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Affective Responses on Consumer Behavior: A New Perspective on IMC

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Abstract

The prime objective of this paper is to shed light on incidental affect that consumers experience while making a purchase decision, though unknowingly. In psychological literature, to be specific, affect in broader sense has received ample attention, with “Schimmack and Crites (2005) locating 923 references to affect between 1960 and 1980 and 4,170 between 1980 and 2000” (Cohen, Pham and Andrade, 2006). But, incidental affect has not been treated with due importance. The data in this study gathered from 60 respondents indicate that incidental affect plays a crucial role in influencing the decision of the consumers and can be further explored as a new avenue of IMC. Researches on subliminal advertisements have been conducted, but that even failed to evoke satisfactory results, evoking suspicion and criticism. In actuality, such studies have been conducted in laboratories mainly and results have been found to be tough to be implemented. Bridging up this gap, the concerned study shows that incidental affect can be cultivated to bloom as a promising tool of future IMC.

Keywords: affective response, integral affect, incidental affect, impulsive buying

Introduction

Theories of marketing communication, have, for long played a role in persuasion and other sales supportive activities. In most cases, such information, comes to us in the form of advertisement, sales promotion, even ‘word of mouth’ and prompts us to take specific actions in relation to this. At such a juncture, it seems that it is quite easy to explain the underlying cognitive mechanism that guides this process. But, when we are faced with consumers who admit purchasing a product without prior planning, we need to think in a different way. Such an area is not only less thought about in marketing, but also less studied. This makes up the focal point of this study. As such, in the following paragraphs we will see that affective responses, especially incidental affect, plays a major role in influencing the purchase decision of the consumers, and how such affect can be infused in the marketing messages to serve the end of the seller.

Past 15 years of consumer research has greatly matured in its understanding of consumer behavior and has made ample progress to move the research on *affect* from being ‘just another’ field of research (Cohen, Pham and Andrade, 2006) to a new dimension in consumer behavior. *Affect* is thus a way we all look at the world and a better understanding of affect will lead us to better understanding of the world (Bower, 1981). Further details are explained in the following sections.

Purpose of the study

The prime object of this study is to reveal the impact that incidental affect can have on the purchase decision of consumers. Not only is the literature on incidental affect meager, but also has been treated in contemporary psychological literature in a very casual way and cognitive judgments pertaining to incidental affect have been considered as ‘cold, ineffective’ states (Forgas, 1995). Notable works on incidental affect include studies done reveal the relation between incidental affect and task related affect (Garg, Inman and Mittal, 2005), influence of incidental affect on consumer’s food intake (Garg, 2007), the time for which incidental moods last (Pocheptsova and Novemsky, 2010) and compensatory consumption (Woodruffe, 1999). These studies are either partial in their

treatment of affect (*Garg, 2007*) or skewed in terms of gender (*Woodruffe, 1999*). As such this study intends to throw light on those factors which are relevant to the formation of incidental affect and the extent to which such factors exert influence on the purchase decision of the consumers. Since, we cannot escape emotions in our life, we cannot escape affect. We will take up these factors separately, and as we proceed, we will explain the purpose of studying these factors and will also highlight how it will contribute towards the existing marketing communication practices.

Literature review

Affect is not a new name in psychological literature. Of all the available obscure and prominent sources, Freud was one of the early scientists to mention affect in his work. In '*Beyond the pleasure principle*' published in 1920, Freud commented that affect is set in motion by a propensity to avoid what is unpleasurable to human body and mind. Affect is thus a subjective state of mind that arises from within the body, lasts for a few moments, and leaves a trace that influences the future actions. Such responses are created out of prior experiences, motivations and, in consumer contexts, knowledge about the product concerned. Clubbed with such internal factors are the external factors like complexity, familiarity, typicality, and novelty of information. Under such a subjective state, when a person takes a decision, it is not always the outcome of cognitive mechanism, but is called affective response. Affect is further classified under the following heads.

Integral Affect are those affective responses that are directly elicited from direct encounter with the object, representation of the object, or from thoughts of the related object. (*Cohen, Pham and Andrade, 2006*).

Incidental Affect are those affective responses that are not directly related to the object. The "source of the mood is unknown" and the responses may be elicited from a person's "...current mood. Incidental affect may also come from a person's emotional dispositions and temperament, or from any contextual stimuli associated with integral affect (such as background music, pleasant scent, etc.)" (*Cohen, Pham and Andrade, 2006*).

