) The receiver's response to the advertising message is influenced by several factors which are related to the source, the message and the media. These factors may operate singly or interactively.

Finally, the importance of this chapter stems from our view that conceptualising the persuasive communication process will help to provide a better understanding of the mechanism by which advertising operates - the focus of our discussion in the chapter that follows.

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CHAPTER FOUR

**PERSUASIVE ADVERTISING AND ITS ROLE IN INDUCING
THE DESIRED RESPONSE**

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INTRODUCTION

One of the major issues with which advertising researchers and practitioners are concerned is the development of an effective persuasive message which will successfully lead to the achievement of desired marketing objectives. Therefore, it is important to understand the nature of advertising, how it is perceived by the consumer, how it operates, its objectives, and how it can be used in competitive marketing situations. This chapter deals with all these aspects with some focus on the persuasive role of advertising. Specifically, this chapter deals with the following issues:-

- (1) The structure of the advertising communication process.
- (2) The consumer's perception and advertising.
- (3) Explaining the advertising influence on buyers' behaviour.
- (4) The objectives of advertising.
- (5) The role of advertising in product differentiation.
- (6) Inducing resistance to persuasion in advertising.
- (7) Summary and conclusion.

Each of these issues will be discussed in the sections which follow.

SECTION 1: THE STRUCTURE OF THE ADVERTISING COMMUNICATION PROCESS

In Chapter Two, it was shown that advertising is a form of mass communication. In this sense "it is true, though unfortunately trivial, to say that advertising works by communicating." [1]

It follows, therefore, that all forms of advertising have a communication dimension by which some message is conveyed to a group of people in relation to whom the message is intended to achieve a specific goal [2]. This communicative nature of advertising has its beginnings in ancient civilisations. "Most historians believe that the outdoor signs carved in clay, wood, or stone and used by ancient Greek and Roman merchants were the first form of advertising." [3]

In today's advertising, the communication of information about an advocated subject matter (including product, service, idea, candidate) still constitutes the backbone of the advertising system. Therefore, in this section, an attempt to analyse the basic structure of the advertising communication process will be made.

To revert to our definition of advertising, it can be said that advertising is a paid nonpersonal communication through various media by an identified sponsor (eg. a business firm, nonprofit organisation, or individual) to a group of people in the hope that they will be persuaded and in turn induced to purchase the advertised product or service.* If we use this description as a base to analyse the structure of the advertising communication process, four basic components can be distinguished: (1) the source, (2) the message, (3) the media, and (4) the receiver (or the audience).

* Several definitions of advertising have been discussed in Chapter Two.

Exploring the systematic nature of advertising communication, Aaker and Myers [4] pointed out that advertising communication always involves a perception process and four elements: the source, a message, a communication channel, and a receiver. The authors added that the receiver sometimes becomes a source of information by engaging in a word-of-mouth communication with his friends or associates and the like, who speak with the receiver regularly or irregularly. Thus, in the authors' view, advertising can operate through a two-step communication process. Indeed, this emphasises an important dimension in the advertising process.

For the purpose of the present study, each of the components of advertising will be discussed as follows:

SOURCE

The source of advertising is "the initiator of the message." [5] However, Aaker and Myers [6] pointed out that, in the case of advertising communication, at least two types of sources are involved. The first is the company or brand concerning which there is an interest in communicating certain information to the audience. The second is the spokesman (endorser). However, "this kind of distinction is unnecessary, since the source is the entity which the consumer perceives as the source." [7]

Percy and Rossiter [8] indicated that among the potential components within advertising that may be construed as sources, either singly or in combination, for any one piece of advertising are: an industry (eg. the food industry), and a company sponsoring the advertising campaign.

Dunn and Barban [9] pointed out that a source represents a combination of communication, originator and encoder - in terms of advertising, an advertising manager and a copywriter for example.

Hedges [10] indicated that the source of an advertising message may be identified, identifiable or anonymous. He indicated that the first two will normally consist of an endorser "who is usually a recognisable authority on the subject, such as a celebrity or a member of a peer group." The anonymous source, on the other hand, may be associated with messages coming only from the company (originator). However, the endorser and the originator could be combined together to form what is normally classified as the source of an advertising message.

Schiffman and Kanuk [11] emphasised the importance of endorsers as credible sources in advertising communication. The authors distinguished three types of endorsers:-

- (1) Celebrities
- (2) Experts
- (3) The "common man"

The first type of endorser represents an idealisation of the life which most people would like to live themselves. The second type - the expert, is a person who because of his occupation, special training, skill or extensive experience is in a unique position to help the prospective purchaser to evaluate the product or service advertised. The third type of endorser is the "common man." Some appeals employ the testimonials of satisfied customers representing the "common man." The advantage of this type of endorsement is that "it demonstrates to the prospective customer that someone just like him, or someone he would like to be, uses and is satisfied with the product or service advertised." [12]

As we said earlier, in the two-step advertising communication process, the prospective consumer may not be dependent solely on a direct message, rather, he depends on what is described as an opinion leader [13]. In this situation, the opinion leader is considered as an initial receiver of the advertising message which he conveys through a word-of-mouth communication to its destination (or the ultimate receiver). Within this context, the initial receiver (ie. the opinion leader) plays the role of the source as well as receiver. Therefore, in the two-step advertising communication model we have to distinguish between the initiating source (the originator), and the opinion leader who conveys the message to its destination.

MESSAGE

The advertising message is often considered the most vital component of all in the advertising process. In Lasswell's [14] model of the communication process, the message refers to "what is said" by the source. The message is in a sense "a model of what exists in the sender's mind." [15] In broad terms, Hedges [16] viewed the advertising message as "the information or atmosphere/image the source is sending to the audience."

On the other hand, Aaker and Myers [17] suggested that the advertising message refers to both the content and the execution. It is "the totality of what enters the receiver's perception." From the authors' view, the advertising message can be described in terms of the nature of its execution, that is, the approach followed in the message, such as, soft sell versus hard sell, the use of humour, of fear, of two-sided communication, etc.

For the advertising to be effective, the message must address the prospective consumer's needs and present the information that satisfies those needs. In other words, to the extent that an

advertising message provides a consumer with a need-solution appeal, it will be able to induce the consumer's positive response [18].

Ross [19] suggested that "message impact is seriously related to the credibility of the source and the way he handles the pragmatic dimensions of ethical proof."

Ray [20] described the true creative advertising message as the one that considers both the idea and the format. He attributed the failure of many advertising campaigns to failing to establish such a balance. The same idea has been emphasised by Cone and Foxworth [21]. The authors stated:-

"It is possible to go too far in message idea creativity, so that the idea is lost in the cleverness of the message. The balance between these two needs - to say something important and to say it in a way that will get heard - is a realistic goal."

MEDIA (OR CHANNEL)

In order to reach its intended audience, a message must be transmitted through an appropriate channel. Therefore, "the media are the advertising vehicles that are used for the delivery of the advertising message." [22]

Since advertising is by definition a mass form of communication, it uses those media which enable it to reach the masses to whom the message is addressed. It follows that the medium or the channel in an advertising system will be drawn from mass media such as radio, television, newspapers, magazines, billboards, and

so on. Because the impact of the communication message can be different for different media [23], the effective use of each of the mass media depends upon the nature of the information and the characteristics of the audience. For instance, "research indicates that oral presentation, through the broadcast media, produces greater retention of simple material than does print (visual presentation), especially among the less educated and less intelligent." [24] "However, print is superior to an oral presentation when complex factual material is to be retained." [25] Thus, it is clear that the channel selection requires a close examination of the kind of message to be presented and the audience for which it is intended.

When McLuhan [26] made his famous statement, "the medium is the message," he provided elaborate evidence of the importance which is associated with the media selection decision. What he meant by his statement is that consumers are exposed to the message and the medium as a unit. They do not differentiate between the two. Therefore, it is necessary for media planners to understand everything that has preceded and contributed to the development of the message itself. In other words "It is the message which must be selected first and this will help to identify the most appropriate medium to reach the target audience." [27]

Baker [28] pointed out that an evaluation of an advertising medium must consider four major factors: (1) the character of the medium (which can be determined by the geographical coverage of the medium, the socio-economic composition of the audience, the demographical distribution of the audience, the medium's physical characteristics - visual, oral, etc, the frequency of publication, and the power to reach special groups), (2) the atmosphere of the medium (which is difficult to define because it is based on a subjective evaluation of the medium content, and

presentation), (3) the coverage of the medium (which refers to the actual number of persons exposed to the medium, in the sense of being made aware of its content), and finally, (4) the cost of the medium.

In addition, Faison [29] stated four factors which make one medium more effective than others. These are: (1) the level of source credibility, (2) the level of consumer involvement intended by the advertiser, (3) the media input control, and (4) the media prestige.

A more intensive study dealing with the differential effect of the media has been conducted by Gensch [30]. He identified four elements as being influential in media selection, which he termed as "media weights." These elements are: (1) the target population weights, (2) the media appropriateness weights, (3) the advertising exposure weights, and (4) the advertising perception weights.

However, as the researcher concluded, the decision on each of these elements is highly subjective and it is preferable if generalisations about these elements are based on stronger research evidence.

It is worth mentioning that in the two-step flow of advertising communication model, where word-of-mouth communication is considered, another channel level would appear, namely the personal communication (or opinion leader). Klapper [31] directed attention to the influence of group membership and opinion leadership in advertising effectiveness.

Day [32] reported research into the acceptance of a new branded convenience food product covering two diary panels of 1,100 households in the USA; one panel acted as a control. Data were recorded on awareness, preference, intentions and usage, recall

of advertising, and word-of-mouth exposure. Day concluded from his exhaustive research that "ultimate success, in terms of creating and reinforcing favourable attitudes, largely rested with the ability of the brand to generate favourable word-of-mouth communications and to provide a satisfactory usage experience."

However, Maloney [33] has suggested that it may sometimes be advantageous for advertisers to ignore potential "opinion leaders," and to short-circuit the "two-step flow" of communication in cases where products "can be accepted with a minimum of financial or social risk." He added, "but even then, presumably, the subtle influence of word-of-mouth communication will still operate, perhaps to the advantage of an advertised brand." It seems clear, however, that word-of-mouth communication as a complementary part in the advertising process is a key factor when the brands advertised are seen by the receiver as high-involvement (ie. high priced) brands.

RECEIVER

The basic assumption common to all communications is that advertising is not sent into a vacuum. In any advertising campaign, therefore, it is supposed that the message has its intended receiver to whom it is directed. As Aaker and Myers [34] pointed out, "the receiver in an advertising communication system is the target audience."

Indeed, a receiver plays a key role in determining the effectiveness of the advertising message. His positive response towards the advocated brand represents the major objective of the advertising campaign. "The completion of the communication task is dependent upon the activity of the receiver." [35]

It follows, therefore, that advertisers must understand those receiver characteristics that operate to help or hinder the acceptance of the message. Schiffman and Kanuk [36] indicated that advertisers must develop what they called a "consumer profile," by segmenting their audience in terms of some relevant characteristics. Indeed, this process will help the development of the appropriate message and the selection of the appropriate media.

Consistent with this conclusion, Aaker and Myers [37] argued that, "the receiver can be described in terms of audience segmentation variables, life-style, benefits sought, demographics, and so on." However, the authors emphasised the involvement in the product as a variable of particular interest.

It is worth mentioning, however, that in the two-step flow of advertising communication model, we have to distinguish between two levels of receiver: (1) the opinion leader, who receives the message directly, then transfers it to the other level, (2) the opinion receiver who is considered the end point (or the destination) in the advertising communication process. The first (or the initial) receiver conveys the message to its ultimate destination (the second level) through word-of-mouth communication. Within this context, the initial receiver of the advertising message (ie. the opinion leader), becomes an interim source and the destination becomes a receiver.

FEEDBACK

Feedback is just as important a concept in advertising communication as it is in interpersonal communication. However, it is rarely direct in mass communication in general, and in advertising in particular. Schramm [38] indicated that "it is usually inferential." In advertising, the sponsor of the

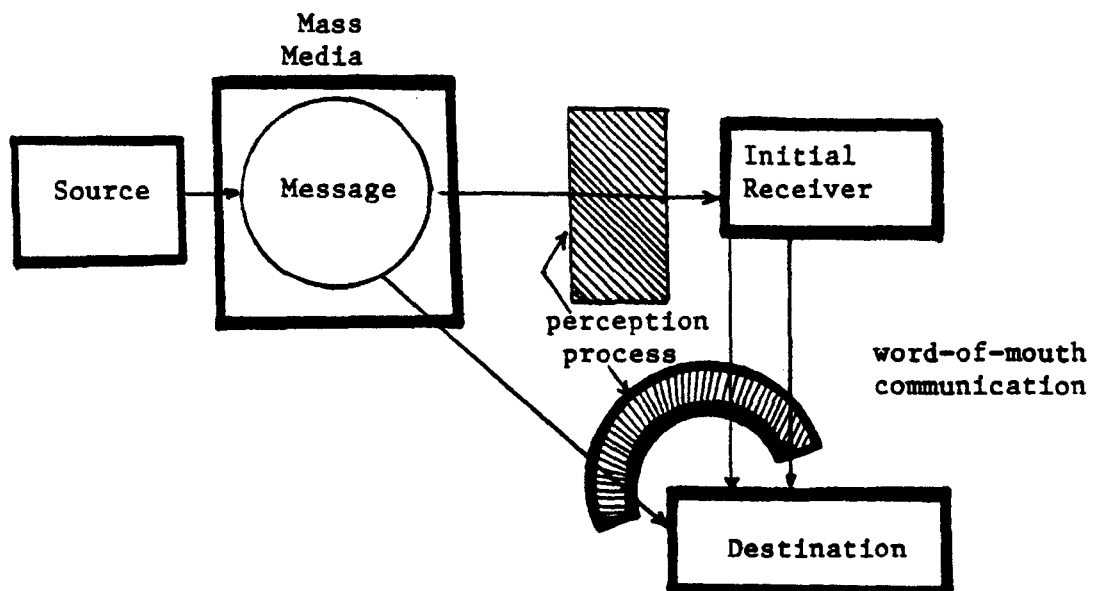
advertising message infers how persuasive the message was from the resulting action (eg. buying or not buying the advertised product) taken by the audience. [39]

When the personal influence emerges as an integral component when the two-step flow hypothesis is applied in the context of advertising communication, opinion leaders become the main source of the feedback.

However, because the receiver's perception plays a crucial role in shaping his response to the advertising message, the balance of this part of the study focuses upon explaining the receiver's perception process as an integral component of the receiver's response to advertising communication.

Finally, Figure (4-1) depicts the advertising communication process as it was explained in the previous pages.

Figure (4-1): The Advertising Communication Process



Source: Adapted from Aaker and Myers' Model of the advertising communication system. In David A Aaker and John G Myers, Advertising Management, (2nd ed), Prentice-Hall Inc, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1982.

SECTION 2: THE CONSUMER'S PERCEPTION AND ADVERTISING

Because the consumer's perception has a crucial role in shaping his response to the advertising message, this section focuses on perception in relation to the advertising communication system. In the context of this section, an attempt is made to explain the perception process and the related concepts in relation to advertising.

DEFINITION OF PERCEPTION

Perception has been defined as "the process by which an individual maintains contact with his environment," [40] and elsewhere as "the process by which an individual selects, organises, and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world." [41]

Also, DeLozier [42] pointed out that the decoding process forms the basis for perception. When the decoding process begins, message stimuli are translated into thought. The author added, "The decoding process involves matching message signals with the appropriate referents contained within a receiver's perceptual field."

Since the message signals are in the form of physical stimuli, the receiver must possess some mechanical sensors capable of detecting different kinds of stimuli presented through various channels [43].

Webb [44], Managing Director of Social Surveys (Gallup Poll) Limited, states:-

"The perception of messages by an individual is an active process, rather than a passive reception of stimuli. The reaction to the message can take an infinite variety of forms, according to how it fits in with the recipient's background, environment, interests and preoccupations."

Hovland and Sears [45] stated that for any researcher who is thinking of studying an individual's view of the world or cognitive set, he must note the following:-

"The cognitive map of the individual is not, then, a photographic representation of the physical world; it is, rather, a partial personal construction in which certain objects, selected out by the individual for a major role, are perceived in an individual manner. Every perceiver is, as it were, to some degree a nonrepresentational artist, painting a picture of the world that expresses his individual view of reality."

Thus, the individual's perception of the stimuli is not a function of sensory input alone which is inherent in the stimulus itself; rather it is the outcome of an interaction of the sensory input with the mental processes which are activated once the sensory input enters the mind. In this sense, "perception involves a synthesis of physical stimulations which the brain receives plus the mental activity a person engages in to complete a thought." [46]

Schiffman and Kanuk [47] emphasised the idea that the receiver's perception is a result of different kinds of inputs which interact to form the receiver's perceptual experience. The

authors distinguished between two kinds of inputs: (1) the physical stimuli from the external environment, and (2) the input which is provided by the receiver himself in the form of certain predispositions, such as expectations, needs, attitudes and learning based on previous experiences. The authors added that "the combination of these two types of inputs produces for each individual a very unique perceptual picture of the world."

Thus, "every man through his (cognitive world) attempts to construct for himself his own meaningful world and he classifies and orders within it a multitude of objects, among which the most significant are other people. No two people live in the same cognitive world. Indeed, the social behaviour of a person is shaped by the view of the world he has from his particular vantage point." [48]

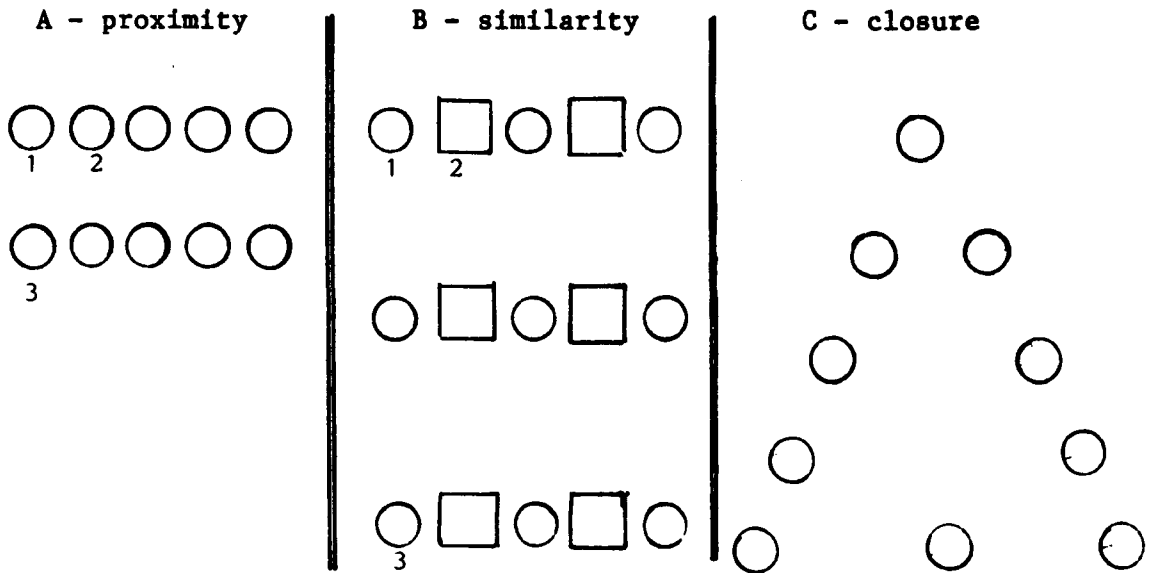
However, it is appropriate now to turn the discussion to deal with the factors influencing the individual's perception. In this context, we shall examine two sets of factors: (1) structural factors, and (2) the receiver's characteristics.

(1) THE INFLUENCE OF STRUCTURAL FACTORS ON PERCEPTION

This set of factors pertains to the organisation of stimuli factors and the way they are presented to a receiver [49].

Within the context of this set of factors, DeLozier [50] distinguished three factors: proximity, similarity, and closure. Proximity refers to "the physical nearness of stimulus elements." Similarity refers to "the likeness of stimulus elements," and closure refers to "the process of completing a perceptual situation." Figure (4-2) illustrates each of the three factors.

Figure (4-2): An illustration of proximity, similarity and closure



Source: M Wayne DeLozier, *The Marketing Communication Process*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1976, pp44-45.