Pertinent researches on affect, as mentioned earlier, are few in number. It has already been mentioned that incidental affect requires pre-existing motives, experiences to come into play. Since, substantive processing is involved in the process, preexisting ideas play a crucial role in matching the prior experiences to the target at hand. In this case, it may be said that though the target and the prior experiences may not be related, it affects the judgment of the consumer and such a condition is typical of the definition of Incidental Affect as "*experiences whose source is clearly unconnected to the object to be evaluated*" (*Cohen, Pham and Andrade, 2006*). In contrast, typical and simple targets engage the consumers in a heuristic processing and hence, it involves a low affect infusing condition. Recent studies have provided enough support for this stance that more atypical or complex targets give rise to incidental affect (*Forgas 1992a, 1992b*).

Gradually, we move towards the focal point of the study, i.e. the purchase decision and in what ways the surrounding atmosphere affects the decision. Regarding atmosphere, the consumers concentrate on the 'total product' and 'atmospherics' (*Kotler, 1974*) is an important part of that and in certain cases, the atmosphere becomes the primary product. Kotler, in his article remarks that atmosphere has been neglected by businessmen, because they strongly declined to become poets fantasizing with atmosphere while conducting business and partly because atmospherics are a 'silent language' and he remarks that such a study will affect the future business prospects. We all, as consumers "tend to enjoy a shopping experience with supportive and friendly shop assistants" and "more without the presence of an overbearing salesperson" (*Tendai & Crispen, 2009*) who actually bullies consumer rather than helping him. All these factors have been collectively dealt with by Tendai and Crispen (2009) in their comprehensive finding that "the presence of an enjoyable, pleasant and attractive in-store shopping environment increases the chances of impulsive buying among consumers". But this study has

been conducted in relation to impulsive buying and not extended to incidental affect. Another important aspect that is worth mentioning here is the 'representativeness' (Cohen, Pham and Andrade, 2006). Practical explanations will make it clear. Schwarz and Clore (1983) in their experiment related to life satisfaction, interviewed participants in different situations. They found that those respondents who were interviewed on a sunny day gave better feedback about their lives, than those respondents who were interviewed on a rainy day. This has been referred to as the 'representativeness' (Pham, 1998, Strack, 1992).

In the current study, we will consider only a few factors of atmospherics, which are strictly related to the study. We will only consider how weather (*temperature*), music (*volume, pitch*) and treatment at stores (*softness and smoothness*) influence the judgment of the consumers. Since these are the situational factors, and are perceived differently by different consumers, such things collectively contribute towards Incidental Affect. We have already discussed that how weather influences people's evaluation of their lives. People actually hover around with many intentions that are not likely to be materialized until situational factors 'tip the scale' for purchase. The focal point here is the fact that how the above-mentioned factors are judged by consumers, will influence their purchase decisions. Before, we conclude this discussion, we will review a few of the previous works which concerns research related to consumer judgement. One way in which Kotler lacks his study is the fact that his work (1974) is void of any experimental findings and empirical results. But, since this was one of the early works regarding atmospherics, it has been studied extensively by researchers and we will follow up with two more researches that deal with the elements of atmospherics separately.

Globally studied in relation to the above-mentioned parameters is the influence of music on how consumers behave and purchase while music is being played. Gueguen & Jacob (2010) found that consumers spent more time in a flower shop when romantic music was played and that the time spent at the same store declined when pop music was being played. In another study Broekemier, Marquardt and Gentry (2008) found the positive effect of music on purchase decision, if the music was happy and vice-versa. When melodious music was played consumers spent more time at the store and expressed a positive purchase intention. Though Broekemier et al. (2008) focused their study on purchase behavior of women, further introspection done on the basis of the premises of impulsive buying and consumer decision making provides a strong foothold for the discussion to follow.

Theoretical background

Here in this section, we will explain the component elements of affect and how they produce the output.

Components that play a crucial role in formation of incidental affect can be classified under two main heads. These are: 1. External components and 2. Internal components

External components: Affect, as defined in psychological literature is a state of mind which prompts people to pursue the pleasurable and to avoid the displeasure. This topic when introduced in the marketing practices was used to refer to the behavior under which the consumers were dependent on their internal mood states, feelings, as opposed to the advertising effects. Noted psychologists, social scientists, social psychologists, and decision researchers have for long concentrated on the subject of decision making under uncertainty (Levin, 2006). Apart from Cohen, Pham and Andrade (2006), very few studies have mentioned the difference between various types of affect, and also have failed to give a comprehensible idea about the component element of each. But, since we are discussing incidental affect only, we will limit our discussion to the confines of incidental affect only.

In the previous sections, we have already discussed 'atmospherics', and 'evaluation of the surrounding'. In this section, we will discuss a few more elements: cognitive load, stress, and reference point. Of these three, the 'reference point' needs some special treatment which is beyond the scope of this paper. Before we start with the

internal components of affect, we will complete how stress and cognitive load makes their position as component element of incidental affect.