Figure (4-2-A) is perceived by people as two rows of circles instead of as five columns of circles. This phenomenon is due to "the closeness of circles 1 and 2 as compared to the distance between circles 1 and 3. The circles along the horizontal appear to belong to each other because of their proximity." [51]

Also Figure (4-2-B) is perceived by people as alternating columns of circles and squares, because objects 1 and 3 are similar, whereas 1 and 2 are different. On the other hand, Figure (4-2-C) shows a set of circles which people perceive as a triangle. "A person performs closure because an incomplete figure or perceptual situation produces tension within his perceptual field to see objects as whole or complete." [52]

Although the structural factors of stimuli play an important role in designing and developing the advertising message, closure is the most useful concept in advertising. Therefore, it will now be discussed in more depth.

THE PERCEPTUAL CLOSURE

People have a need for closure and they express this need by organising their perceptions so that they form a complete picture. If the pattern of stimuli to which they are exposed is incomplete, they nevertheless tend to perceive it as complete [53]. By contrast, "if the individual is prevented from doing so, he is left in a state of tension, which manifests itself in improved memory for the uncompleted task." [54]

This notion has been extended to advertising messages by Heimback and Jacoby [55]. These researchers suggested that hearing the beginning of a message leads to the development of the need to hear the rest of it. The resulting tension leads to improvement in memory for that part of the message which has already been heard.

In fact, the need for closure has some significant implications for advertisers. The presentation of an incomplete advertising message for completion by the consumer, and the very act of completion itself, serves to involve the consumer more deeply in the message itself [56]. Thus an incomplete advertisement tends to be perceived more readily than a complete one.

In summary, it seems clear that perceptions are not equivalent to the raw sensory input of discrete stimuli or the sum total of discrete stimuli. Rather, people tend to add to or subtract from the stimuli to which they are exposed according to their own expectations and motives [57].

(2) THE INFLUENCE OF RECEIVER CHARACTERISTICS ON PERCEPTION

There are several characteristics of a receiver that influence his perception of advertising messages, such as his needs, moods, attitudes, personality traits and values. Both the physiological and psychological needs of a receiver influence how he perceives objects. In a study by Levine and his associates [58], the subjects were exposed to a series of food pictures which were obscured by a ground-glass screen. The results of this study revealed that the frequency of associations related to food and eating increased as the subjects became more hungry. However, after about twelve hours of food deprivation, these associations declined. Several follow-up studies supported these findings [59].

An individual's mood has also been found to influence his perception of stimulus objects. Leuba and Lucas [60] found that people in a happy mood seemed to pay little attention to details. In a critical mood, people focused on specific detail. And people who were in an anxious mood paid more attention to facial expressions in the pictures they were observing. The researchers concluded that different moods seemed to influence not only what was observed, but the meaning of what was observed.

Similarly, considerable empirical evidence has been established to the effect that individuals' attitudes have been found to influence the way they perceive stimulus objects. "People tend to see and hear messages that are favourable and consistent with their held attitudes and avoid, misinterpret, or otherwise distort messages inconsistent with their attitude." [61]

On the other hand, personality traits have been found to play an important role in determining how people perceive objects and other people. Intelligence, sex, affiliation, and dependence

have been found to have extensive influence on the individual's perception [62].

Finally, as Krech and his associates [63] put it, "each person has an individualised image of the world because his image is the product of the following determinants:-

- (1) his physical and social environments
- (2) his physiological structure
- (3) his wants and goals
- (4) his past experiences."

However, they stated that there are many common features underlying the world image of people. Hence, although no two people have precisely the same conception of the world, it is possible to "cluster" people into homogeneous groups within which they have a common perspective of the world around them.

Now, given that an individual's perception of any piece of advertising is an important element of the study of the advertising communication, it is appropriate to turn the discussion to deal with some relevant concepts regarding the consumer's perception of advertising.

SELECTIVITY IN THE CONSUMER'S PERCEPTION OF ADVERTISING

As the preceding discussion illustrated, the consumer's perception of stimuli from the environment is based on the interaction of his expectations, needs, interests, and attitudes with the stimulus itself. However, "the consumer subconsciously exercises a great deal of selectivity regarding what aspects of the environment - what stimuli - he will perceive." [64]

The consumer through his selective perception screens out of his mind information that is not of interest and matches what he reads and hears with his previous experience, his existing knowledge, his existing attitudes and his personal value system. Consequently, only a few advertisements can come through this filter system because many add nothing to his knowledge and some say something new but conflict with his knowledge or beliefs [65]. In other words, the individual consumer notices what he wants to notice and ignores, overlooks or forgets the rest.

However, perceptual selectivity is dependent on two main kinds of determinants: stimulus factors and personal factors.

(1) STIMULUS FACTORS INFLUENCING PERCEPTUAL SELECTIVITY

Gensch [66] pointed out that four variables are most often used to predict the probability of perception of print advertisements; these are:-

- (1) Length of advertisement
- (2) Use of colour
- (3) Position of advertisement
- (4) Thickness of issue

Concerning the length of advertisement, Starch [67] reported that:-

"readership as a rule is directly proportional to the size of the advertisement with this exception: a full page attracts not quite twice as many readers as a half-page ad, and a two-page ad attracts not quite twice as many readers as a full page. Also, spectacular, or multi-page advertisements will attract a smaller total reader audience than the same number of pages issued as separate one-page ads at suitable intervals."

It was reported that page size affects exposure probabilities more than the use of colour:-

"... in terms of cost against added readership, four-colour spreads are not so efficient as pages. They generally add about 50 percent more readership at double the cost ... since female ad-noting for a page is usually higher than male, spreads increase female readership on the average by only one-third." [68]

(2) PERSONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING PERCEPTUAL SELECTIVITY

Krech and his associates [69] stated that "personal factors limit the number of objects that can be perceived at any one moment."

2.1 SPAN OF APPREHENSION

Woodworth and Schlosberg [70] indicated that the average span of the adult's attention is about eight objects, with a range from six to eleven. This concept emphasises the fact that the human capability of information processing is limited. This suggests that in advertising the layout should be relatively simple for high impact.

Bauer and Greyser [71] reported that the average consumer in the US is exposed to 1500 advertisements per day, but he actually perceives only 76 advertisements per day.

2.2 COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

In his theory of cognitive dissonance, Festinger [72] suggested that an individual strives for consistency among his beliefs, attitudes, values and actions. In a situation where dissonant elements intrude into an individual's cognitive system, these elements must be modified to fit the present cognitive structure or the present cognitive structure must be changed to accommodate the dissonant stimuli. In this situation, selective perception "operates as a filtering mechanism to protect a person's ego. It operates to maintain balance and consistency in a person's cognitive system." *

2.3 PERCEPTUAL ORGANISATION

People do not experience the numerous stimuli that they select from the environment as separate and discrete sensations; rather, they tend to organise them into groups and perceive them as unified wholes [73]. To do so, individuals may use one of two mechanisms: (a) selective sensitisation, and (b) grouping. Each of these will be discussed briefly:

2.3 (a) SELECTIVE SENSITISATION

Dearborn and his associates [74] investigated the perceptual organisation of departmental industrial executives. A group of 23 executives were selected from departments in the following way: Sales (6); Production (5); Accounting (4); and Miscellaneous (8). Each person was asked to read a standard text

* Selective perception was discussed in Chapter Three in the context of the dissonance reduction strategies.

book case: Castengo Steel Company which gave a great deal of factual detail about the organisation and activities of the company. The executives were then asked to give a brief written statement on what they considered to be the most important problem facing the company. The results revealed that five out of six sales executives stated sales as the most important problem. In contrast, only five of the remaining seventeen executives mentioned sales. Four out of five production executives mentioned that the company is facing organisation problems. Hence, different departmental executives perceive the same information in different ways, according to their departmental activities and goals.

2.3 (b) GROUPING

Individuals tend automatically to group the stimuli they perceive so that they form their impression about the stimuli selected [75]. In doing so, they attempt to facilitate recalling of information stored in their memories. This conclusion has been supported by an experiment conducted by Miller [76], in which the researcher concluded that the perception of stimuli as groups or "chunks" of information rather than as discrete bits of information, facilitated their memory and recall.

Grouping is used by advertisers to imply certain desired meanings in connection with the advertised products or services. For example, an advertisement for tea may show a young man and woman sipping tea in a well-furnished room before a blazing hearth. The grouping of stimuli by proximity leads the consumer to associate the drinking of tea with romance, fine living, and winter warmth.

2.4 PERCEPTUAL INTERPRETATION

The interpretation of stimuli is an individual, unique process, since it is based upon what the consumer expects to see in light of his/her previous experience, on the number of plausible explanations he/she can envisage, and on the motives and interests prevailing at the time of perception [77].

People usually see what they expect to see, and what they expect to see is usually based on familiarity, on previous experience, or a preconditioned "set." Kelley [78] supported this notion. The researcher preconditioned students in two different college classes by telling the first class in advance of a lecture to be given by a guest speaker who was described as an expert in his field but "cold" in nature. The second class was told that the speaker (the same one) was an expert and "warm" in nature. The results of this experiment showed that the students who were "set" to hear a cold lecturer did indeed find him cold; and those who anticipated a warm lecturer found him to be warm. Furthermore, there was more interaction and participation in the classroom discussion from those students who expected the lecturer to be warm than from those who expected him to be cold.

Also, the consumer usually attributes the sensory input he/she receives to sources that he/she considers most likely to have caused the specific pattern of stimuli. Past experience and social interaction with other people may help to form certain expectations which provide categories or alternatives that the individual can use in interpreting stimuli [79].

In a marketing context, people tend to perceive products and product attributes according to their own expectations. A housewife who has been told by her friends that a new brand of coffee has a bitter taste will probably perceive the taste to be bitter [80].

However, when stimuli are highly ambiguous, an individual will usually interpret them in such a way that they serve to fulfil his/her own needs, wishes, interests, and so on. How close a person's interpretations are to reality, then, depends on the clarity of the stimulus, the past experiences of the perceiver, and his motives and interests at the time of perception [81].

2.5 SENSORY DISCRIMINATION

DeLozier [82] defined sensory discrimination as "a person's ability to perceive a difference between similar stimuli presented to the same sense mode."

A series of experimental studies have been conducted using cigarettes, colas, and beers to demonstrate the extent to which a person's ability to perceive a difference between brands of the same product. Husband and Godfrey [83] conducted a study in which fifty-one subjects were asked to identify each of four cigarettes. Each subject was told that his brand of cigarette was among the four to be identified. All subjects were blindfolded while participating in the test. The results of this study revealed that subjects were unable to identify correctly their own brands from among the four brands they smoked. Similar results have been obtained from subsequent research on the issue [84].

This phenomenon has significant implications for advertisers. Products which are indistinguishable to consumers' sensory systems can be discriminated by means other than alteration in the physical product, and advertising can be effectively used in creating brand differences in the minds of consumers.*

* The role of advertising in product differentiation will be discussed later in this chapter.

However, in the context of a person's ability to perceive a difference between similar stimuli, it is worth noting that "each human sense has a range of sensitivity which is defined by an upper and a lower threshold. The lower threshold is a point below which a stimulus goes unnoticed by a particular sense mode. The upper threshold is the point beyond which a stimulus goes unnoticed by a particular sense mode." [85]

However, of particular importance to advertisers is the lower threshold, also called the differential threshold or the just noticeable difference (Jnd). This represents the smallest change in a stimulus variation which is just barely noticeable to an individual's sense mode. A German psychophysicist named Weber [86] discovered that the just noticeable difference between two stimuli was not an absolute amount, but an amount relative to the intensity of the first stimulus.* The Federal Trading Commission monitors the size of the printed warnings in cigarette ads to ensure that people do have the opportunity to perceive them when reading cigarette ads.

* Weber measured the Jnd by using the following mathematical formula: $\frac{dI}{I} = K$

I

where: (dI) stands for the smallest increase in stimulus intensity which is just noticeably different from a previous intensity; (I) stands for the intensity of the stimulus at the present point where the intensity occurs; (K) stands for a constant which varies across sense modes.

The (Jnd) notion has to be considered in all situations where marketers wish to update their existing marketing policies (such as pricing, packaging, etc) without losing the ready recognition of consumers who have been exposed to years of cumulative advertising impact. In such situations, marketers have carefully to redesign their changes to fall below the (Jnd), so that consumers will not perceive the difference.

The Campbell soup company has been one of the most subtle of all marketers in changing its package. The company altered its product's typography and refined its logotype many times without losing any of the valuable Campbell image. Campbell is still one of the most widely recognised packages in the world today [87].

2.6 SELECTIVE DISTORTION

The individual is also subject to influences that tend to distort his perception. An individual's emotions and wants might act so as to select certain aspects of a stimulus object and from these aspects a perception of the object is developed which might deviate markedly from a "veridical cognition." This distorted cognition would tend to be congruent with the emotions and wants of the individual [88].

The early studies were principally concerned with showing the nature of distortion in perception of sources of perceptual inaccuracy. Levine and his associates [89] conducted a study in which subjects were shown ambiguous pictures of food after being deprived of food. The food pictures were placed behind a ground-glass screen that obscured them to the point of ambiguity. As the hunger of the subjects increased, they perceived more and more food objects in the ambiguous perceptual field. After twelve hours of food deprivation, they began to see fewer food objects, as perceptual defence or repression took hold. This

study has been criticised for the design it used. But it stimulated many follow-up studies and is now regarded as a special case of a more general one whose nature is not yet clear.

In advertising, Joyce [90] stated in relation to perceptual distortion:-

"there is a lot of evidence that how people perceive advertisements depends to a great extent on their preconceptions and their interests. In extreme cases, this can lead to misunderstanding and mistakes."

The author cited a number of examples in this regard, of which one was:-

"A television commercial for a food product featured a well-known woman presenter who had been promoted as an efficient housewife and cook. The commercial in which she featured attempted to strike a humorous note by making the presenter daydream and forget some food she had bought and leave it in a shop, with the result that she had to serve a rather scanty evening meal. Most respondents seeing the commercial in a comprehension test misunderstood or ignored the "forgetting" sequence, and consequently criticised the inadequate meal or found it unbelievable. They had been so conditioned to perceive the presenter as an efficient cook that they could not accept a "human" counterinstance."

Thus, in perceiving an advertisement, the consumer organises the advertisement's content into his model of reality. In doing so, the consumer often simplifies, organises, creates stimuli, or even distorts some aspects of the advertisement's content. Therefore, the consumer's perception represents, in some sense, a

psychological barrier through which an advertising message must penetrate if it is to be accepted and acted upon. So advertisers often use extreme "attention-getting devices" (such as brand differentiation) to achieve maximum exposure and thus to penetrate the consumer's perceptual screen.

Concluding our discussion of the consumer's perception of advertising, we now turn the discussion to deal with the explanation of how advertising operates to achieve the desired response from consumers. This will be the focus of the next section.

SECTION 3: EXPLAINING ADVERTISING'S INFLUENCE ON BUYING BEHAVIOUR

In the previous section, an attempt was made to explore the receiver's perception in relation to the advertising communication system. In this section, the discussion focuses on explaining how advertising operates in influencing the receiver's buying behaviour.

Because the hierarchical approach is considered the basic approach to explain the influence of advertising on buying behaviour, it will be extensively examined as follows.

THE HIERARCHICAL APPROACH TO THE INFLUENCE OF ADVERTISING

A widely used approach to explain the advertising influence on buying behaviour is the hierarchical approach. This approach is based upon two basic assumptions:-

- (1) Advertising operates through a hierarchy of communication effects [91]. In other words, the hierarchical approach holds that "for a piece of persuasive communication (eg. advertising) to be effective (ie. result in a given behaviour), it must go through a number of stages, each of which being dependent upon success in the previous stage." [92], ie. the approach implies a step-by-step, or ladderlike process. By definition, if one rung is missing then the climb up the ladder cannot be achieved.

- (2) The approach involves three types of levels: cognitive, affective and conative. The approach assumes that cognitive response must precede affective which must precede conative [93].

In fact, there are several variations of the basic hierarchical approach to the influence of advertising on buying behaviour which have been offered by researchers and practitioners. Because all these variations share the above two assumptions, they have been described as "members of a family." [94]

For the purpose of the present study, each of these variations (models) will be examined on a chronological basis as follows:-

(1) STARCH MODEL

This model was produced by Daniel Starch [95] in the early 1920s. Although the model represents a pioneering, systematic attempt to explain how advertising operates, the model referred essentially to press advertising since it was produced before the advent of broadcast media [96].

According to the model, an advertisement, to be effective in inducing the desired response, must:-

- (1) be seen
- (2) be read
- (3) be believed
- (4) be remembered
- (5) be acted upon

Later, Starch outlined "the behaviour of advertising" as follows [97]:-

- (1) Advertising calls attention to and informs consumers about products and services via mass communication media.
- (2) To accomplish function (1), advertising establishes a favourable or preferential association link between a need and a brand name (ie. establishes the brand image). This can be achieved through: (a) repetition, and (b) satisfactory use or performance of the brand itself.
- (3) Hence, advertising leads to buying action because of (a) the existing preferential image, (b) the attention-directing and reminding process, and (c) the persuasive-activating power of the message.

In addition, Starch distinguished between two sets of forces which constantly affect the influence of advertising. "One set tends to weaken the associative links" through either forgetting or fading of memory, and also because of competitors counter-advertising (eg. comparative advertising). The other set of forces may strengthen the associative links through the power of repetitive advertising, and by continued satisfaction resulting from the purchasing of the product advertised.

Beside the validity problems which apply equally to other hierarchical models,^{*} Starch's model suffers from the lack of clarity in the definitions of its steps [98]. For example, it is

* These problems will be dealt with in our overall criticism of the hierarchical models later in this section.

not clear what is meant by "seen." For example, does it include subliminal effects? The "read" step is even more loosely defined. It is not at all clear whether all the copy has to be read, or just the headline, or just those parts of the copy which in the individual's judgment are important. Also, the "remembered" step of the model leads us into the whole controversy about recall of advertising content as a measurement of advertising effect.

(2) STRONG'S "AIDA" MODEL

This model was introduced by E K Strong [99] in his textbook "The Psychology of Selling." The model, which is perhaps the most widely quoted one and which has been adopted in analysing buying behaviour, including the influence of advertising [100], suggests that the prospective buyer passes through four distinct stages as follows:-

- (1) Attention
- (2) Interest
- (3) Desire
- (4) Action

Although the model represents a step forward in attempting to explain the influential role of advertising in buying behaviour in that "it makes fewer assumptions about the mechanics of persuasion and does present a more dynamic picture of the advertising process" [101], the model suffers from the same conceptual problems as those which apply to Starch's model. For example, neither Starch nor Strong say anything about the consumer's state of mind. They made what Golby [102] called the "empty organism" assumption, ie. they assumed that a given stimulus (eg. advertisement) will obtain certain responses from the recipient (eg. purchasing action). This assumption portrays

the prospective consumer as a passive person who responds automatically to the stimulus offered, a proposition which is obviously untrue, since the consumer in almost all the persuasive communication situations proved to be obstinate [103].

(3) LAVIDGE-STEINER MODEL*

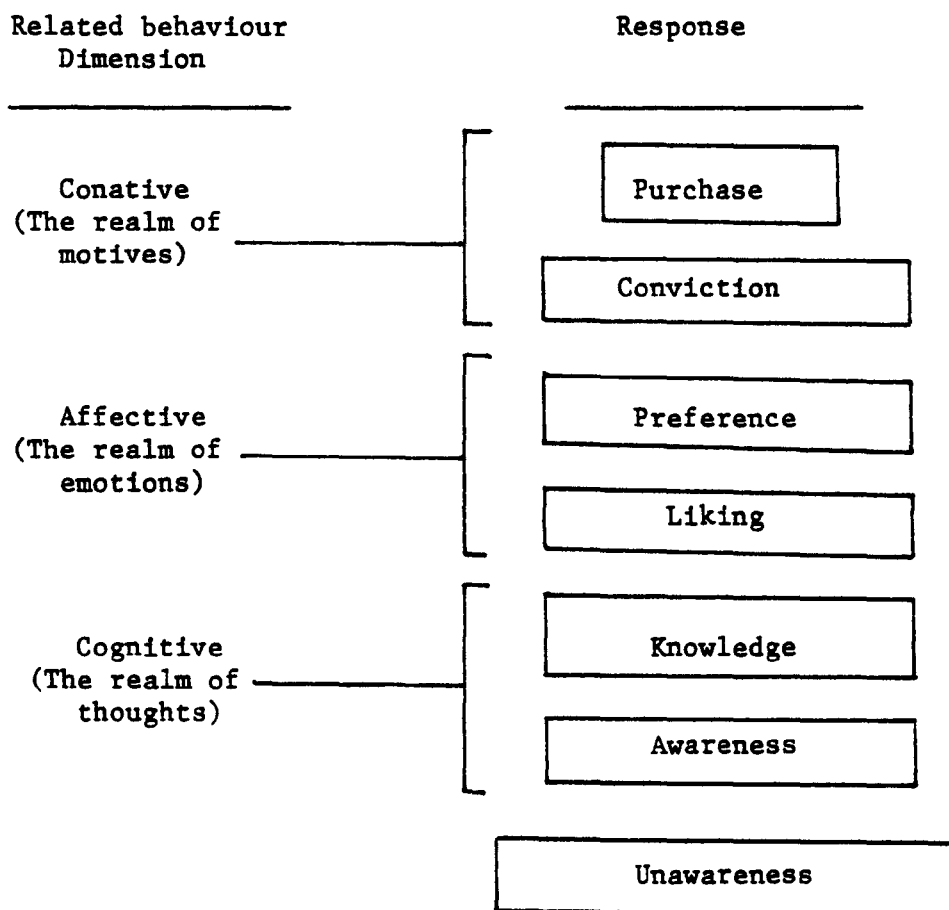
This model was published by Lavidge and Steiner [104] in 1961. It represents an attempt to conceptualise the covert responses through which an individual moves to the overt behaviour (purchase). According to the model, an individual moves through the sequence shown in Figure (4-3).