Stress is another external factor that creates a feeling for affect. As defined in the opening paragraphs, that affect is a state of mind that prompts people to pursue the pleasurable and to avoid the unpleasurable; further clarifications will be provided in the lines to follow. The propensity to avoid the *unpleasurable* has been referred to as the '*compensatory consumption*' in the literature of consumer behavior. Though recent marketing academics have given 'little attention' to the topic of '*compensatory consumption*' (Woodruffe, 2006), interest in this area of research is not something new (e.g. Jahoda et al., 1933; Caplovitz, 1963). However, our discussion and previous definition of incidental affect (to avoid displeasure) is very much in analogy with Gronmo's (1988) definition of consumption. i.e., a systemic lack between consumption and needs and remarked, "*rather than satisfying specific needs, certain aspects of consumption may be reactions to a more general lack of need satisfaction that is, to compensate for failure or weaknesses of some sort*". In context of purchase, Elliot (1994) comes up with an idea that is further analogous to our discussion. He remarks that important function of consumption is to maintain consumers in a positive mood which indicates that it is widely used by people to 'repair' negative emotional states. So we can easily make out that affect is very much dependent on such compensatory behavior. Next we embark on the issue of cognitive load. This is external factor in the fact that it is dependent upon the information that the marketer wants to convey. Depending upon the information that will be passed to the consumers, and the nature of the product, the deliberative system (Lowenstein, O'Donoghue, 2007) will be affected. This in turn will determine how the consumers will engage in decision making and hence the creation of affect will be dependent on the information processing. The efficiency of cognitive load depends on how much it is capable of influencing the cognitive capacity of the consumers. The cognitive capacity is an internal component, and will be discussed in the next section.

Internal Components: Since, internal factors that create affect are varied and their interplay that induce affect are rather complex, we will start the discussion with processing routes and will show how different elements are processed giving rise to different forms of affect, and from that point will segregate the elements that are crucial to the formation of incidental affect.

Affect is mainly induced in the human beings at time when information is processed under two main routes: 1. Direct route and 2. Indirect route

The direct route which is activated when the consumers engage in a direct processing of information, that is to say that when the consumers are engaged in a routine purchase and hence, there is a little scope of affect getting infused in the decision. Things such as price, necessity, and purpose are considered here and hence incidental affect has the least chance of getting infused. So, this puts direct route as a component element of integral affect and hence, we will put it out of discussion.

We will hereby move on to the indirect route which has greater chance of infusing affect into the decision making system and the components by which incidental affect is infused into the processing system are described as:

Selective attention: selective attention refers to the fact that the specific information tend to get attention, while we are processing the information under affective state of mind, we tend to pay attention to those details which are mood-related and affect-congruent details and by this stage affect sets in.

Selective encoding: selective encoding refers to the encoding of the affect-congruent information that has been acquired by the selective attention, and is encoded into a richer network of primed associations, which is capable

of holding such information for a much longer time. For example, ad information involving an outstanding message will be remembered for the celebrity endorser and the depth of the message.

Selective retrieval: selective retrieval refers to the process of retrieval of affect-congruent information. Such information which was coded in the context of affective process has greater chance of getting retrieved in than other details.

Now, we will consider the variable that create affect and will explain how some of these variables are responsible for the formation of incidental affect.

Familiarity: the name familiarity in this context is self-explanatory. In context of affect, it is used to denote whether information presented to the consumer has been encountered before. If the information has been encountered before and encoded depending upon the stimuli, then subsequent exposure to it will give rise to affect, which will be dependent upon the nature of the stimuli. If the information has not been encountered before, then depending upon the familiarity with the subject, consumers will either pay attention to it or reject it. Such information acquired will either manifest itself in an immediate gratification (in this case, purchase decision), or will pave the way for a future purchase.

Complexity and Typicality: complexity and typicality refer to the fact that what type of information has been communicated. More the information is complex and less typical it is, more time will the consumers spend to compute a meaning out of the information presented. Hence, there is greater chance of affect getting infused in the process. This affect is not integral affect or task-related affect, because, integral affect does not require the consumers to think on their choice because they have already decided on their choice. Hence, it is clear that the affect is incidental affect.

Personal relevance: this is another important component of incidental affect. Products that are relevant to the consumers will be processed via the central route (*Petty and Caccioppo, 1985*) and those which are not relevant will be processed via the peripheral route (*Petty and Caccioppo, 1985*). Hence, information which will be processed via peripheral route actually gives rise to an affect which is purely incidental.