As described by Lavidge and Steiner [105] the sequence of events (responses) in the purchasing behaviour moves as Figure (4-3) depicts:-

- (1) Near the bottom of the steps stand the potential purchasers who are completely unaware of the existence of the product or service in question.
- (2) Closer to purchasing, but still a long way from the cash register, are those who are merely aware of its existence.
- (3) Up a step are prospects who know what the product has to offer.

* This model is often termed "the hierarchy of effects" model, and has been described after Lavidge and Steiner as "A Model for Predictive Measurements of Advertising Effectiveness."

Figure (4-3): The Lavidge-Steiner "Hierarchy of Effects" Model



Source: Adapted from the authors' model, in Robert J Lavidge and Gary A Steiner, "A Model for Predictive Measurements of Advertising Effectiveness," Journal of Marketing, Vol 25, October 1961, p62.

- (4) Still closer to purchasing are those who have favourable attitudes towards the product - those who like the product.
- (5) Those whose favourable attitudes have developed to the point of preference over all other possibilities are up still another step.
- (6) Even closer to purchasing are consumers who couple preference with a desire to buy and the conviction that the purchase would be wise.
- (7) Finally, of course, is the step which translates this attitude into actual purchase.

The authors indicated that these steps are not necessarily equidistant. In some instances, the distance from awareness to preference may be very slight, while the distance from preference to purchase is extremely large. In other cases, the reverse may be true. Furthermore, a potential purchaser sometimes may move up several steps simultaneously. The authors hypothesised that:-

"the greater the psychological and/or economic commitment involved in the purchase of a particular product, the longer it will take to bring consumer's up these steps, and the more important the individual steps will be. Contrariwise, the less serious the commitment, the more likely it is that some consumers will go almost (immediately) to the top of the steps."

[106]

It seems clear that the level of the prospective consumer's involvement in the purchasing situation is the major determinant of the speed involved in the purchasing decision. For example, "In some products, the risk factor is more evident, and in others

it may be regarded as less serious, and their purchase will not be likely to involve a great amount of conscious decision making (as it is clear in most habitual purchasing decisions)." [107]

In addition, Lavidge and Steiner related the steps in their model to three basic behavioural dimensions (states of mind): cognitive, affective, and conative. The first two steps (awareness and knowledge) were related to cognition (or the realm of thoughts), the second two steps (liking and preference) were related to affect (or the realm of emotions), and the final two steps (conviction and purchase) were related to conation (or the realm of motives).

Although the Lavidge and Steiner model of hierarchy of effects offers a systematic approach for thinking about the mental processes which occur in the mind of the consumer from the initial awareness of a product to a final action of purchasing it, in a concise and clear way which has been theoretically formulated by other researchers, the model suffers from some conceptual problems. In particular, the stairstep assumption underlying the model has been the focus of a great deal of criticism.*

Wills [108] criticised the model by stating that "the model postulated wrongly that messages directly triggered behaviour. All that was needed was the correct message. Those were soon modified to allow a sequential effect which depicted the target audience moving from the awareness to interest, hence, to desire and finally action. Furthermore, there is no considerable evidence to support this attractive sequence."

* More detailed evaluation of the hierarchical approach will be presented later.

Another criticism came from Robertson [109] when he commented, "however, even if we may specify consumers who are at one stage in their purchase decisions process, this does not necessarily mean that they will continue along the process. For example, liking may not be a sufficient condition for the consumer to prefer the product."

(4) THE ROGERS' BASIC MODEL

Another comprehensive model of the sequence of the hierarchy of effects is Rogers' model of "Innovation - adoption" [110]. The model describes five basic stages in the consumer's adoption of innovation. These stages are:-

- (1) Awareness stage. The individual learns of the existence of the new idea but lacks information about it.
- (2) Interest stage. The individual develops an interest in the innovation and seeks information about it.
- (3) Evaluation stage. The individual makes mental application of the new idea to his present and anticipated future situation and decides whether or not to try it.
- (4) Trial stage. The individual actually applies the new idea on a small scale in order to determine its utility in his own situation.
- (5) Adoption stage. The individual uses the new idea continuously on a full scale.

However, this model was influenced to a large extent by the sociologists. It can clearly be seen, particularly with regard to the last three stages, and this conceptualisation has been criticised on many counts. For instance, Midgley [111] indicated that "In terms of new product marketing, two broad deficiencies can be discerned, corresponding to durable and non-durable products. For the former it could be asked whether it is possible for a consumer to "try" the products, and for the latter whether consumers really use such a detailed and extensive process in regard to products such as detergents or toothpastes. If it is therefore necessary to make considerable modifications for each type of innovation the usefulness of the above becomes doubtful."

Indeed, Rogers has subsequently modified his model to take account of the fact that people may reject an innovation, and that they may engage in dissonance-reducing activity after adoption. The new model is thought to be "consistent with the learning process, theories of attitude change, and general ideas about decision making." [112] The new model for innovation-decision process describes four distinctive stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, and confirmation.

Although the Rogers' model (the basic or the modified one) relates to an innovative consumer's behaviour rather than to advertising, it provides a useful tool in describing how a consumer responds to an advertising message promoting a new product or service. For that reason it was included in our discussion of how advertising operates.

The modified version of Rogers' model "would appear intrinsically more satisfying; it should be remembered, however, that it is an abstraction, as we know little about these mental states." [113]

(5) COLLEY'S DAGMAR MODEL

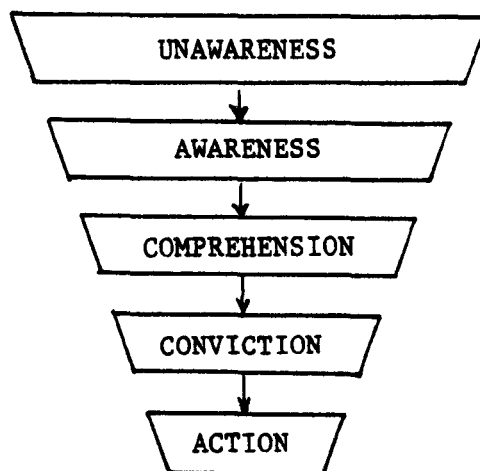
This popular flow-model of advertising was developed by Russell Colley [114] as a part of his general approach to Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results, DAGMAR.

Colley emphasised in his model the contributory role of advertising in achieving the ultimate objective of a sale. He stated:-

"specifically, then, what do we expect advertising to contribute in each particular marketing situation? ... Advertising does not physically bring buyer and seller together. Its purpose is to communicate something to somebody."

According to Colley, all commercial communications that have an impact on the ultimate objectives of a sale, must carry a prospect through several stages of understanding as Figure (4-4) shows:-

Figure (4-4): Colley's Model of Advertising Communication



Source: Adapted from Russell H Colley's model of communication process, in Russell H Colley, "Squeezing the Waste out of Advertising," Harvard Business Review, Vol 40, Sept, Oct 1962, pp76-88.

As the figure above depicts, advertising communication must move the prospective consumer through the following stages:-

- (1) From unawareness to awareness. "The prospect must first be aware of the existence of a brand or company."
- (2) Comprehension. "He must have a comprehension of what the product is and what it will do for him."
- (3) Conviction. "He must arrive at a mental disposition or conviction to buy the products."
- (4) Action. "Finally, he must stir himself to action."

As described by Colley himself, "this formula, perhaps in different words, is as old as advertising, selling, and other forms of persuasive communication."

Although the model is based upon the same assumptions as the other hierarchical models, it was accepted enthusiastically by a wide variety of scholars of the advertising process and by advertising agency people [115].

Aaker and Myers [116] in their evaluation of the Colley's model stated, "the model had great appeal to managers of the 1950s, who were frustrated by the available methods for controlling advertising efforts and impatient with embryonic methods of developing sales-response models." The authors added, "by introducing behavioural science theory into advertising management, DAGMAR provides the framework for the development of more operational objectives." [117]

Another positive aspect of the model is that "it recognises the two-way nature of the communication process and places the emphasis on the effect on the recipient of the message rather

than on the message in vacuo." [118]

However, the model's conceptualisation of the consumer's response to advertising was the focus of many criticisms. For instance, Chisnall [119] argued that the model does not rely on empirical evidence; rather it relies on what he called "nebulous descriptions of consumers' reactions to advertising." Indeed, this notion has been emphasised by Colley himself. The author admitted that his model is based on "applied common sense"; it represents the advertising process as a series of "logical and comprehensible steps."

De Groot [120] directed his criticism of the model to the definition of the precise links in the chain and of their sequential nature. For instance, de Groot questioned whether it is always necessary to first comprehend how the product functions, and even if it is, is that a sufficient condition for the consumer to be convinced? In de Groot's view, "there must be other unidentified links between steps two (comprehension) and three (conviction) in the model, and these are the ones that really count, and need to be identified."

(6) MCGUIRE'S INFORMATION PROCESSING MODEL

This model was developed in 1969 by William J McGuire [121]. Although the model shares the other hierarchical models' basic assumptions, ie. the hierarchy of effects, and the cognitive-affective-conative relationship underlying the hierarchical models, the information processing model of McGuire is rather different and more rigorous because it identifies more steps than most other models, and in a more detailed manner, it also provides guidance on how to measure the achievement at each of the relevant stages.

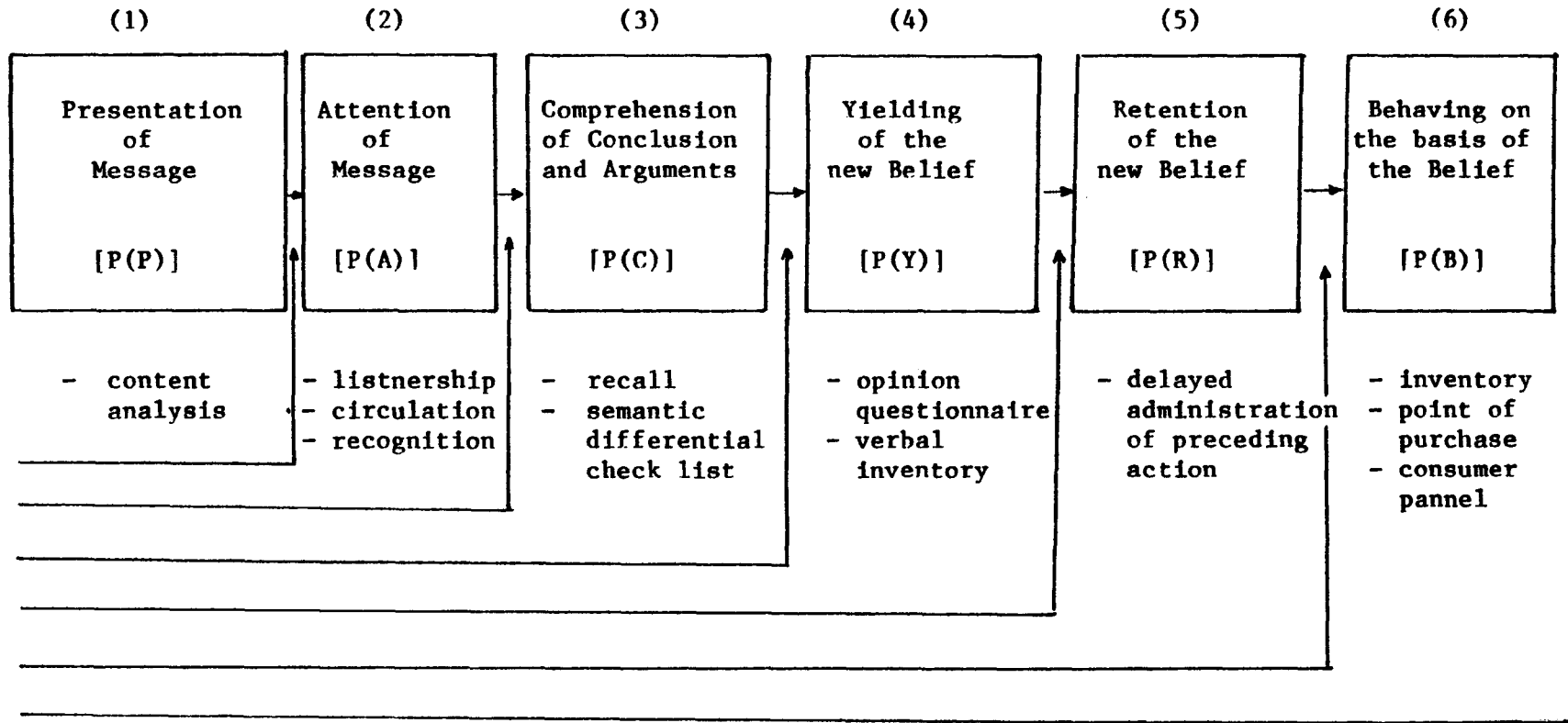
In his model, McGuire proposed five sequential events, each of which has a probability of occurring, which determine the likelihood that a person will be persuaded to perform a given behaviour (a sixth event). Accordingly, the probability of an actual purchase is the joint probability of all six events.

Figure (4-5) illustrates McGuire's model of information processing. The first step in his model is the presentation of the message. To understand what is going on in this step, a content analysis must be undertaken. The next step is concerned with the attention that the message receives. The amount of attention can be typically assessed from circulation and/or readership figures. McGuire's next step is the comprehension of the conclusion and argument of the message. This step is considered by McGuire as a necessary prerequisite to the following step - yielding to the conclusion. The most relevant measures suggested here are recall measurements, and an attitude and opinion questionnaire.

The next step in the model is retention of the new belief. This step is the "one ignored by other writers but a recognition of the true nature of the advertising situation." [122] Indeed, the retention step acknowledges the fact that in the real world there is a time lag between attention to an advertisement and acting upon it. As McGuire suggests, this time gap varies with the nature of the product advertised, but with certain high priced durable products it may well be months. In this step, McGuire suggested repetition, recall, attitudes and opinions over time as measures to assess the extent to which the new belief has been retained. McGuire's final step is the behaviour - the desired response. To monitor this, he suggested classical retail audit and consumer panel techniques.

Figure (4-5): McGuire's Information-Processing Model

Steps in persuasion process:



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Effectiveness Index Tests

Source: Gerald De Groot, The Persuaders Exposed, Associated Business Press, London, 1980, p62

As in other hierarchical models, McGuire's model has been criticised on the basis that the sequential staircase assumption is not always reasonable [123]. Even McGuire himself admitted that when he stated that he would lose all credibility as an attitude researcher if he claimed that his model is applicable to a majority of communication situations [124].

Research by McGuire [125] and others [126] seems to indicate that the sequence of effects assumed by the model typically occurs under the high involvement condition and when there are clear differences between alternative options (eg. products). However, it is fair to admit that McGuire's model "is clearly a much better, though-out one than most models introduced in advertising thinking." [127]

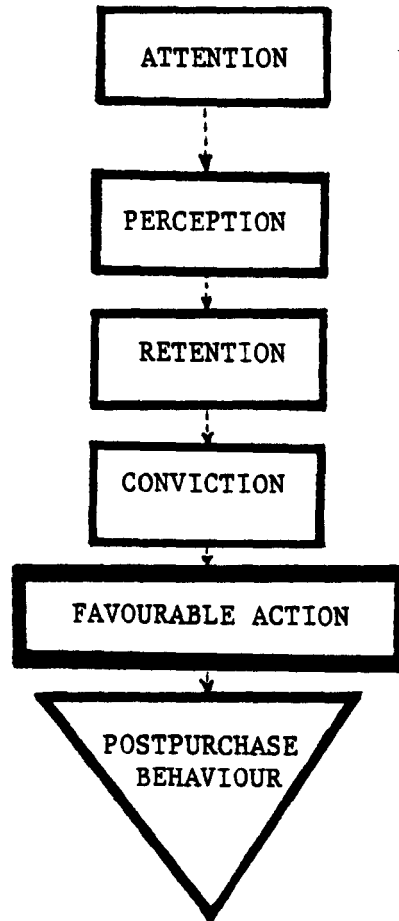
(7) DELOZIER'S MODEL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESPONSES TO ADVERTISING

In 1976, DeLozier [128] introduced his model which explains how advertising communication works to achieve the desired response (purchasing behaviour). His model suggests that advertising can achieve the desired responses through a sequence of psychological responses that the consumer makes toward the advertising message. The model is presented in Figure (4-6).

As the figure depicts, the sequential responses of a consumer to advertising moves as follows:-

- (1) Stimulating attention. The first step that advertising has to produce is to attract and hold the consumer's attention. In this regard advertising, to be influential, must consider the selective nature of the consumer's exposure to advertisements, ie. consumers

Figure (4-6): DeLozier's Model of the Psychological Responses



Source: Graphic representation of DeLozier's model.

ordinarily selectively attend to advertisements which are of interest to them or which are relevant to their particular needs and problems.

- (2) Influencing perception. In order to be effective, advertising must influence favourably the prospective consumer's perception of the advertised product. This step involves the process of establishing the brand image (or the favourable impression of the brand in the mind of the prospect).
- (3) Facilitating Retention. This step is the most important one in the model. As DeLozier [129] indicated "In advertising communications it is essential to create and retain changes in the consumer's behaviour which are deemed desirable to the firm." In this regard, repetition is a valuable technique. However, the important question to be answered concerns the optimal level of the repetition. To this question, DeLozier offered no specific answer. However, he cited several variables, such as the nature of the product, the characteristics of the audience and the quality of the message, which are to be considered in determining the level of repetition. In general, DeLozier suggested that for established products, "advertising messages should be spaced continually over a period of time." On the other hand, for new products "advertising should be heavily concentrated in the introductory stage in the product life cycle, followed by distributed (spaced) advertising."

It is worth mentioning that retention represents a common thread between DeLozier and McGuire, and perhaps it is the most differential aspect in their models. However, Robertson [130] reported that McGuire used it

(ie. retention) to mean the retention of impetus towards action, a use which is quite distinct from DeLozier's.

- (4) Gaining conviction. While the previous three steps in the model represent a preliminary (low-level) set of responses a consumer makes to an advertisement, this set of responses is considered by DeLozier as a prerequisite to the "higher level of responses," ie. conviction and the resulting action. Therefore, gaining conviction represents the pre-action step in the model, so it is considered "the ultimate goal of the advertiser." In achieving this level of consumer response, some degree of attitude change is assumed to have occurred.
- (5) Generating action. According to the model, advertising can contribute to this end by helping to set the stage for purchase behaviour. Considering the possibility of the advertising sleeper effect, DeLozier [131] was specific when he stated that "Because good advertising communications can sometimes change attitude temporarily or build strong positive attitude for new products, particularly when directed to prime market targets, advertising communicators can often induce trial purchases."
- (6) The final step and perhaps the most valuable addition to the hierarchical approach models, is "affecting postpurchase behaviour." While almost all the hierarchical models ignored this step in their conceptualisation of the advertising influence in the consumer's purchasing behaviour, DeLozier emphasised this step as a major function of advertising. After making a major purchase decision, consumers are

normally involved in a postpurchase evaluation process which aims at reducing any doubts concerning the decision they made. By adding this step, DeLozier emphasised the crucial role of advertising in creating the brand image in the consumer's mind. Such reassurance enhances the likelihood that the purchasing behaviour will be repeated.

At this point, it would be useful to present the models analysed above in inclusive chronological order as in Table (4-1).

THE HIERARCHICAL MODELS: AN OVERALL EVALUATION

As Table (4-1) illustrates, the hierarchical models have two aspects in common [132]:-

- (1) The models contain three behavioural dimensions:
(a) cognitive (attention, awareness, comprehension, learning, belief), (b) affective (interest, feeling, evaluation, conviction, preference, yielding), and (c) conative (intention, trial, action, behaviour).
- (2) The models are based on the assumption that cognitive response must precede affective which must precede conative in the hierarchy of effects.

Ray [133] argued that although the first of these two aspects seems to be quite reasonable, the second - the logic involved in the sequential response - is not always reasonable.

Indeed, a great deal of the criticism which was directed at the hierarchical approach models was concerned with the stairstep assumption underlying all these models. Both empirical evidence and theory indicate that the notion of the stairstep is, at the

Table (4-1): The Hierarchical Models: Summary

The Model	Starch's Model	Strong's "AIDA" Model	Lavidge-Steiner Model*1	Rogers' Model*2	Colley's "DAGMAR" Model	McGuire's Model	DeLozier's Model*3
Steps Towards Action							
Step 1	Seen	Attention	Awareness	Awareness	Unawareness	Presentation	Attention
Step 2	↓ Read	↓ Interest	↓ Knowledge	↓ Interest	↓ Awareness	↓ Attention	↓ Perception
Step 3	↓ Believed	↓ Desire	↓ Liking	↓ Evaluation	↓ Comprehension	↓ Comprehension	↓ Retention
Step 4	↓ Remembered	↓ Action	↓ Preference	↓ Trial	↓ Conviction	↓ Yielding	↓ Conviction
Step 5	↓ Acted upon		↓ Conviction	↓ Adoption	↓ Action	↓ Retention	↓ Action
Step 6			↓ Purchase			↓ Behaviour	↓ Postpurchase Behaviour

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*1 This model is known as the hierarchy of effects model.

*2 The modified version of this model consists of four stages: Knowledge, Persuasion, Decision, and Confirmation.

*3 This model is also termed the psychological responses model.

Source: Constituted from the literature review by the researcher.

very least, too simple. Many studies both in psychology and in marketing communication indicate that cognitive response is often not a measurable precedent to either affect or conation [134].

Webster [135] pointed out that the "marketing communication literature usually talks about the buyer's mental stages as a hierarchy of effects of communications, although there is some disagreement about the nature of the hierarchy, and whether the steps are valid descriptions of actual buyer behaviour."

Also, there is no strong evidence concerning the possibility of predicting behaviour from attitude [136]. Campbell [137] and Day [138] pointed out that the affective-conative link is questioned by studies of the attitude-behaviour relationship that have been carried out over the last forty years.

Freedman and his associates [139] recognised that there is no one-to-one correspondence between attitude and any given behaviour. The most popular view to emerge was that:-

"... attitudes always produce pressure to behave consistently with them, but external pressures and extraneous considerations can cause people to behave inconsistently with their attitudes. Any attitude or change in attitude tends to produce behaviour that corresponds with it. However, this correspondence often does not appear because of other factors that are involved in the situation."

Perhaps more important, the addition of other variables - even if found to improve prediction of behaviour from attitude - does little to advance the understanding of the attitude-behaviour relation itself [140]. For example, Fazio and his associates [141] have reported attitude-behaviour relations of moderate magnitude when respondents were given direct experience with the

attitude object or with the behaviour. In the absence of such direct experience, the relation between attitude and behaviour was found to be relatively weak.

One of the staunchest critics of the hierarchy-of-effects models was Palda [142]. The researcher questioned the logic of all the hierarchical models and criticised the lack of adequate measurement devices that would be necessary to make them operational. In general, Palda's objection was to the staircase notion of the models. In this regard, he stated three major objections which can be cited as follows:-

- (1) The progression from one step to another assumed in the hierarchical models does not necessarily imply a greater probability of eventual action (purchase). For example, in the Lavidge-Steiner model, awareness and knowledge do not always have to precede purchase by any appreciable amount of time. Similarly, the liking/conviction progression is challenged. Palda pointed out that "it has not tended to the question, until very recently, the plausibility of assumption that each of these steps contributes to an increased probability of purchase."
- (2) The hierarchical models involve conceptual problems with the measurement of each step in the stair. The operational definitions required to collect data in the field often leave open the question of whether or not the desired construct has actually been measured at all.
- (3) There is no conclusive evidence in the literature that supports the assumption that change in the attitude or conviction has necessarily preceded change in behaviour, rather than resulting from it. Palda

concluded, "A causal relationship and a meaning relationship between attitude and behaviour can be distinguished when attitude is changed first, the aim is to cause change in behaviour. On the other hand, if behaviour changes first, a change in attitude is involved and serves to give a meaning to the already achieved behaviour." [143]

In effect, Palda regarded the hierarchical models as "more sketchy views of the internal psychological process a typical consumer is supposed to experience from the perception of an ad to purchase."

Another criticism of the hierarchical models is that all the models assumed a high degree of involvement between a consumer and the advertised brand, an assumption which is not always true in all the purchasing situations [144]. This implies that in any purchasing decision situation, a consumer is supposed to engage in an extended problem-solving behaviour wherein an active search and use of information is involved [145]. However, this is not likely to occur in all purchasing decisions.

Consistent with this notion, Potter and Lovell [146] argued that the hierarchical models assumed "a conscious, rational sequence, which does not really stand up to examination. Consumers are not necessarily convinced before they buy." The authors added that the idea that advertising brings about conversion from not knowing (or unawareness) about something to buying (action) seems to be a more acceptable assumption where a new product is concerned. However, they argued, that most advertising "is involved with products that have penetrated a large proportion of the target market."

Here, advertising may not involve more than reminding or reassuring consumers of the existence of the brand advertised. In this regard, Potter and Lovell [147] argued that "the task of advertising does not fit easily into the compact schemes (ie. the hierarchical models)."

However, our view is that the involvement in the extended problem-solving process does not imply rationality because, in the final stage of the decision process (ie. making the purchase decision), the consumer bases his decision upon what he considers (or perceives) as satisfactory information about his choice. Therefore, the issue is still a subjective matter.

Consistent with this view, Schiffman and Kanuk [148] pointed out that the extended problem-solving process is "just an approach through which a consumer (who does not possess complete knowledge) actively seeks information and attempts to make a satisfactory decision."

Despite all this criticism of the hierarchical models, some of these models, such as AIDA, DAGMAR, and the Lavidge-Steiner model of hierarchy-of-effect, still dominate the frame of reference of typical practitioners and the conceptual frameworks of the better-known advertising and marketing textbooks.

Crosier [149] suggested that, "For the meantime, the hierarchy of effects at least provides a common, codified and consistent conceptual framework for practitioners. But its ultimate value is determined by the degree to which performance characteristics derived from it can be made operational. What do impact, involvement, communication, empathy, persuasion and motivation consist of?"

In general, the hierarchical models "offer a useful framework which should not be entirely discarded." [150]

Webster [151] indicated that "the basic value of the hierarchy-of-effects models resides in their ability to help the marketing communication strategist think clearly about his objectives, specific communication tools, and how he will evaluate the results of communication efforts."

A final comment on the hierarchical models is that, although the models have been extensively criticised for their conceptual and measurement problems, it may be concluded that these models must not be viewed as final formulations of how advertising works. A reasonable view of the models requires us to evaluate them as advanced attempts by means of which the models' developers attempted to contribute to explaining the advertising effect on consumer purchasing behaviour. However, more refinement for the purpose of placing the models in a more operational context must be considered by the researchers in the field of marketing communication, and in advertising in particular.

To this end, the discussion now turns to deal with other approaches explaining how advertising operates. In the context of this approach we shall examine three models: Krugman's model of low-involvement, Joyce's model, and Baker's model. Each of these three models will be examined separately.

KRUGMAN'S MODEL OF LOW-INVOLVEMENT

Given the admitted shortcoming of much of the hierarchical models, it is not surprising that alternative theoretical formulations have emerged. One of the most influential models, and one that is based on the basic notions of learning theory, is that expressed by Herbert Krugman [152] in his article "The Impact of Television Advertising: Learning without Involvement," published in 1965.

Krugman argued that most of the models about how advertising works assumed a high degree of involvement between the recipient of the advertising and the object being advertised and/or the advertisement. However, Krugman conceded that most television viewers are not involved with either the advertising or the topic. The author pointed out that "we seem to be saying, then, that much of the impact of television advertising is in the form of learning without involvement." This is contrary to the other hierarchical models which assume high involvement between a consumer and the advertised product or service.

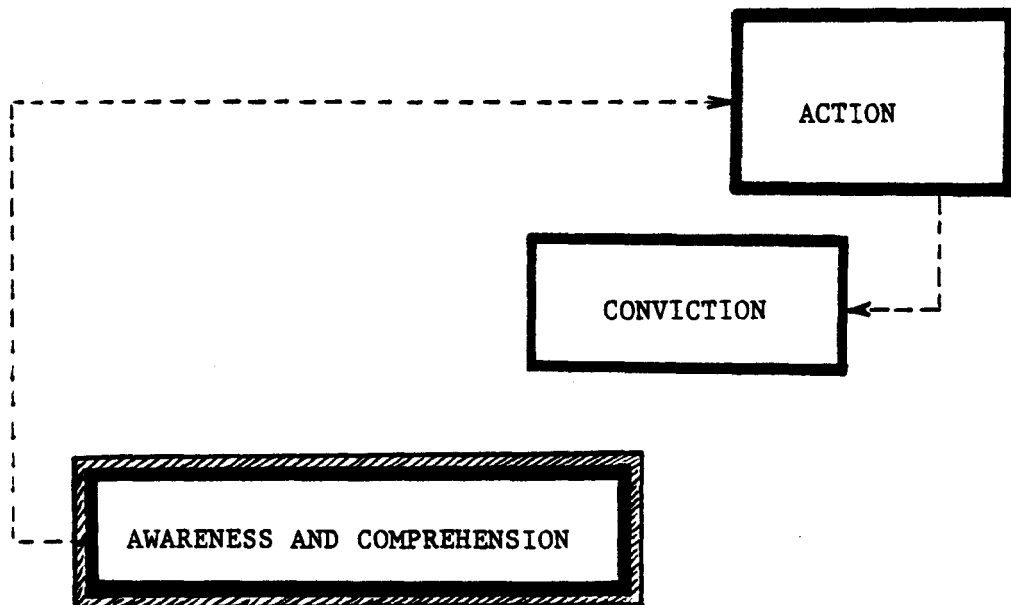
Therefore, from Krugman's viewpoint, advertising acts as a kind of trigger to purchase. However, the exact nature of the trigger mechanism was not explained, nor even hypothesised in Krugman's model. Krugman also maintained that changes in attitude do not necessarily measurably precede changes in behaviour, because with low involvement learning the "full perceptual impact is delayed."

Thus, the basic assumption in Krugman's model is that a gross awareness occurs first and then action and attitude development in that order. In this regard, Krugman stated, "with low involvement one might look for gradual shifts in perceptual structure, aided by repetition, activated by behavioural-choice situations, and followed at some time by attitude change." [153] This assumption, however, is different from that proposed under the high involvement situation where the more familiar conflict of arguments and ideas at the level of conscious opinion and attitude that precedes changes in overt behaviour is expected to occur.

It follows, therefore, that the stairstep notion in Krugman's model takes another sequence pattern. It is a cognitive-conative-affective one: contrary to all the previously discussed

hierarchical models which assumed that cognitive-affective-conative is the pattern of the relationship among the stairsteps in the models. Figure (4-7) represents Krugman's model of low-involvement:

Figure (4-7): Krugman's Low-Involvement Model of Advertising



Source: Adapted from Mark S Albion and Paul W Farris, The Advertising Controversy: Evidence on the Economic Effects of Advertising, Auburn House Publishing Company, Boston, Mass, 1981, p5.

As Figure (4-7) above illustrates, Krugman suggests that although television advertisements may not directly change attitude, they may after overwhelming repetition, make possible a shift in cognitive structure, and a conative response (eg. the purchase action) may be the more likely step to occur. As a result of experience with the product, an affective response (eg. attitude change), may subsequently occur. In other words, in Krugman's

model, affection is a function of experience, and conation is the result of repetition.

Thus, in contrast to the other hierarchical models, Krugman's model is based on the assumption that changes in attitude do not necessarily precede changes in behaviour. In this regard, Krugman argued that:-

"persuasion as such, ie. overcoming a resistant attitude is not involved at all and that it is a mistake to look for it in our personal lives as a test of television's advertising impact. Instead, as trivia are repeatedly learned and repeatedly forgotten and then repeatedly learned a little more, it is probable that two things will happen: (1) more simply, that so-called "overlearning" will move some information out of short-term and into long-term memory systems, and (2) more complexly, that we will permit significant alterations in the structure of our perception of a brand or product, but in ways which may fall short of persuasion or of attitude change. One way we may do this is by shifting the relative salience of attributes suggested to us by advertising as we organise our perception of brands and products." [154]

It follows, therefore, that in measuring the advertising effect, it is unlikely that attitude change will be measured. What is likely to be measured is a change in consumer preference or preference structure. As Krugman suggests, "this kind of measurement is not equivalent to a change in attitudes." For Krugman, while attitude can be learned only after what is called a behavioural completion, preferences can change as a result of a one-time transmission of new information that represents a way of perceiving a product that is in conflict with or different from that represented in older information. Therefore, according to

Krugman, there is no attitude change involved in the advertising influence process, rather, preference change is the most likely effect.

It is worth mentioning that Krugman was interested in measuring television advertising impact, and his model may therefore be confined to television advertising. Krugman's model can be viewed as a TV-oriented model. In this direction, "Krugman has done much to redirect the thinking of researchers into alternative conceptualisation of the attitude change process in advertising." [155]

In fact, the importance of Krugman's model lies in his attempt to fill the gap in conceptual thinking about the role of advertising in purchasing situations made under low-involvement conditions. Thus, the low-involvement model is applicable to those purchasing situations which the other hierarchical models have failed to consider in any real depth.

JOYCE'S MODEL OF "HOW ADVERTISING MAY WORK"

An attempt to conceptualise the consumer's response to an advertisement was made by Joyce [156]. The author assumed that "it is at least possible to draw crude distinctions between attending to an advertisement, perceiving it, becoming involved with it (including acquiring attitudes towards it), and recalling it or its message after it is no longer in view."

Thus, Joyce assumed that the response of a consumer to an advertising message can be induced through four distinct stages: attention, perception, involvement, and recall.

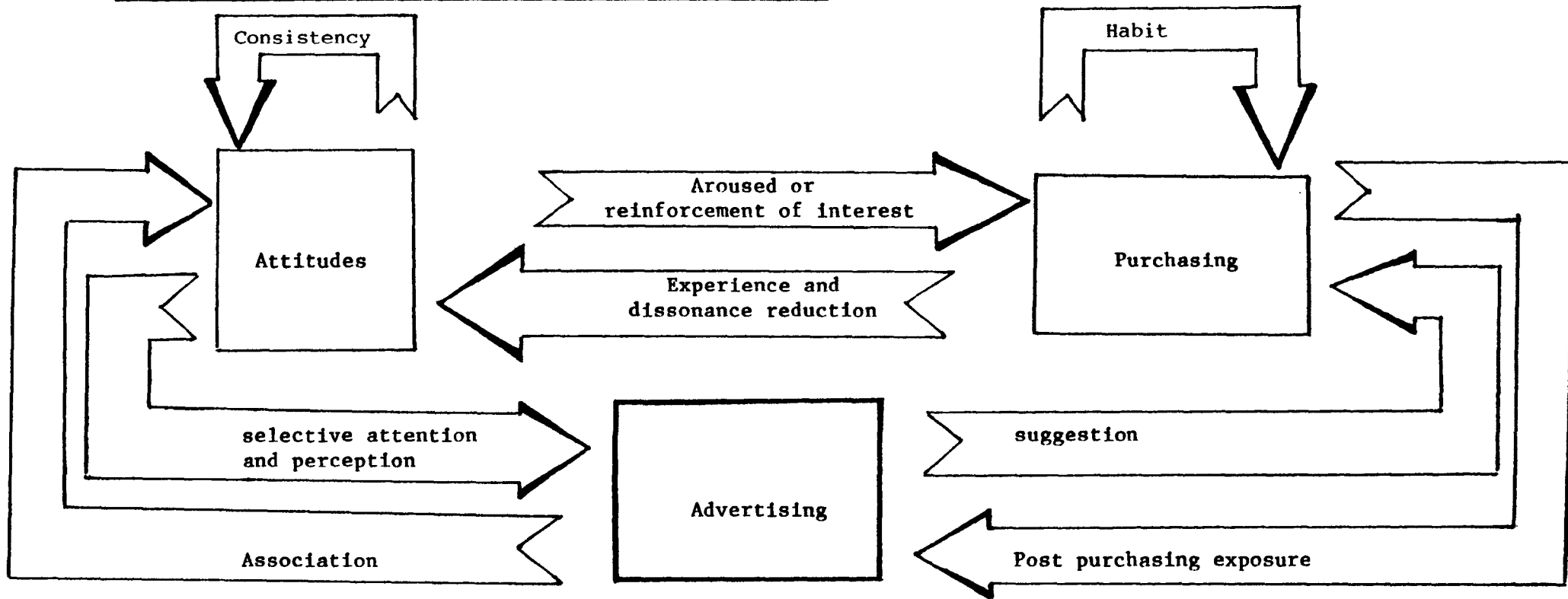
As they were described by Joyce himself, both "attention and perception are highly selective." Consumers bring preconceptions to advertisements and may misperceive or misunderstand them. Involvement, however, can be induced if the advertisement is liked, has stimulated the consumer's interest, and can be believed. However, "involvement in an advertisement is a much more complex matter than such terms as "liking" and "belief" imply: it probably does not matter if an advertisement is not liked or not literally believed. However, interest in the sense of stimulation and identification in the very broadest sense, are probably important." [157]

The last stage in Joyce's model is recall. The author distinguished among three types of recall: (1) recall of the advertisement having been seen, (2) recall of the content of the advertisement, especially slogans, and (3) recall of information or images that it communicated. However, the author pointed out that "Recall of the product, rather than the advertisement or slogan, is what counts."

In order to summarise these notions, Joyce represented his model (Figure (4-8)). As Figure (4-8) shows, the model consists of two arrows joining the three boxes - an arrow from "advertising" to "attitudes," showing that advertising changes or reinforces attitudes by investing the product with favourable associations, and an arrow from "attitudes" to "purchasing," showing that favourable attitudes lead to interest in the product being aroused when there is an opportunity to buy it, or to a reinforcement of a purchasing habit.

However, it seems that it would also be correct to put in arrows going the other way. Purchasing may influence attitudes, partly as a straightforward reflection of product experience, partly

Figure (4-8): Joyce's Model of "How Advertising May Work"



Source: Timothy Joyce, "What Do We Know About How Advertising Works," in Michael Barnes (ed), The Three Faces of Advertising, Advertising Association, 1975, p242.

(perhaps even before the product is consumed) by the drive to reduce dissonance, which leads to favourable attitudes in justification to oneself of the decision to purchase. Equally, the impact of advertising on the consumer is very much affected by attitudes in the sense of preconceptions: both attention and perception are selective and this selectivity is affected by attitudes.

The model also considers the possibility that advertising influences purchasing directly, ie. advertising may partly work by suggestion, a process in which attitudes need not necessarily function as an intermediary. Also, there is evidence that the fact of having bought a particular product may in some circumstances heighten attention to advertisements for that product, again as a part of the phenomenon of the drive to reduce dissonance.

Finally, Joyce introduced two "loops" in his model. First, the consistency loop around attitudes, which is likely to operate when advertising stimuli and purchasing situations are absent. Second, the habit loop around purchasing, which recognises that much purchasing is habitual and apparently unaffected by advertising or by attitude changes.

In fact, Joyce's model represents a valuable explanatory tool by which the influence of advertising on purchasing behaviour can be explained. One important notion in the model is the mutual causal relationship between attitude and behaviour with attitude influencing behaviour, and behaviour in turn influencing attitudes. In other words, the model assumed a reciprocal causation between attitude and behaviour. This notion has been ignored by almost all the hierarchy-of-effects models.

BAKER'S MODEL: A REALISTIC VIEW OF CONSUMER'S DECISION PROCESS

Baker [158] developed a model which provides a realistic view of how a consumer makes his choice decisions and which can be considered a useful analytical framework for explaining how a consumer responds to marketing communication and particularly to advertising.

The model portrays the consumer's purchase decision as a sequential process. Accordingly, a purchasing decision is a function of a set of variables which contribute to the shaping of the final purchasing decision. Specifically, the starting point in Baker's model is the "enabling conditions" which is considered as "a summary variable comprising a need, awareness of a possible means of satisfying it and the resources necessary to acquire a supply."

The second stage in the model is "precipitation" through which "the felt need" moves up to the point where an individual consumer will actively consider means of satisfying the need. As Baker suggests, this process is accomplished through two steps of analysis. The first is an economic analysis of the economic advantages and disadvantages associated with each competing alternative (eg. products or services) which are available in the choice situation. This type of analysis is thought of as a cost-benefit analysis. The second concerns the review of the performance characteristics of the object to be chosen.

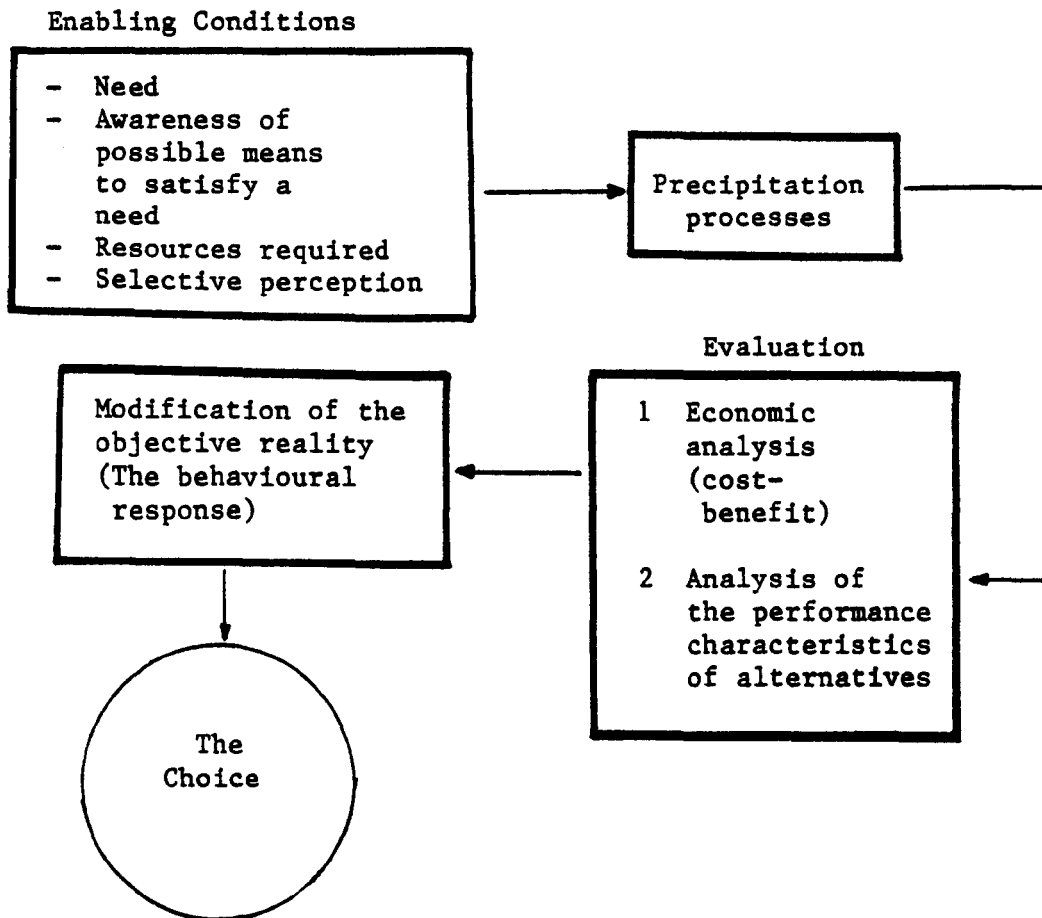
The next stage in the model is the modification of "the objective reality." This has been described by Baker as representing the consumer's behavioural response to the outcome of the preceding stages. While these stages are based on rationality (or objectivity), the modification is subjectively accomplished. Therefore, "the economic rationality is a very compelling norm

and likely to dominate purely subjective preferences." [159]

Thus, Baker views the purchase decision (individual or collective) as "a sequential process in which we apply economic and performance criteria to alternatives (with some subjective overtones, of course) in order to arrive at a final choice."

On the basis of the contextual formulations underlying Baker's model, we might illustrate the model in the following diagram:

Figure (4-9): A proposed diagram of Baker's model of consumer's choice decision



Indeed, an important aspect of Baker's model is its ability to be applied as a powerful descriptive and explanatory tool. The model represents what might be considered a logical conceptualisation of how the consumer (individual or collective) makes his purchase decision in real marketing situations. As depicted by the model, the consumer's decision making is an objective process which is bounded by the consumer's subjectivity. By definition, the purchase decision is a function of the consumer's behavioural response which is derived from his modification of the objective reality.

The realistic aspect of the model is that it considers the enabling conditions as a prerequisite for the following stages in the decision process. While the models of the hierarchy of effects considered the awareness of the product or service as a starting point, this is not sufficient to move the consumer to follow the sequential processes if the need and the resources required are not available. It is in this sense that Baker's model possesses its power.

RAY'S THREE-ORDER HIERARCHY MODEL

Perhaps the most comprehensive treatment of the advertising effect was that developed by Ray [160]. The author proposed that the response to advertising could take any of the following three hierarchical orders:-

- (1) The standard stairstep learning hierarchy (or the learn-feel-do), which is based on the assumption that learning must occur before attitude and behaviour change take place. This type of hierarchy is applied to those communication situations wherein (1) the consumers are more involved with the products or services advertised, (2) the alternative products are

clearly different, (3) an emphasis is on the mass media in communication, and (4) the product is in the early stages of its life cycle.

- (2) The dissonance-attribution hierarchy (or the do-feel-learn), as described by Ray, is "the exact reverse of the standard learning one." It posits situations in which purchasing behaviour occurs first, followed by attitude change, and only then by learning - a conative-affective-cognitive relationship. An example of such a situation might be the purchase of a product by a consumer who, on the basis of product use, begins to form attitudes toward the product, and then to support these attitudes, starts to learn from advertisements featuring the product. The dissonance-attribution hierarchy is more likely to occur when:
 - (1) the audience is involved in the product advertised,
 - (2) the alternative products are almost indistinguishable (or low differentiated),
 - (3) a non-mass medium (eg. personal selling) is important,
 - and (4) the products are in the maturity stage of the product life cycle.

- (3) The low-involvement hierarchy (or learn-do-feel). This type of hierarchy is mostly appropriate when involvement in the products or services advertised is low, products are similar (or low-differentiated), mass media are important, and the product is in later stages of its life cycle.

If we consider Ray's classification as a basis to classify the advertising effect in the different marketing communication situations, the hierarchical models previously discussed fall into the first type of Ray's classification, ie. the standard staircase learning hierarchy, while Krugman's model of

low-involvement can easily be classified as a low-involvement hierarchy. Therefore, it seems clear that what Ray has done is in effect a refining process of what the literature provides. However, in adding the dissonance-attribution hierarchy, Ray was a pioneer in that he filled another conceptual gap in thinking of how advertising works. This hierarchy applies to those purchasing situations where a consumer makes his purchasing decision without forming any attitude toward the product, and his exposure to advertising is designed to form such a preferential attitude.

Indeed, the three-order hierarchy model proposed by Ray has "resuscitated the hierarchy-of-effects models by dropping their rigid, single sequential arrangement at which the great deal of criticism has been aimed." [161] Therefore, Ray's formulation is considered a valuable contribution to identifying the most probable situations in which the consumer may make his purchasing decisions.

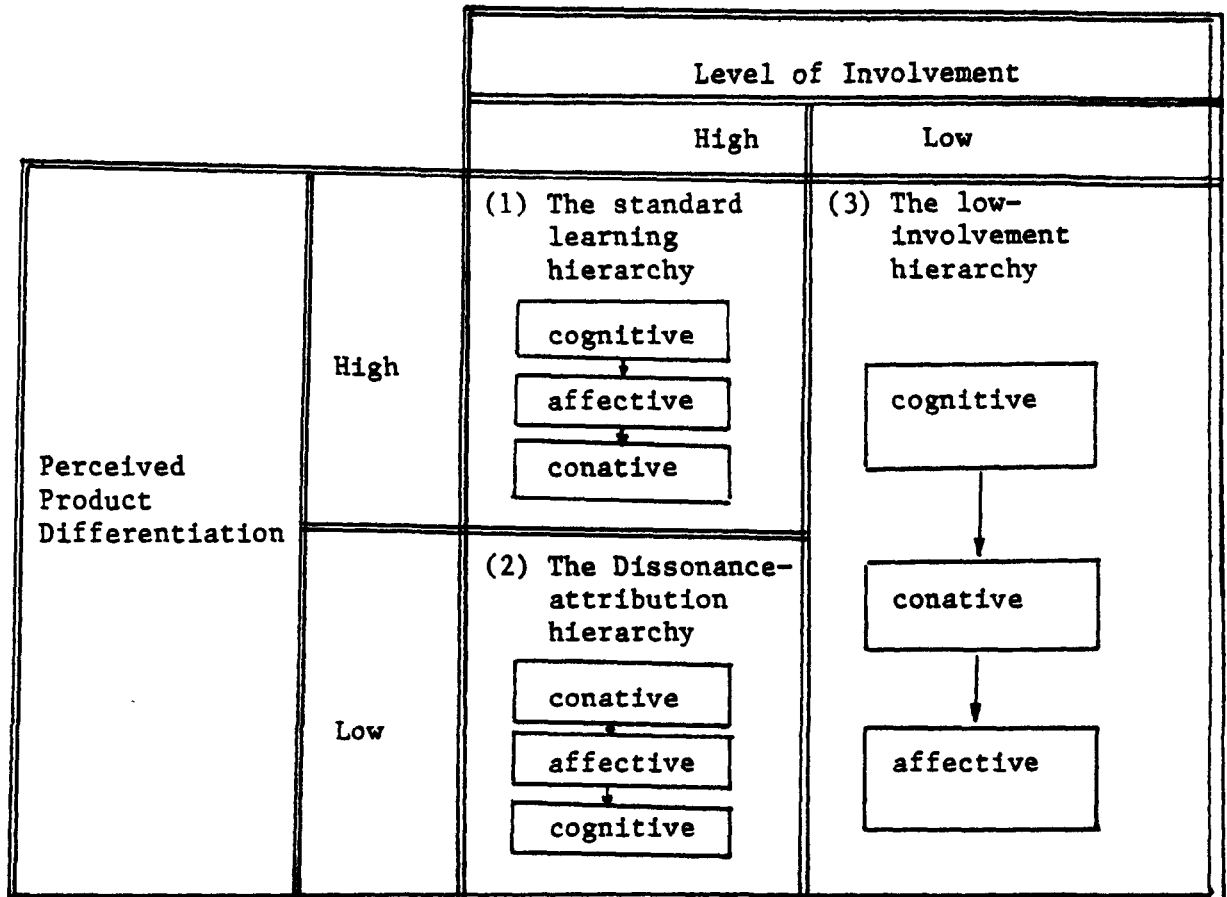
However, Ray's model of three-order hierarchy is not without its critics. O'Shaughnessy [162] argued that Ray did not claim that those situations in which each of the hierarchies is said to occur are either necessary or sufficient conditions for the corresponding process to occur. The author added, "Neither does Ray attempt to set out the causal (motivational) chain leading from situation to process adoption." The three-order hierarchy models showed "a commonsense link between situations and processes, but it is the empirical link that still needs to be firmly established by research."

O'Shaughnessy continued, "Even assuming that the three-order hierarchies are exhaustive and mutually exclusive processes leading from non-buying to buying action, questions can still be raised: is advertising concerned only with moving the target

audience to buying? What happens when different members of the target segment are at different stages of the same hierarchy or at different stages of different hierarchies, since not every one in the target segment will perceive conditions similarly?" For all these questions, Ray offered no answers.

Finally, considering the level of personal involvement in the advertised product or service, and the level of product differentiation as crucial factors in Ray's analysis of the pattern of hierarchy to be applied in a certain situation, his three-order hierarchical models can be represented in Figure (4-10) below.

Figure (4-10): Ray's Three-order Hierarchy Model



Source: Graphic interpretation of Ray's three-order hierarchy

THE INFORMATION-PROCESSING THEORY APPROACH TO EXPLAINING THE ADVERTISING INFLUENCE

A more recently developed approach to explain how advertising affects the consumer's decision-making process is that provided by information-processing theory [163]. The theory holds that purchase and consumption decisions are viewed in terms of how individuals acquire, organise, and use information provided by the marketing communication messages [164].

The basic notions of information-processing theory stem from different sources which indicated that individuals respond to any stimulus of a marketing communication through several stages, at the end of which a pattern of behavioural action is assumed to occur.

Ray [165] pointed out that individuals process information acquired from marketing communications through at least four stages: (1) the initial attention filter, (2) the short-term memory, (3) the long-term memory, and (4) the central processing. In the first stage, if the message is strong, different, and interesting enough, it gets through the attention filter. When reaching the second stage i.e. the short-term memory, the message must be rehearsed quickly. Only a few ideas can be held at this stage. In the third stage, messages reaching long-term memory are subject to forgetting, particularly if central processing does not occur or if competitive messages interfere with memory. Finally, in the fourth stage, messages may be processed along with other information the individual holds in his mind to produce appropriate or inappropriate feelings, intentions, and actions.

Bettman [166] in his information-processing theory of consumer choice identified at least four major information-processing stages. These are: (1) external search, (2) internal search,

(3) evaluation, and (4) selection. The author suggested that the consumer makes choices at each of these stages, and not just at the last stage - selection.

Keith Crosier [167] attempted to conceptualise the basic notions of information-processing theory and introduced what he described as "a simplified representation of information processing behaviour, synthesised from several sources." Because it would be significant in contributing to our understanding of how advertising operates and in turn how a consumer shapes his response to advertising, it is worth discussing the major operations (stages) in information processing as represented by the author.

As described by the author, "the sequence of information-processing operations is triggered by the stimulus of a marketing communication." [168] For the purpose of the present study, these sequential operations will be briefly discussed as follows:

- (1) "Acquisition" of information provided by the communication message. This operation is not assumed to be initiated until some high level of utility is perceived in the information. It follows that if this utility is not perceived by a consumer, information will not gain his attention, and it is likely to be rejected.
- (2) "Reception." This operation is influenced by the extent to which the information is perceived as sufficiently salient.
- (3) "Analysis." If both acquisition and reception of information are gained, this will lead the consumer to a further step in the information-processing procedure, ie. the analysis step. It is worth mentioning that

"rehearsal" plays a crucial role in the analysis operation. It begins operating when "the comprehended information interacts with the previously processed information being stored in the memory, in order to frame support arguments and counterarguments with respect to the proposition contained in the communication." Predispositions stored in the memory have a determining role in extending or shortening the information-processing procedure. If the predispositions are not available the next step - organisation - will follow.

- (4) "Organisation." Here, the crucial component is the "abstraction" in which "the mental picture of the product under consideration is enriched by the use of soft cues in the information to infer hard attributes. For example, colour may be used to infer exclusivity or price to infer cheapness in all senses of the word."
[169]
- (5) "Utilisation" of information. The most likely outcome in this stage is the choice. This can be fulfilled by applying a set of four decision rules: (1) the "linear compensatory" rule, which consists of scoring all options relevant to the choice, and a perceived weakness on one attribute may be compensated for by strengths on others, (2) the "conjunctive" rule which requires a consumer to establish a minimum acceptable level for each product attribute. This level is used as a criterion for selection. According to this rule, a brand is evaluated as acceptable only if each attribute equals or exceeds that level. Therefore, by applying this rule, "the total range of attributes is reduced to a manageable number and all options rated on each remaining dimension," (3) the "disjunctive" rule

which reduces the number of options by defining a threshold level on each attribute, and accordingly, any attribute which fails to match it will be rejected. Finally, (4) the "lexicognitive" rule, which implies selection of one attribute as a more important (salient) criterion and then scoring the options on the basis of that criterion.

- (6) The final step in the information-processing procedure is behaviour (or action). When utilisation is accomplished, a consumer is expected to behave consistently. Indeed, the use of the product chosen provides the consumer with some experience which is going to be stored in the permanent memory and will update the predispositions stored there.

It seems clear that the major contribution of information-processing theory is that it augmented the explanatory power of the hierarchical approach. Consistent with this conclusion, Crosier [170] stated that the information-processing theory approach "holds the promise of explaining what the hierarchy only describes."

In general, "what information-processing theory does offer is a more complete conceptual framework, more prospect of rendering the constituent concepts operational, a better chance of valid prediction and measurement, and hence more effective strategic planning of marketing communications initiatives." [171]

At this point, we now turn to discuss the objectives of advertising communication.

SECTION 4: THE OBJECTIVES OF ADVERTISING

Having explained how advertising operates to induce the desired response by the consumer, here we discuss the objectives of advertising. It is difficult to understand how advertising decisions can adequately be made without prior clear specification of the objectives which the advertising is trying to fulfil. Therefore, our concern in this section is to discuss these objectives, but before proceeding to this, it is necessary to answer an important question: is there any need for advertising objectives? In the part that follows, we shall attempt to answer this question, after which we shall turn the discussion to deal with the actual objectives of advertising.

THE NEED FOR ADVERTISING OBJECTIVES

Aaker and Myers [172] stated:-

"The challenge today is to bring effective management to the advertising process in such a way as to provide stimulation as well as direction to the creative effort."

Indeed, the pivotal aspect of any effective managerial effort is the development of meaningful objectives. Without good objectives, it is almost impossible to guide and control the decision-making process.

Broadly speaking, in modern management objectives serve the following functions [173]:-

- (1) Objectives operate as communication and co-ordination devices. In this context, they provide a vehicle by which the communication process among concerned groups

can be effectively established. Objectives also serve to co-ordinate the efforts of those groups in a harmonic way that may help in achieving these objectives.

- (2) Objectives provide a criterion for decision-making. One test of the operationality of an objective is the degree to which it can act as a decision criterion.
- (3) Another related function of objectives is to evaluate results. In this sense, objectives act as standards with which performance results can be compared.

The need for objectives in advertising communication has been emphasised by Colley [174] in his well-known publication titled, "Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results, DAGMAR."* The author pointed out that measuring advertising effectiveness is an impossible task unless the advertising objectives are stated specifically in terms of some operational measurement.

Glover [175] indicated that "an advertising objective should meet two criteria: it should be specific and measurable. An objective should be specific to provide a goal for the advertiser to attain. An objective should be measurable so that the advertiser has a basis for the stated objectives. Meeting these two criteria does not seem to be overly difficult."

Given that defining advertising objectives is an important task, it becomes necessary for advertisers to have specific objectives which can help them to guide and control their creative effort.

* Colley's ideas in defining Advertising goals were discussed earlier in the previous section.

But the important question to ask is, what are the advertising objectives? This question represents a controversial issue and we will deal with some of its aspects as follows:

SALES AS AN ADVERTISING OBJECTIVE

The argument for an advertising objective concerned with sales gains much of its power from the concept behind the following thought: "the purpose of advertising is to change or to reinforce certain aspects of the behaviour of people in a direction desired by the sponsor." [176] However, in all advertisements promoting products or services, it would be difficult to conceive any other objective than sales.

The argument that sales is an advertising objective is based on the assumption that advertising that successfully communicates a message about a product will result in sales of a product. If it does not, then the advertising is not effective regardless of how effective the message was.

White [177] supported the argument for sales as an advertising objective. He stated "The basic task of advertising is to sell or to assist sales." In his view, advertising has to be capable of generating additional sales, otherwise it will lose the fundamental reason for its use.

In fact, sales as an advertising objective is probably best thought of as a long-range or time-lagged objective [178]. Advertising is only one of many factors influencing sales and the effects of these factors may enhance or hinder the effect of advertising on product sales.

Aaker and Myers [179] suggested that forces such as price, distribution, packaging, product features, competitive actions,

and changes in the consumer's needs and tastes, have a probable influence on sales, and therefore, it is extremely difficult to isolate the effect of advertising from that of these forces. The authors argued that "evaluating advertising only by its impact on sales is like attributing all the success or failure of a football team to the quarterback." The fact is that many other elements can affect the team's performance, for example, the competition, other players and so on. The implication of such an analogy is that the effect of advertising should be measured by criteria (objectives) which it alone can influence.

At the end of their discussion of sales as an advertising objective, the authors concluded that "If, in a real world situation, all factors remained constant except for advertising ... then it would be feasible to rely exclusively on sales to measure advertising effectiveness. Since such a situation is, in reality, infeasible, we must start dealing with response variables that are associated more directly with the advertising stimulus." [180]

Thus, it seems realistic that product sale is a function of a combination of several factors, one of which is advertising. Sales therefore seems to be an unreliable criterion to be adopted in either evaluating the effectiveness of advertising or in providing a practical guidance for decision-making.

COMMUNICATION AS AN ADVERTISING OBJECTIVE

If immediate sales do not form the reliable basis of an operational objective for advertising, the question which is then asked is, what sort of basis could be the alternative?

One important alternative lies in the argument which is concerned with communication as an advertising objective. The implication of such an argument is that "the expected results are those that advertising, by itself, can reasonably hope to accomplish." [181]

The basic assumption behind the argument for communication as an advertising objective is that "a consumer is not made aware of a product unless he has received some message about the product. Similarly, comprehension, conviction and action are contingent on the message and its ability to stimulate consumer thought and acceptance." [182]

Colley [183] in his approach to defining advertising goals for measured advertising results (DAGMAR) emphasised that "Advertising goals are virtually always communication goals." Consistent with this line of thought, Campbell [184] stated:-

"If the brand image is made brighter because of an ad, that is a communications effect. If the ad causes the marketing environment to be more conducive to communicating a sale, that is a communication effect. If the advertising campaign causes an increase in sales volume, sales share, trial purchases or repeat purchases, these are all communication effects. Very simply, all results of advertising are the results of communication."

Within this context, advertising operates through communication. Moreover, Colley [185] suggested that "advertising operates through a hierarchy of communication effects."*

* The notion of hierarchy of effects of advertising models was discussed in more detail earlier in this chapter.

In a similar spirit, Dunn and Barban [186] argued that "Although the ultimate purpose of most advertising is to make a sale, its immediate purpose is to communicate, specifically, to communicate a message to a particular target audience." The authors emphasised the notion that the communications objectives of advertising should be both specific and measurable.

Thus, it could be said that the argument for communication as an advertising objective has been widely accepted as more reliable than the sales argument, because communication operationally represents a specific objective which is associated with advertising alone. Within the context of this view, "Advertising's job purely and simply is to communicate, to a defined audience, information and frame of mind that stimulate action." [187]

However, still another view says that substitution of communication goals for sales goals does not really eliminate the need to determine the relationship between achieving any particular communication goal and ultimate sales effect. Therefore, another argument which is based on reconciling the controversy of sales versus communication as an advertising objective emphasises the notion that each of the two criteria (or objectives) can be employed depending on the stage in the product life cycle (PLC), and the consumer's decision-making process. In the following section, this reconciliatory view will be briefly discussed.

GLOVER'S RECONCILIATORY APPROACH

In an attempt to reconcile the controversy of sales versus communication as an advertising objective, Glover [188] introduced his proposed approach which is based on the assumption that both sales and communication can act as an advertising

objective on an exchangeable basis. Glover analysed the function of advertising in terms of the different stages in the consumer decision-making process and the product life cycle (PLC). In this context, the author stated:-

"Much of the communication vs. sales controversy vanishes when advertising objectives are considered in light of how consumers may use advertising and what the product requires in the way of advertising throughout its life cycle." [189]

Glover's approach can be summarised in terms of the following four points:-

- (1) A product in the introductory stage is relatively unknown to consumers, therefore consumers are likely to engage in an extended decision behaviour. In this case, advertising is not likely to be an initial direct stimulus to product sales. Information about the new product is needed by consumers in order that product evaluation in relation to competing products can be made. Therefore, communication must be the overriding objective of advertising, and advertising effectiveness must be judged on successful communication of the intended message.
- (2) When the product is entering the growth stage in its life cycle (where a sharp upward trend in product sales is the distinct characteristic), and many consumers are in the final stages of extended decision-making, consumers have usually obtained enough information about the product to evaluate intelligently its merits and ability to satisfy needs. However, product trial and evaluation still occur, but consumers may begin to translate extended decision-making into habitual

purchase behaviour (which is true particularly in the latter phases of the growth stage in the product life cycle). In such situations, advertising may serve to dispel any doubts about product acceptance with a favourable argument for product usage. When this occurs, advertising objectives may be appropriately set in terms of sales. The effectiveness measure should not necessarily be in terms of a specific volume or number of units sold. Rather, it should be the sharpness of the upward movement in the total product sales curve.

- (3) When the product is in the maturity stage, consumers are likely to engage in habitual purchasing behaviour. Since the extended decision process is not operative and consumers cannot usually be told anything new about a product, a more direct link between advertising and sales is possible. Therefore, advertising objectives may appropriately be set in terms of sales. However, this is not always the case either. Some advertising is aimed at breaking a consumer's habitual response in purchasing by attempting to provide information which counters competing product claims and creates a state of uneasiness about habitual response in product purchasing. Advertising aimed in this direction is not directly sales related. Therefore, advertising objectives are appropriately set in terms of communication. Because the latter case represents an exceptional situation, the measure of effectiveness suggested should be overall sales stability.
- (4) Finally, when the product is entering its declining stage and product changes or new product uses are emphasised, consumers may again engage in extended decision-making, communication certainly becomes the

advertising objective. Also, the measure of effectiveness should be concerned with communication.

Although Glover has conceptualised consumer decision processes and stages in the product life cycle and the differences in the objectives of advertising with respect to each process (consumer decision and product life cycle stages) as being parallel, the approach has been directly criticised by Glover himself. His criticism can be formulated in two major points:-

- (1) The author acknowledged that his approach is by no means complete or a definite answer to the controversy over advertising objectives. It does not pretend to account for specifics or subtleties. However, the author attributed this to the generality of his framework.
- (2) The author argued that the exceptions that do exist in the framework are not necessarily anomalies, but only differences in degree from the broader patterns the conceptualisation outlined.

However, four more critical points can be added to those of the author. These are:-

- (1) The author ignored the fact that sales is a function of many forces, such as packaging, competition, etc. In those cases in which the author assigned sales as an advertising objective, this fact was not sufficiently clear. In his conceptualisation, the author viewed the exclusive role of advertising in achieving sales, ie. the advertising is the only factor behind sales. However, this is not a true assumption. Therefore, the contributory role of advertising in achieving sales is the argument that is likely to be accepted.

- (2) The author assumed that all consumers engage in an extensive search of information about the new product in its introductory stage of life cycle. Indeed, this is not a true assumption, particularly if we consider the concept of adopter categories.* In Roger's model of adoption of innovation [190] this concept indicates where the consumer stands in relation to other consumers. Accordingly, our judgment is that almost all those consumers who are assumed to engage in an extended decision process in the introductory stage of the product life cycle, are innovators. This casts a veil of doubt over the reliability of Glover's conceptualisation as a framework within which advertising objectives can be defined.
- (3) It seems clear that Glover has assumed that learning must precede purchasing behaviour in all marketing communication situations. The assumption that both empirical evidence and theory indicated that it is so is, at the very least, too simple [191].
- (4) The author argued that under the conditions of habitual purchasing behaviour, sales as an advertising objective becomes an appropriate objective. However, the author added that this may not always be the case. The only exceptional case mentioned by Glover, is when consumers are prompted to break habitual purchase behaviour because of information provided by competing advertising. In such an exceptional case, communication becomes the most appropriate advertising

* These categories are: (1) innovators, (2) early adopters, (3) early majority, (4) late majority, (5) laggards.

objective. However, given the increasingly competitive tone in advertising communication (eg. comparative advertising), attempts to break the consumer's habitual behaviour and encourage brand-switching tendencies represent the situation which prevails. Thus, while breaking the consumer's habitual purchasing behaviour is considered an exceptional case in which communication becomes the most appropriate advertising objective, one can argue that such habit-breaking attempts represent a major trend in modern advertising (eg. comparative advertising).

Having discussed the above three types of advertising objectives (sales, communication, and the reconciliatory model), it is our view that the argument for communication as an advertising objective is strongest, for at least three reasons:-

- (1) Accepting the argument for sales as an advertising objective implies that advertising is the only force behind sales. This is not true, because advertising is just one of many forces that must be blended together to reach the ultimate objective of a sale. Neither advertising nor any one of the other forces alone can sell goods; rather, they all contribute to the sales objectives. Therefore, we accept the argument that the role of advertising in accomplishing the sales objective is a contributory one, not an exclusive one.
- (2) Based on the previous reason, sales cannot be a reliable criterion for measuring advertising effectiveness. By contrast, it is possible to attribute communication solely to advertising. Therefore, communication seems to be a more reliable criterion for measuring advertising effectiveness.

- (3) Accepting sales as an advertising objective means that other kinds of advertising such as political and public service advertising are excluded, since they are not oriented to making sales.

However, the question which arises here is, if communication is the most acceptable basis of setting objectives in most advertising, what are the specific advertising objectives? This is what we will try to answer in the part that follows.

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES OF ADVERTISING

In terms of communication, Colley [192] defined an advertising goal as "a specific communication task to be accomplished among a defined audience to a given degree in a given period of time." Colley introduced an approach which contains six guidelines which advertising management can make good use of in formulating sound objectives for its advertising programme. The approach can be summarised as follows:-

- (1) An advertising objective must be distinguished from a total marketing objective.
- (2) Advertising goals should be written down.
- (3) Goals of advertising should be based on an intimate knowledge of market opportunities and buying motives; they express realistic expectancy, not vain hopes.
- (4) Advertising should be measured in terms of effects, not exposures.

(5) Benchmark measurements should be developed before the campaign is implemented.

(6) Methods of measuring accomplishment are to be measured.

Aaker and Myers [193] argued that, operationally, defining the communication objectives of advertising "usually involves using advertising-response measures that intervene between the incidence of the stimulus (advertising) and the ultimate behavioural response (certain purchase decisions)." The authors added that such intervening measures "refer to a wide range of mental constructs such as awareness, brand knowledge, and attitude." [194]

Thus, communication objectives of advertising can be specified in terms of one or more of such intervening mental states. Advertisers are recommended to set these objectives in terms of moving potential customers through these mental states (objectives). Thus, it could be suggested that each mental response in the mind of the prospective customer pushing him to purchase the advertised product (the ultimate objective) represents a specific goal that might be achieved by advertising. In other words, the communication effects* induced by advertising constitute appropriate objectives of advertising.

DeLozier [195] supported this idea. He stated that the consumer's psychological responses intended to be produced by advertising form the set of goals which the advertising attempts to achieve. These goals can be summarised as follows:-

(1) Stimulating consumer attention.

* The communication effects constitute the basic idea in all the hierarchy-of-effects models of advertising which were discussed earlier.

- (2) Influencing favourably the consumer's perception of the advertised brand.
- (3) Facilitating consumer retention of the advertised brand.
- (4) Gaining conviction (favourable attitude) towards the advertised brand.
- (5) Generating a favourable action (eg. search and purchase behaviour) towards the advertised brand.
- (6) Effecting favourable postpurchase behaviour (eg. reduction of postpurchase dissonance) towards the advertised brand.

Bolen [196] suggested eleven possible advertising objectives that may be used either individually or in combination. These objectives are: (1) inducing trial purchasing behaviour, (2) intensifying the brand usage, (3) sustaining the existing customers' preference toward the product, (4) confirming imagery (the brand image), (5) changing habits, (6) building product line acceptance, (7) breaking the ice (ie. providing a brand recognition), (8) building ambience (ie. creating a positive feeling about a business), (9) generating sales leads, (10) increasing awareness of the advertised brand, and (11) increasing sales.

However, more recently, with an increasingly noisy and competitive communication environment, competition in advertising is considered directly [197]. In such an environment, advertisers employ different forms of competition, the most obvious of which is comparative advertising. This occurs where the advertised brand is claimed to be superior to other brands in the product category on some or all brand features. Indeed,

under these competitive market conditions, brand-switching behaviour from one brand to another is likely to occur, and the advertising objective here would be a competitive maintenance one. As Stephen King [198], a director of J Walter Thompson Ltd, stated, "the consumers in most markets have a short list of brands they find acceptable and buy among these brands in an irregular way at different frequencies. The task of advertising is competitive maintenance: bringing the brand to the top of the list (competitive) or trying to keep it there (maintenance)."

In the same spirit, Aaker and Myers [199] introduced an approach to defining advertising objectives which is based on dividing the market into three segments. Accordingly, they assigned what might be considered as possible advertising objectives in relation to each of those segments. The first segment in the authors' classification contains those who buy the advertised brand (the existing customers). For this segment, the advertising objective would be to maintain the loyalty of those customers and reduce the likelihood that they would be tempted to try another brand and would, as a result, eventually stop using the advocated brand.

The second segment consists of those who buy other brands exclusively. For this segment, the advertising objective would be to attract some of those to get them to try the advocated brand.

The third segment consists of those who do not buy the product class at all. Attracting the purchasing behaviour (at least on a trial base) of those prospective customers may not be an attractive objective for the small firm, because it will serve the interest of the large firms. So, it is advantageous to the latter.

Thus, in a competitive market situation, advertising should have two major objectives: (1) to maintain the brand loyalty of the existing customers, and (2) to induce brand-switching behaviour by those who buy the other brands to cause them to favour the advocated brand.

However, as a defensive strategy, brand loyalty is a more favourable advertising objective, especially when the firm is low-competitive. Brand loyalty as an advertising objective has been emphasised by Albion and Farris [200]. They pointed out that "To the extent that consumers are more likely to continue purchasing a brand that is advertised and less likely to switch to new or competing brands, advertising must create and maintain brand loyalty."

Empirical research on advertising objectives provides us with some objectives which have been assigned to advertising. The most rigorous published work is that carried out by Corkindale and Kennedy [201]. The researchers identified sixteen objectives which have been stated as major objectives of advertising campaigns by the companies included in the study.* Table (4-2) shows these objectives.

As can be seen, the predominant goals are rightly those that advertising could have some direct impact upon (communication goals), such as image building, attitude development, informative and persuasive messages. Moreover, in most cases reported in Table (4-2) some type of assessment was attempted. However, more detailed analysis led the researchers to probe the widespread

* These companies include some of the largest British consumer goods companies such as Beecham, Cadbury Schweppes, CPC, Heinz, Lyons, Spillers and Watney Mann.

uses of attitude/image measures. The companies apparently used these to gauge some of the effects of nearly all their advertising goals, but as the researchers concluded:-

"It was realised that companies actually use attitude/image studies primarily for monitoring consumer reaction to the product. Using the surveys to assess the effectiveness of any particular campaign is almost an incidental check, and not a formal assessment. As such, these measures almost constitute an 'informal' evaluation. For those product situations where these surveys are used for formal assessment, the assumption is that favourability of attitudes is the best available predictor of consumer purchase." [202]

Concluding our discussion of advertising objectives, we now turn the discussion to deal with the role of advertising in product differentiation.

Table (4-2): Advertising Objectives and Assessment

Objectives	Frequency of mention	No of occasions on which assessment was undertaken
(A) Advertising objectives:		
1 To create branding and image building	23	19
2 To convey particular messages	21	18
3 To educate and convey information	16	10
4 To affect attitude	13	13
5 To create awareness	8	5
6 To affect loyalty intentions	6	4
7 To gain willingness to try	5	3
8 To act as a reminder	2	1
9 To motivate enquiries	1	1
(B) Marketing objectives (set for advertising):		
10 Buyer behaviour *	13	8
11 Market share	9	8
12 Penetration/distribution	6	3
13 Influences on buyer behaviour **	5	5
14 Relating to "own-label" ***	5	5
15 Total market development ****	3	3
16 Sales	2	2

* Buyer behaviour includes aims such as "to improve frequency of purchase" and "to gain new users."

** Influence on buyer behaviour includes "to win back previous product users" and "to stop existing users turning to a competitive product."

*** Own-label includes "to defend against "own-label" products."

**** Total market development includes "to expand whole market."

Source: D R Corkindale and S H Kennedy, Measuring the Effect of Advertising, Farnborough, Saxon House, 1975, p154.

SECTION 5: THE ROLE OF ADVERTISING IN PRODUCT DIFFERENTIATION

In the current market situations where many brands in the product category seem to be physically homogeneous, the question which is always asked is, why, when two brands have similar product attributes, are they sold at different prices? And why do consumers exhibit ongoing preferences for the more expensive brand? Put it another way, why do consumers choose one brand and not the others in the product category, especially when almost all the brands are similar? Indeed, in the absence of other factors, advertising is thought to have a particular effect in this respect. In this section, we shall explore the role of advertising in creating product differentiation.

However, it is appropriate first to define the product differentiation concept.

DEFINITION OF PRODUCT DIFFERENTIATION

O'Shaughnessy [203] pointed out that an offering is viewed as differentiated "if it is preferred by some buyers on the grounds of differences in: (1) physical aspects of the product, (2) services offered, (3) convenience in using or buying the product, and (4) image projected."

Albion and Farris [204] distinguished between two levels of product differentiation:-

- (1) The innate product differentiation, which refers to "the degree of difference in product performance along salient product attributes that actually exists in the market."

- (2) The perceived product differentiation, which refers to "the degree of difference in the product performance along salient product attributes that consumers believe exists."

The second level seems to be close to the concept of the differential advantage which is defined by Alderson as "the belief of the demander that a supplier's offering possesses more want satisfying ability than others' offerings." [205]

However, our concern is the perceived product differentiation, since advertising is more likely to create this type of product differentiation. But the question with which we are concerned is, does advertising have a role in creating product differentiation? and if it does, how can it do that? These questions will be answered in the following part of our discussion.

ADVERTISING AS A SOURCE OF PRODUCT DIFFERENTIATION

Albion and Farris [206] suggested that advertising is thought to be able to differentiate products which are actually differentiated through exaggerating the innate product differentiation. It also can differentiate the physically homogeneous product by creating additional differential dimensions, such as the brand image. The authors added that the product differentiation induced by advertising can be defined as "the difference between innate and perceived product differentiation."

Although the authors' conceptualisation of product differentiation is quite useful, especially for measurement purposes, one can argue that it is not always true that the difference between the innate and perceived product

differentiation can be attributed to advertising, since the consumer's perception of the product is not always the direct effect of advertising. This argument leads us to ask an important question: to what extent can advertising contribute to product differentiation?

Comanor and Wilson [207] maintained that advertising differentiates many homogeneous products merely by the fact that the brand is advertised and that advertising may constitute an implicit warranty of performance. Another side to the argument of the effect of advertising on product differentiation holds that under some conditions, product differentiation may be perceived to be greater than the actual (innate) product differentiation. This exaggerating effect can be attributed to advertising.

Consistent with this notion, Steiner [208] cited life insurance policies as an example of a service that many consumers incorrectly perceive as differing little from company to company. In such a situation, advertising may bring the level of perceived product differentiation more into line with the innate differences between policies.

However, if we accept the argument that an advertising effect on product differentiation exists, the important question which remains is, what kinds of products and services are capable of being differentiated from competition through advertising?

Broadly speaking, Borden [209] argued that advertising is more effective as a means of product differentiation when products have: (1) bases for product differentiation, (2) appeal to emotional buying motives, and (3) hidden values (not apparent by inspection of the product).

After reviewing several studies on perceived risk, Cox [210] concluded that products whose purchase had high perceived risk were products for which the consumer tends to rely primarily on information not drawn from marketers.

This conclusion was supported by a study conducted by Roselius [211]. The results of that study revealed that the purchase of a major brand was attributable to various means other than advertising - including word-of-mouth information, shopping activity, and government reports. These results provide evidence that advertising's ability to differentiate products in high-risk situations is least effective.

A useful basic classification of products was that provided by J M Clark, which has been discussed by Baker [212]. This classification can be summarised as follows:-

- (1) Products which "satisfy the same principal want, and in which the producer is free to imitate others as closely as he wishes, using techniques that are not radically different from theirs and differentiating his product only to the extent that it seems advantageous to him to do so, in order to appeal to some subsidiary want more effectively than other variants do, and thus fit into a gap in the array of variant products." This pattern of product differentiation was termed by Clark as "differentiated competition," eg. the different brands of detergent.
- (2) "Substitution" products which "appeal to the same principal want but which are inherently and inescapably different, due either to different materials or basically different techniques," eg. the use of a

laundry service in place of the purchase of detergents for home washing.

- (3) "Products that serve independent wants and are substitutes only in the mathematical sense that spending more for one leaves less to spend on others."

Although Clark's classification does not provide any relationship between each of these product categories and the advertising effectiveness to differentiate, it seems clear that the first product category in the classification may be the most likely one that advertising can differentiate. This conclusion was supported by Albion and Farris [213] who suggested that "advertising is thought to increase perceived product differentiation of physically homogeneous products."

However, DeLozier [214] discussed the role of advertising in product differentiation in a broader context. He emphasised that companies whose products are relatively homogeneous physically, such as cigarettes, toothpastes, cereals, soaps, detergents, must rely heavily upon advertising communication to create product differentiation in the minds of their consumers. In this case, "advertising communications generally create this kind of product differentiation by associating emotional or social connotations with the advertised brand." On the other hand, advertising also can differentiate between products which have obvious physical and functional differences between them. In this case, DeLozier pointed out that advertising can "ordinarily emphasise the advantages of these features over those of competing brands."

Thus, DeLozier distinguished between two approaches by which advertising can differentiate between products: (1) the association approach, and (2) the differential advantage approach. While the first is appropriate for the homogeneous

products, the second is more suitable for products which are physically and functionally different.

The association approach to product differentiation through advertising is widely applied in contemporary advertising. O'Shaughnessy [215] indicated that "the association of the advertised product with pleasant places, people and situations is something we expect in consumer advertisements."

Moreover Leymore [216], while talking about the relationship between the product and the background with which the product is associated in many consumer products, pointed out that "it is not surprising that the background envelops the product to convey the idea that the product is part of something better, bigger, and so on." The author argued that the relative effectiveness of advertising depends on the extent to which it can establish a creative association between the product advertised and the highest level of the underlying structure of particular values in a society. She claimed that "in being supportive of prevailing social values and acting to reduce anxiety, advertising plays the same role in modern societies as a religious and secular myth in traditional societies." [217]

Differential advantage also has been emphasised as an advertising approach to product differentiation by Narver and Savitt [218]. They argued that "since the concept of differential advantage inheres in the consumer's perception, it becomes the advertising task to promote this concept. By its persuasive mechanism, advertising can transmit all the physical and social-psychological dimensions which can portray the brand as differentiated from others."

In his theory of the Unique Selling Proposition (or USP), Reeves [219] indicated that the effectiveness of an advertisement in gaining the attention of the consumer is in large part determined

by its ability to promote the differential advantage of the product advertised. He stated:-

"The consumer tends to remember just one thing from an advertisement - one strong claim, or one strong concept ... each advertisement must make a proposition to the consumer. The proposition must be one that the competition either cannot, or does not offer. The proposition must be so strong that it can move the mass millions, ie. pull over new customers to your product."

It follows, therefore, that advertising - to be effective - must ensure that the advertised brand is different and if possible superior in some way or other from those of their competitors, even though they may be physically identical (eg. washing powder in the UK).

Thus, it could be concluded that advertising can differentiate products whether they are physically identical or not. However, in the low-perceived risk purchase situation, the advertising effect in product differentiation is thought to be higher than that in the high-perceived risk situations because consumers tend to rely on information from sources other than advertising or even marketing communication sources.

Another relevant question to our discussion of the role of advertising in product differentiation is, how can advertising achieve the product differentiation goals? In the part that follows, we shall discuss the positioning approach by which advertising can do so.

POSITIONING AS AN ADVERTISING APPROACH TO PRODUCT DIFFERENTIATION

One of the major concerns of marketing practitioners, in general, and advertisers in particular, is positioning. It is a major approach by which the wide variation of the products and services available in the marketplace can be dealt with.

This state of the marketplace which complicates the consumer's choice decision is thought to lead consumers to adopt some strategies to cope with it. One important strategy by which the consumer can cope with this state of the market is to discriminate one brand from its competitors [220].

But because the consumer's ability to discriminate among related stimuli or memorise inventories is limited * [221], he tends "to ignore information that cannot satisfy the criterion of utility, to reject and forget any "acquired" information that does not meet the salience criterion, and then to reject any "received" information that cannot be comprehended ... these tactics reduce sensory overload to an amount of information that can be stored in the permanent memory and periodically retrieved for the purposes of rehearsal and abstraction." [222]

In market situations where the consumer faces a wide variation of brands of so many products and services, it is really important to know how products can be ranked in the consumer's mind against the competition.

* Some experiments reported that the upper limit of stimuli which can be discriminated by an individual was always close to seven separate "pieces" of information.

In this respect, Jack Trout and Al-Ries [223] suggested that brands of any given product are ranked in "a ladder in the mind" manner. The notion of the ladder was discussed by Crosier [224]. He stated, "the ladder is labelled with the single product attribute subconsciously rated most important, the competing options are placed on the rungs on the basis of received and organised information, and the one on the top rung is chosen. If it happens not to be available locally or in the preferred colour, the second-rung occupant will simply be promoted." The author added that because consumers view brands not as unidimensional entities, but as multidimensional, it seems more likely that "the mind will create a limited number of separate ladders, each labelled with one of the attributes common to the brands under consideration, and the options will be independently ranked on all of them."

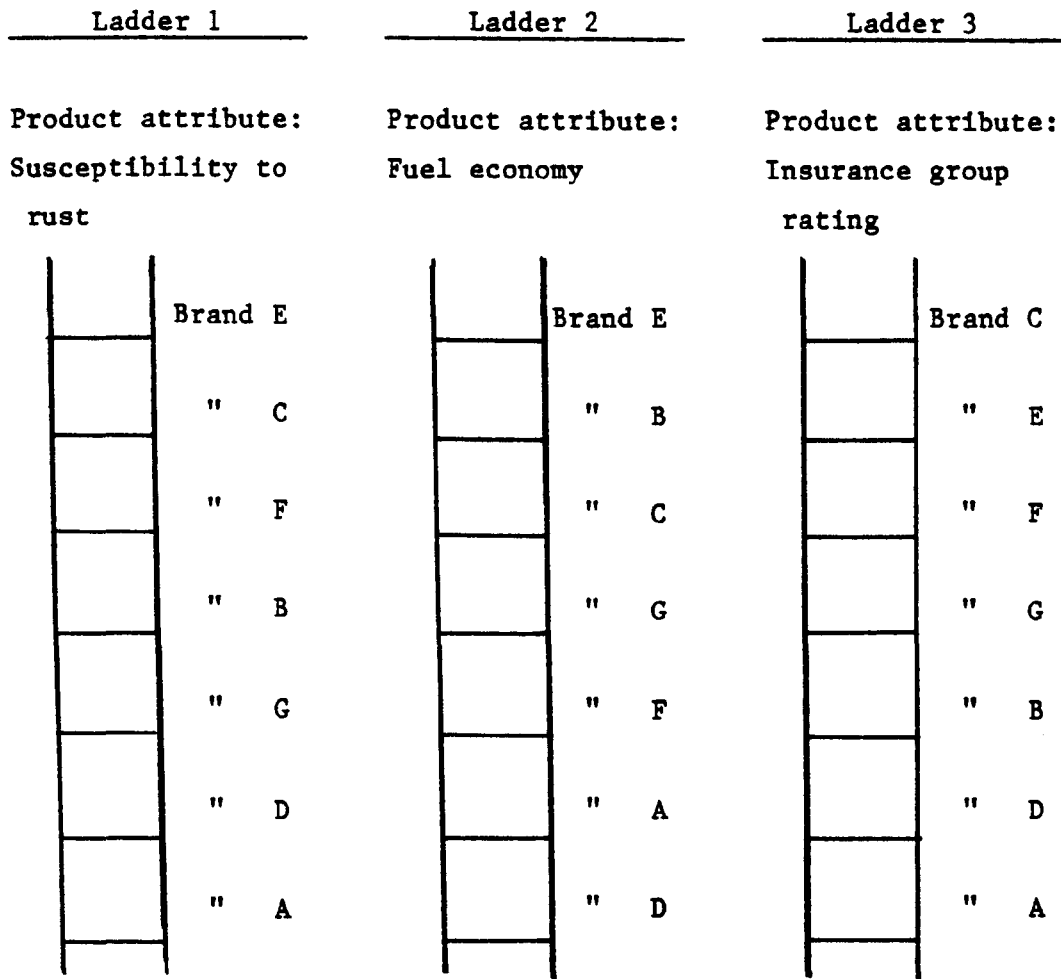
Figure (4-11) shows the hypothetical case of choosing among competing car models. It is worth indicating that "the ladders configuration may be held in the permanent memory store and revised periodically as salient information is newly received, or it may be used immediately." [225]

It follows, therefore, that the advertising message must be able to introduce the product or service associated with a salient attribute which is sufficient to place the product in a more salient rung on the ladder; otherwise, the message will not pass beyond acquisition to perception.

Considering the above ideas, it seems clear that the basic purpose of positioning is to introduce the brand so that consumers perceive it as fulfilling certain needs or possessing certain attributes which other competing brands cannot fulfil. In other words, "the product positioning is especially important

Figure (4-11): Coping with information overload: "Ladders in the Mind"

Universe of choice: product class
Medium-sized family Saloon cars



Source: Keith Crosier, "Marketing Communication," in Michael J Baker, (ed), Marketing: Theory and Practice (2nd ed), The Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1983, p141.

in relation to other brands in the same product category." [226] Indeed, this implies that positioning is: (1) inherent in the consumer's mind, and (2) a competitive approach by which a product can be positioned (or ranked) in a preferential location in the consumer's mind which may make it differentiated from others in the same product category.

Consistent with this conclusion, Engel and Blackwell [227] argued that "the concept - positioning - implies a mental stratification process which is designed to influence the location of the brand in the minds of potential customers."

But the important question to be asked is, how can advertising influence the brand position in the mind of the consumer, and in turn make it more preferred to others in the product category?

Indeed, there are several strategies through which advertising can achieve the brand positioning goal. In the next section, we shall discuss these strategies.

ADVERTISING STRATEGIES FOR BRAND POSITIONING

Aaker and Myers [228] distinguished seven strategies by which advertising can position products. These strategies can be summarised as follows:-

- (1) Positioning by using product characteristics or customer benefits. Advertising can achieve brand positioning by associating the brand by a product characteristic(s) which is/are not offered by other brands in the product category. Also, the brand can be associated with a particular benefit which can be gained by using the brand. This strategy is widely used by the automobile producers. For example, Datsun

and Toyota have emphasised economy and reliability, Volvo has stressed durability, while Volkswagen emphasises "value for money." However, sometimes a product is positioned along two or more product characteristics simultaneously. For example, the toothpaste "Aim" has been introduced as good tasting and anti-cavity.

- (2) Price-quality. This is a useful and appropriate strategy to consider. In many product categories, there are brands that deliberately offer more in terms of service or performance. On the other hand, there are others that have been positioned on the basis of price.
- (3) Positioning by use or application. According to this base, a product is associated with a use or application. For example, the Bell Telephone Company has associated its long distance calling service with communication with loved ones in its "Reach out and touch someone." Also, Campbell's soup was positioned as a lunch-time product and used noontime radio commercials extensively.
- (4) Positioning by product user. This strategy of positioning is based on associating a product with a user or class of users. For example, Johnson & Johnson repositioned its shampoo from one used for babies to one used by people who wash their hair frequently and therefore need a mild shampoo.
- (5) Positioning by product class. Some products are positioned with respect to others in the product-category. For example, Maxim freeze-dried coffee was positioned with respect to regular and instant coffee.

- (6) Positioning by cultural symbols. Many advertisers use cultural symbols to differentiate their brands from competitors. To apply this strategy, the essential task is to identify the symbol that is very meaningful to people that other competitors are not using and associate the brand with that symbol. For example, Marlboro cigarettes were positioned by associating them with the American cowboy.
- (7) Finally, advertisers can position their brands by making reference to one or more competitors. Indeed, this strategy is useful for two reasons: first, the competitors may have a firm, well-established brand image developed over a long time. The competitor's brand image can be used as "a bridge to help communicate another image referred to it," and second, sometimes it is not important how good consumers think the communicated brand is, it is just important that they believe it is better (or perhaps as good as) the competitor's brand (the reference brand). This strategy can be achieved by comparative advertising in which a competitor is explicitly named and compared on one or more product attributes.*

On the other hand, Ray [229] introduced what he described as an attitudinal framework for product positioning by advertising. This framework is based on influencing the consumer's attitudinal structure. Within this framework, Ray identified six distinct strategies by which advertising can achieve positioning. The proposed strategies hold that advertising can maintain or shift

* Comparative advertising will be discussed in more detail later in this section.

attitudes with respect to salient product characteristics and their ratings. This is assumed to develop the preferential position of the product or brand in the consumer's mind.

Because of their significant importance to the present study, these strategies are summarised as follows:-

- (1) "Affecting product class linkages to goals and events." This can be achieved by influencing those forces that strongly affect the consumer's choice criteria used for the product class. To do so, advertisers must know: (a) the goals of a given market segment, (b) the choice criteria (salient product attributes) used to evaluate the alternative product classes considered to achieve these goals, and (c) the perceptions regarding each product class. Therefore, the initial step in planning this strategy is to know the consumer's goals precisely, because this will explain the attitudinal ratings.

After the consumers have differentiated according to their goals and translated this differentiation into preference for one product class over another via saliency ratings, an advertiser could now try to alter these saliency ratings or product class choice criteria in the hope of attracting more consumers to his product class and ultimately to his brand. Therefore, as Ray suggested, "this strategy relates to the formulation of advertising that attempts to induce primary demand."

- (2) "Adding characteristic(s) to those considered as salient for the product class." This strategy is concerned with the product when it is at the mature stage of its life cycle, since by this time consumers' attitudes pertaining to choice criteria have been

well-established. Regarding this strategy, the advertiser must believe that the new characteristic has the potential of becoming salient, and that his brand can obtain a high relative rating on the new characteristic. "The continuing success of Crest in the toothpaste market, for example, seems to be due to this brand's ability to appropriate the fluoride characteristic."

- (3) "Increase/decrease the rating for a salient product class characteristic." This strategy is an extension of the previous one and requires careful research to determine how the marketer's brand and competitive brands are positioned by the market segment.
- (4) "Changing perceptions of the brand." This strategy focuses on changing consumer perceptions of the market offering itself. It must be noted, however, that advertisers should not attempt to change perceptions of their brand when the brand itself does not possess an adequate quantity of the characteristics in question.
- (5) "Changing perceptions of competing brands." Under some conditions, success may be achieved by altering perceptions for a brand with regard to salient characteristics that are perceived as being possessed to a greater extent by a competitive brand.
- (6) Changing "the composition rule" or the way people go about using characteristics and brand perceptions to make a purchasing decision. The composition rule assumes that "the purchase probability of any particular brand is the sum of the salient characteristics ratings multiplied by the brand ratings across all characteristics considered by a segment."

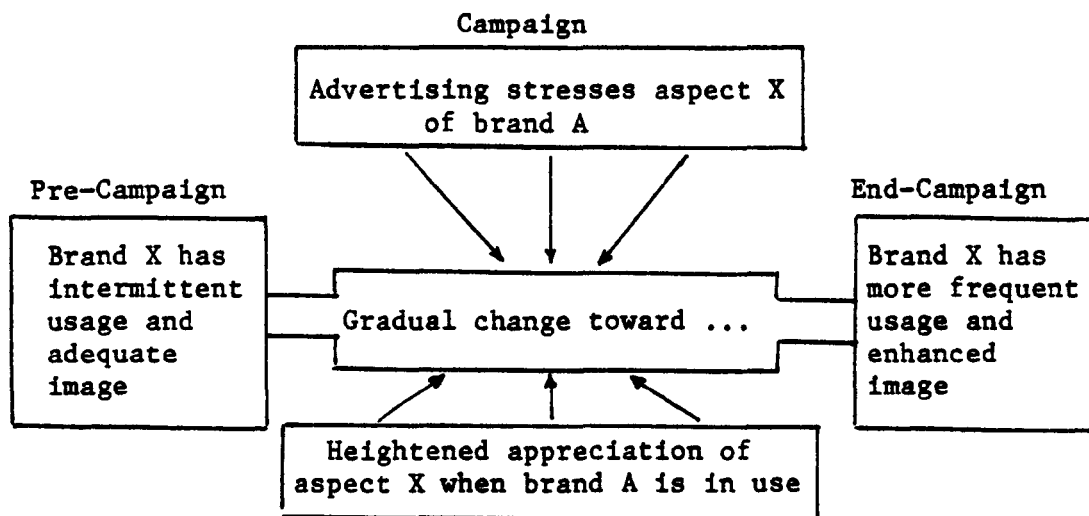
Thus, the rule refers to the pattern in which ideal characteristic ratings and brand perceptions relate, in combination, to the overall evaluation of the brand or product.

An important attempt to explain the main ways in which advertising influences the brand's position in the consumer's mind is the heightened appreciation model developed by Potter and Lovell [230].

The model emphasises a particular aspect of the brand's performance characteristics that is highly appreciated (preferred) by the prospective consumer. In this sense, advertising works by rendering the brand "salient," that is, making it "top of mind." This being the case, in a purchasing situation, other things being equal, the most salient brand would be the one bought.

Figure (4-12) illustrates the basic ideas of this model.

Figure (4-12): The Heightened Appreciation Model



Source: Jack Potter and Mark Lovell, Assessing the effectiveness of Advertising, Business Books Limited, London, 1975, p4.

More recently, analysis of brand switching and purchasing patterns in general has encouraged the view that most advertising works by encouraging an increase in the frequency of purchase of one brand against others through attempting to shift the consumer's preference structure from one brand to another. Comparative advertising is considered a major approach through which advertisers can achieve that end. Therefore, the discussion now turns to deal with comparative advertising.

COMPARATIVE ADVERTISING AS A POSITIONING APPROACH

For many years, competition in advertising communication received little attention. But more recently, with an increasingly competitive communication environment, the use of competitive information in advertising messages can easily be noted in many situations and with variation in the competitive tone [231].

Prasad [232] indicated that comparative advertising is based on making specific brand comparison between the advertised brand and other competing brands (which fall within the same product category), and using claims in support and favour of the advertised brand, ie. the advocated brand. Specifically, this type of advertising "explicitly names or identifies one or more competitors of the advertised brand for the purpose of claiming superiority, either on an overall basis or in selected product attributes."

Ray [233] argued that this type of advertising, ie. comparative advertising, represents an "attack" form of competition. He added that the basic purpose of comparative advertising is to alter the consumer's perceptions of a brand with regard to salient characteristic(s) that are perceived as being possessed to a greater extent to which consumers perceive competitive

brand(s) as possessing certain product attributes.

McCarthy [234] described competitive advertising as a method used to develop selective demand for a specific brand rather than a product category. According to his view, "a firm can be forced into competitive advertising - as the product life cycle moves along - to hold its own against competitors." The author added that comparative advertising is considered to be the form through which this tone of competition is expressed.

In the USA, comparative advertising was legally legitimised in 1972 by a call from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) for the advertising networks to permit advertisers to name competing brands in commercials rather than the traditional brand X commercials. However, in many European countries, comparative advertising is considered an illegal practice [235].

In Britain, there is no law against it, although several aspects of law touch upon it, and the code of practice laid down some guidelines as to what is permissible. Specifically, the general rule is that "the basis of the comparison must be true and honest, otherwise, a "knocking" advertisement could be liable under the common law offence of slander of goods. In general, comparison is acceptable but disparagement is not." [236]

The early assumptions about comparative advertising were based on the belief that it would (1) help business carve out a better marketplace position, (2) lessen consumers' confusion, (3) provide the consumer with more factual information, and (4) aid the consumer in making satisfactory brand choice decisions [237].

But as the practice of comparative advertising increased, it has been the focus of considerable controversy in the advertising industry [238]. Some writers have hailed it as "a new method of

communication which may well be the most vital new creative weapon to have come into our (advertisers') hands in many years." [239]

Starch [240], by contrast, asserted that advertisements that make comparisons by implication are undoubtedly better and more effective than ones which make comparisons by direct reference, and warned that "direct reference to competitors usually advertises the competitors as much as yourself (the advertiser himself)."

In contrast, other writers, however, have warned that comparative advertising could turn the advertising business into "a Carnival brand name shooting gallery - noisy, unproductive and unprofessional, and could erode the credibility of all advertising business." [241]

Schwartz [242] stated that ignoring the competition and focusing on the advertiser's own product and claims may be effective when the advertiser dominates the field, but it may not be the optimal strategy in other circumstances. The researcher advocated the strategy of comparative advertising (in his terminology, the strategy of "concentration") to advertisers in these terms:-

"... in many other cases - especially where your advertising budget is much less than his (the competitors's) - especially where the bulk or your prospects are already customers of his - your first problem may be to crack his image, to shatter their loyalty, before you can rechannel their desire around to you." [243]

However, support for comparative advertising was based upon some cases of success cited by marketers. Indeed, it is not entirely clear whether this success can be attributed to comparative

advertising, or whether the same results could have been achieved with more noncomparative advertising (which does not name competition) [244].

The effectiveness of comparative advertising versus noncomparative advertising has not been the subject of much systematic empirical research except for a few studies.

Perhaps the initial attempt towards empirical investigation of the persuasive effectiveness of comparative advertising was made by Wilkie and Farris [245]. On the basis of concepts borrowed from the behavioural sciences, the researchers suggested several hypotheses regarding the likely effectiveness of comparative advertisements and urged that empirical research examining these hypotheses be undertaken.

Prasad [246] conducted a study to test empirically the communications effectiveness of comparative advertisements in relation to their more conventional "brand X" counterparts which do not explicitly name competitors. The results of the study revealed that, on the whole, the message recall effectiveness of the comparative advertising was higher than that of its "brand X" counterpart; its brand recall effectiveness was equal to that of the "brand X" advertisement, and its claim recall effectiveness was considerably higher. The findings also suggested that "claim believability could be a basic problem in the use of a comparative advertising strategy."

Perhaps the most important conclusion that emerged from the study is that the findings "suggest that consumer perceptions of low claim credibility can be a critical problem in the use of a comparative advertising strategy." The researcher reported that "perceived credibility ratings of the product superiority claim of the comparative advertisement were lower among subjects who had a prior preference for the competitor brand named in the

advertisement than among others." [247]

The relative persuasive effectiveness of comparative advertising over noncomparative advertising has also been reported by Hackleman and Jain [248]. They found the comparative advertising format to be more effective than the noncomparative format for some shopping goods.

However, other empirical studies reported contradictory findings. For instance, Shimp and Dyer [249], argued that comparative advertising has been shown to be more effective for "unknown brands or for brands with a relatively small market share."

Levine [250], on the other hand, examined the effects of comparative television commercials that name competitors versus their noncomparative counterparts on four parties: (1) the consumer, (2) the advertisers, (3) the named competitor, and (4) the advertising industry. With respect to the first party - the consumer - Levine reported that by the employment of comparative advertising, the consumer was not better informed, nor did he make a better brand choice (which are the major assumptions which justified the use of the comparative advertising.)

Regarding the effect on the advertiser, comparative advertising did not, in most cases, offer the sponsoring advertiser any advantage by increasing awareness of that advertiser's brand. In fact, comparative advertising increased awareness of competitively named brands. Furthermore, the sponsor of the comparative advertising may run the risk of miscommunicating and generating increased scepticism towards commercial claims. On the other hand, comparative advertising affects the named competitor. By naming competitive brands, comparative advertising can benefit those brands, by increasing their levels of awareness. Finally, comparative advertising can exacerbate

the problems of the advertising industry by increasing negative attitudes towards those product categories where a number of brands are naming names - decreasing both the believability and clarity of the advertising.

Levine concluded that "there is little to be gained from this type of advertising (comparative), for the advertising industry, the advertiser, or the consumer. The only one who may benefit is the competitor who is named in the advertising." [251]

Thus, it could be concluded that there is no strong evidence that comparative advertising is more effective than noncomparative advertising. From the research reported, comparative advertising has in some instances appeared to be more effective, and in others to be less effective.

However, as Aaker and Myers [252] suggested, "the real question is not whether comparative advertising is more or less effective, but rather under what conditions is it more or less effective?" They added that "the risks of course, are that the competitive brand is explicitly exposed, and buyers may not believe the arguments presented." The authors suggested that "a leading brand might therefore, not want to engage in comparative advertising. A brand in second or third place might, on the other hand, use this technique to try to convince people of its superiority over the leader."

Tannenbaum [253], Chairman of Kenyon and Eckhardt, Inc, proposed what have been called guidelines in using comparative advertising. The following are the major ones:-

- (1) Employ the comparison technique only in situations where there is a clear superiority on a salient product attribute and where the major competitor is perceived more positively.

- (2) When the comparison is strongly inconsistent with consumer beliefs, credibility suffers.
- (3) Identify but never disparage the brand leader.
- (4) The goal is to gain increased attention from users of the competitive brand or from those who regard it as a quality standard.
- (5) Other brands can be named when your brand has a distinct advantage and when it takes time for competitors to counteract.
- (6) Great care must be taken to avoid being misinterpreted as promoting the brand against which comparison is being made.
- (7) Comparisons are not helpful when a competitor could counterattack in an area where its brand has clear superiority on a salient attribute.
- (8) Every effort must be made to leave the impression that the named competitor has not been deceiving the consumer.
- (9) The consumer must be able to verify the comparison and prove it to his or her satisfaction.

When such guidelines as these are carefully followed, comparative advertising perhaps can offer some benefit, especially when introducing a new product [254]. On the other hand, Giges [255] argued that comparative advertising works only when clear differences between brands can be objectively verified by consumers.

The main conclusion which emerges from the above discussion is that comparative advertising represents an "attack" competitive strategy by which advertisers can position their brands against the competitors. However, as an extreme competitive form, comparative advertising should be avoided [256].

To this end, the discussion turns now to deal with another idea which is increasingly used in the contemporary advertising. This is inducing the consumer's resistance to persuasive advertising attempts by competitors.

SECTION 6: INDUCING THE CONSUMER'S RESISTANCE TO COMPETITIVE PERSUASIVE ADVERTISING

In the previous sections, the major thrust was to explain how advertising communication can induce prospective consumers to buy the brand advocated through an effective presentation of a believable message. However, a competitive tone in advertising aiming at positioning the brand against others in its product category is increasingly used by advertisers. In this situation, it becomes necessary "to increase one's probability of an additional response by insuring against subsequent counterarguments from competitive communication." [257] For example, in comparative advertising (either by direct comparison with competitors or indirect comparison by using "knocking"), the message will be more likely to be perceived by competitors named in the advertising as a direct attack attempting to make their customers switch from the brand(s) they are using at present to the brand advocated in the comparative advertising. Given these considerations, the question to be asked is, by what course of action are those competitors expected to retaliate? and which advertising strategy will serve their best interest in offsetting the attack? In other words, the question is, "how can we induce those currently loyal to our brand to remain loyal?" [258]

DeLozier [259] attempted to answer the above question by drawing an analogy from military operations. He stated:-

"If an attacking army attempts a head-on charge into the defenses of another army, the attacking army will encounter a high level of resistance."

This statement represents the core of the course of action by which competitors named in the comparative advertising will respond.

In fact, inducing resistance to persuasion as a goal in the competitive markets can be thought of in two ways. First, it can be related to the concept of brand switching, where the goal of inducing resistance to persuasion would be to reduce the probability of switching to competitive brands. Second, it can be cast in terms of the product life cycle. As Bither and his associates have pointed out, "it amounts to extending the profitable portion (usually the maturity phase) of the life cycle as long as possible." The assumption is that during the different stages in the product life cycle (ie. introduction, growth and maturity), "consumers develop favourable attitudes toward a brand. In later stages, consumers are changing their attitudes and beginning to buy competing brands, brands that may be neither significantly different nor better." [260]

For these two considerations, the goal of inducing resistance to persuasive attempts by other competitors is an inevitable task in which marketers become involved. Consistent with this conclusion, White [261] pointed out that "In most markets you will have competitors: competitors whom you may fear, respect, or even despise. However, their presence is a fact of life, and their activities are, frequently, designed to make life difficult for you."

Thus, inducing resistance to persuasion becomes the necessary advertising strategy which has to be considered when the consumers already have been exposed to brand information that is counter to the brand(s) they buy or when the consumers will be exposed to subsequent counter brand information by competitors' communication either directly (by comparative advertising), or indirectly (by brand "knocking"). Within this context, inducing resistance to persuasion is considered to be a competitive, but also a defensive, strategy through which competitors can counter what they perceive as an attack by other competitors in the marketplace.

But, the important question to be asked is, how can the consumer's resistance to competitive persuasive advertising be induced? In the following part we shall examine some important approaches to inducing resistance to persuasion in advertising.

APPROACHES TO INDUCING RESISTANCE TO PERSUASION IN ADVERTISING

While advertising can be directed to induce resistance to persuasion, it must not be thought that this process can be only achieved by the reverse persuasive process. In fact, there are several approaches to induce resistance to persuasion provided by the social psychological literature. For the purpose of the present study, four distinct approaches were identified. These approaches are: (1) Behavioural commitment, (2) Anchoring approach, (3) Motivational approach, and (4) Refutational approach. Each of these approaches will be briefly discussed.

(1) BEHAVIOURAL COMMITMENT APPROACH

It has been argued that "To the extent that an individual tries to keep his internal beliefs, his verbal expression, and his actual behaviour consistent with one another, immunising to future persuasive communication should be possible through some form of prior commitment." [262]

It follows that inducing some form of behavioural commitment involves the individual's taking some more or less irrevocable step on the basis of his belief, thereby committing himself to it. Indeed, behavioural commitment can be induced at least at four levels: (a) the private decision, (b) the public announcement of one's belief, (c) active participation on the basis of the belief, and (d) external commitment.

The first level of commitment can be created by having the individual come to a private decision that he does indeed hold the belief [263]. Consistent with this idea, Bennett [264] has found that the individual's mental review of his belief in his own opinion can operate as an effective mechanism to induce resistance to subsequent persuasive communication.

In the context of advertising, Percy and Rossiter [265] suggested that "advertising that seeks a commitment or decision from the receiver should produce an effect immunising the receiver from competitive advertising. The receiver, once committed to an advertiser's argument, will be less susceptible to counterarguments in other advertising." However, there is little empirical evidence that such form of commitment has conferred any resistance to persuasive advertising.

Public announcement of one's belief implies firmer commitment. McGuire [266] pointed out that "more resistance to subsequent persuasive attempts should follow a public rather than private statement of one's belief." However, it is not a realistic advertising goal to persuade a prospective consumer to publicly express his beliefs prior to his exposure to other competitive persuasive advertising.

On the other hand, active participation on the basis of the belief creates more commitment because it represents overt actual behaviour on the part of the receiver reflecting the beliefs. This notion is extremely important to advertising in the introduction of new products or new uses for existing products. This conclusion has been supported by Percy and Rossiter [267]. They suggested that "the advertiser who is able to most effectively generate buyer response, be it behavioural change in the sense of brand switching or the purchase of a new product, or

an advertising response such as an attitudinal change reflecting a new understanding of an existing brand or product, creates a commitment in the form of a prior response, which should help induce resistance to advertising for competitive alternatives."

A final type of behavioural commitment is the external commitment. According to McGuire [268], "It is the most tenuous of these considered." He argued that "receivers who have been provided with a preannouncement tend to be more resistant to subsequent persuasive communication attacking their beliefs." [269]

(2) ANCHORING APPROACH

This approach to induce resistance to persuasion involves linking the beliefs presented in a persuasive communication to other aspects of a receiver's cognitive structure [270].

McGuire [271] emphasised that "by connecting the belief communicated with the receiver's existing beliefs, the receiver will be more resistant to subsequent counterargument regarding the belief communicated."

Carlson [272] found that "changes in attitude were significantly related to changes in perceived instrumental relationships, and to changes in an index based upon both satisfaction and instrumentality ratings." This suggests that resistance to given belief(s) in a persuasive communication can be enhanced by raising the receiver's perception of the belief's instrumentality to an already positively valenced goal.

McGuire [273] considered three anchoring approaches, which differ regarding the type of cognitions to which a given belief is to be linked. These approaches are: (1) linking belief(s) to accepted values, (2) linking belief(s) to other receiver's belief(s), and (3) linking belief(s) to valenced sources and reference groups.

Much of the notions underlying the anchoring approach to inducing resistance to persuasive communication have been argued by Percy [274]. The author stated that "Not only should the linking of accepted values or other beliefs and behaviour patterns enhance response for one's own persuasive communication, but to the degree that such beliefs are linked to the advertiser's message, they also induce resistance to subsequent competitive advertising via anchoring."

In addition, if the receiver is made to see that his opinion is shared by others whom he values highly, his opinion will be more resistant to subsequent persuasive counterargument [275].

Consistent with this conclusion, Percy and Rossiter [276] suggested that "if a high-valence source is linked with a particular product in a receiver's mind, competitive advertising that claims another brand is more appropriate (for whatever reason) would be unpersuasive because of the strength of the belief identification with the reference group."

(3) MOTIVATIONAL APPROACH

Percy and Rossiter [277] pointed out that "altering a receiver's general motivational orientation can have an important impact on resistance to subsequent persuasive communication." For example, Millman [278] has shown that immunising attempts through fear-arousing communication do tend to enhance resistance to

subsequent persuasive communication for receivers exhibiting high levels of chronic anxiety, while lowering resistance among receivers exhibiting low levels of chronic anxiety.

Another motivational approach to induce resistance to persuasive communication is by raising self-esteem. A number of studies have demonstrated that prior success experience enhances the receiver's resistance to subsequent persuasive attempts [279].

Mansuer and Bloch [280] indicated that the resistance to persuasion effect of a success experience is augmented for a receiver if he simultaneously sees the failure of a source found in subsequent persuasive communication.

In advertising, it would be possible to provide a consumer with a successful experience either by enabling him to identify with the source he likes to identify with, or through providing him with factual information that leads him to make better brand choice. By doing so, a consumer will be more likely to resist the competitive persuasive communication advocating another brand(s).

(4) REFUTATIONAL APPROACH

This approach to induce resistance to persuasive communication refers to "the process of explicitly or implicitly stating competitive appeals and then refuting them." [281]

The refutational approach^{*1} is based on the basic notions of inoculation theory as formulated by McGuire [282]. The theory suggests that resistance to persuasion can be increased by prior exposure to small amounts of a future attacking argument, strong enough to stimulate a defence such as counter-arguing, but not so strong as to be persuasive.^{*2}

The mechanism operating here seems to suggest that if a receiver of a persuasive communication is made aware that a strongly held belief is open to argument, the receiver will seek to bolster cognitive defences against any subsequent attempt to attack that belief.

This conclusion has been supported by Percy and Rossiter [283]. The authors suggested that "the more vulnerable the receiver feels, the more likely he will take the necessary cognitive steps required to effectively counterargue when his held beliefs are attacked through subsequent persuasive communication."

In an advertising claim, there are two distinct situations in which the refutational approach becomes a necessary advertising strategy [284]. These two situations are: (1) when two or more competing products are presented, but the advertised product is shown in a more favourable light (eg. comparative advertising), and (2) when a single negative cognitive salience is juxtaposed with one or more equally strong positive saliences. When this occurs "it is necessary to refute the negative salience in order to gain acceptance of the positive saliences as persuasive. If

*1 This approach will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

*2 Inoculation theory and the empirical research which supports it will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

the negative salience is ignored, it will tend to override the positive saliences presented in the persuasive message at the evaluative stage of the buyer-response hierarchy."

Another situation in which the refutational approach can be applied, is when the consumers to whom the advertising message is directed already have ideas that are counter to buying or when it is highly likely that competitors' communication will either directly or indirectly attack the product or brand [285].

Ray [286] suggested that "such a message (refutational message) would not only promote the positive aspects of the message idea developer's brand but also attempt to answer, or at least mute, the attacks on the brand that are implicit in the media and in the consumer's mind."

In contemporary advertising, there are many examples of advertisements which imply the refutational appeal. The most classic and successful refutational advertisement was the one for Volkswagen Beetle. Volkswagen decided to refute directly the counter-claim concerning the size of their car, and their ad showed a picture of the basketball star Wilt Chamberlain standing next to the comparatively small Volkswagen. The headline said, "They said it couldn't be done. It couldn't." And the copy said in part, "So if you are 7 feet, 1 inch tall like Wilt our car is not for you. But maybe you are a mere 6 foot, 7 inches." Then the copy went on to refute the idea that a small car did not have advantages [287].

It is worth mentioning that the refutational approach to induce resistance to persuasion is appropriate especially "when respondents are given the choice of what they can read (for example, in actual field situations)." [288] However, one disadvantage of the refutational approach is that it provides a receiver with information about a competitor's product and thus

might enhance rather than provide a defence against competitive alternative brands. But even in this situation, to say the facts about your brands (whether they reflect the advantages or the disadvantages of the brand) is better than having them said by your competitor, especially those facts which are related to disadvantages.

Thus, it could be concluded that the refutational approach is a preferred strategy in market situations where the goal of an advertiser is to build resistance to attitude change and defend himself against competitive attack.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, an attempt was made to explore advertising as a persuasive communication process. The major purpose was to shed some light on the way that advertising works to induce the desired responses. To accomplish this, the discussion was divided into six sections, each of which dealt with one of the important issues concerning persuasive advertising and its role in competitive markets.

In Section one, the discussion focused on the structure of the advertising communication process. This was an important issue to begin with on the basis that any persuasive process must go through a communication process. And to understand the dynamics of the persuasive process, the structure of the advertising must be understood. Therefore, four basic components of the advertising process were identified: the source, the message, the media, and the receiver. The advertising message is initiated by the source who may be the originator or the endorser, then the message is transmitted through one or more mass media in order to reach its intended receiver. However, since personal communication channels (eg. word-of-mouth communication) play a crucial role in achieving an advertising objective, it was included in our discussion of the advertising process. At the end of the first section we tried to model the advertising process in a simple manner.

The second section dealt with the receiver's perception in relation to the advertising communication system. Perception was explained in terms of what it is and how it operates. This led to investigating some relevant concepts, especially the concept of selectivity in the receiver's perception. It was indicated that consumers select those advertisements which are of interest to them and then interpret those advertisements in a way that is meaningful. Two variables influence the consumer's perception

process - the product stimulus as introduced by the advertisement, and personal factors. The stimulus can be perceived in different ways by consumers according to personal factors. Distortion can thus occur in that the meaning intended by the source of the advertising message is not the actual meaning perceived and interpreted by the consumer/receiver.

These latter points led us to another important issue in our discussion within this chapter, namely an explanation of the influence of advertising on buyer behaviour. Thus, the major purpose of the third section was to explain how advertising works in order to achieve the desired responses, particularly in terms of inducing purchasing behaviour. The discussion concentrated on the hierarchical approach as representing the core of the communication and advertising thought on how advertising can influence consumer behaviour.

Within the context of the hierarchical approach, several theoretical formulations (models) which attempted to conceptualise the consumer's response to advertising communication were examined. It was indicated that all these models have two aspects in common. First, they all contain three types of mental levels: cognitive, affective, and conative. Second, they all assume that cognitive responses precede affective responses, which in turn precede conative responses in a staircase relationship. Despite their valuable contribution in describing advertising effects, the hierarchical models have been theoretically and methodologically criticised, especially in relation to their staircase assumption.

It was concluded that there are some conditions and measurements under which the basic notions of the hierarchical approach will occur, and others in which it will not. This lack of generalisability led researchers to seek other approaches to explain advertising's effects. Ray's comprehensive treatment of

the issue was considered a very important contribution. He distinguished three distinct hierarchies (the learning, the dissonance-attribution, and the low-involvement), which can be applied in almost all marketing communication situations. Also, the information-processing approach was extensively examined, being viewed as the one that explained what the hierarchical models described.

After that, the discussion turned to deal with one of the most controversial issues in advertising - the objectives of advertising. In this context, three points of view were discussed. The first argued that sales was a major objective of advertising. However, it was concluded that since advertising is just one of many factors which contribute to sales, this was a poorly formulated objective. The second view argued that, since advertising plays just a contributory role in achieving the sales objective, it should be measured by other criteria (objectives) than sales. This perspective offered communication objectives as reasonable criteria by which the effectiveness of advertising can be measured, since they can be directly attributed to advertising.

These conflicting objectives were reconciled by Glover, who suggested that both sales and communication could be viewed as advertising objectives depending on the stage in the product life cycle (PLC) and the type of decision involved. The section concluded by arguing that communication effects induced by advertising can be considered the immediate objectives of advertising by which the effectiveness of advertising can be measured. However, it must not be overlooked that the ultimate objective of advertising and any form of marketing communication is to increase sales.

In the fifth section an attempt was made to discuss the role of advertising in product differentiation. In this section, issues

such as definition of the product differentiation, advertising as a source of product differentiation, positioning as an advertising approach to product differentiation, and the advertising strategies of brand positioning, were all extensively discussed in order to explain the persuasive role of advertising.

The discussion then dealt with the issue of inducing resistance to persuasion in advertising. This represents one of the important strategic problems that face an advertiser in the increasingly noisy and competitive communication environment. When this is the case, advertisers should have a defensive strategy by which they can build consumer resistance to persuasive attempts intended by competitors. In other words, the major goal of advertising in such situations is to induce those currently loyal to the brand advocated to remain loyal.

To achieve this goal, ie. inducing the resistance to persuasive competitive advertising, four approaches were distinguished. The refutational approach was viewed as the most appropriate one to induce resistance to persuasion through advertising. This is based on mentioning the positive and negative aspects of the argument (or brand) and refuting the negative aspects. The basic assumption here is that refuting the negative aspects of the product or brand will lead to gaining the consumer's acceptance of the positive aspects.

However, the application of the refutational approach in advertising always takes place within a broader strategy of message variation in which both positive (advantages) and negative (disadvantages) aspects of the brand are presented in the message. It is therefore dealt with in more detail in the sixth chapter, which discusses message variation.

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