Cognitive capacity: the cognitive capacity of the judge is another crucial factor, with substantive processing playing a crucial role. We have already mentioned affect depends upon the information that is being communicated. Forgas (1985) mentions in this respect that, “*when judges suffer from information overload, need to pay attention to multiple inputs, are put under time pressure, or in other ways are impaired, they typically adopt typically simplified..*” processing techniques and while doing this consumer get influenced by incidental affect. As such, the cognitive capacity makes its position as a component of incidental affect.

Methodology

Depending upon the accounts of previous research, we hereby draw the hypotheses that will be tested. The main hypotheses to be tested here can be described as:

1. H₀: Incidental affect has no effect on the purchase decision of the consumers.
H₁: Incidental affect heavily impacts the purchase decision of the consumers.
2. H₀: Under incidental affect, consumers rely heavily on their cognitive capacities while making purchase decision.
H₁: Under incidental affect, consumers are left with little processing resources to judge their decisions.

The aforementioned hypotheses can be further broken into several sub-hypotheses and this will throw further light on the issue at hand. As we go about addressing main hypotheses, we will take up the individual elements

that made up the main hypotheses, deduce sub-hypotheses from the existing literature and test those hypotheses to reach a comprehensible conclusion.

Incidental affect depends upon how much a consumer feels that the product in question is relevant to him. Depending upon the ways in which an individual engages in information processing there are two routes- Central Route and Peripheral Route (*Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann, 1983*) to message effectiveness. Comprehensible idea regarding these routes of attitude change comes from the studies of Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann (1983). According to these authors, a person engages the central route once s/he has considered the purchase of the product in detail, his/her 'diligent consideration' and 'true merits of a particular attitudinal position' are crucial to the employment of this system. As such, we can say that the 'deliberative system' (*Loewenstein, O'Donoghue, 2007*) has a much more role to play.

In contrast, we have the Peripheral route (*Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann, 1983*) to attitude change. Attitude change in this case does not occur because the person has engaged in careful consideration of the product, but because s/he has made 'simple inferences' (*Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann, 1983*) about the outcome of the decision. Apart from that there are various factors that decide the employment of the channel; the associations that different people make about themselves in connection with other persons play an important part. In such cases, people tend to think in terms of images (*Schlenker, 1978*). The peripheral route is expected to have a more crucial role in purchase decision because more conscious thoughts give rise to more negative decisions (*Sheriff and Hovland, 1961*) and hence in many cases, purchase cannot be completed while information travels via the Central Route. On the other hand, the messages that travel via the Peripheral Route have a greater chance of getting accepted as purchase decision because consumers consider these decisions under low involvement states and hence little cognitive effort is spent to evaluate the arguments presented. Instead, the consumers concentrate on the allied factors like the prestige of the celebrity endorser, his/her credibility and in many cases it is by this process only that the consumer decides to purchase the product. Hence we can deduce the sub-hypotheses as:

1. H₀: incidental affect occurs when there is high involvement and relevance of the product in question.
H₁: incidental affective occurs when there is low involvement and relevance of the product in question.
2. H₀: Incidental affect follows Central Route to marketing message effectiveness.
H₁: Incidental affect follows Peripheral Route to marketing message effectiveness.

Now, as the information is passed via the Peripheral Route, we are certain that the event involves 'substantial processing' (*Forgas, 1995*). On this basis we can say that more complex and less typical the target is, the more time will the consumers will spend to create a meaning out of the message presented and hence, there is a greater chance of affect getting infused into the decision of the consumer. Hence, we can deduce the hypotheses as:

3. H₀: Purchase decisions under incidental affective states of mind do not depend on the complexity of marketing message.
H₁: Purchase decisions under incidental affective states of mind depend on the complexity of marketing message.
4. H₀: The deliberative system is not affected by marketing messages and consumers have sufficient resources to process such information.
H₁: The deliberative system is affected by marketing messages and consumers do not have sufficient resources to process such information.

We have already described in the literature review how atmospherics play a crucial role in framing the decision of the consumers, especially Kotler's (1974) account of 'atmospherics' and 'representativeness' (*Cohen, Pham*

and Andrade, 2006). Representativeness is a crucial element of incidental affect and needs to be tested. Hence, we deduce our next hypotheses:

5. H_0 : Under incidental affective states evaluation of the purchase object do not depend on the evaluation of the surrounding atmosphere.

H_1 : Under incidental affective states evaluation of the purchase object depends on the evaluation of the surrounding atmosphere.

6. H_0 : Under incidental affective states of mind, incidental affect is not easily transferred to the target object.

H_1 : Under incidental affective states of mind, incidental affect is easily transferred to the target object.

All of us had experience of purchasing a product, for which we had no prior purchase decision, but purchased that product under impulsive urges. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2007), consumers are more likely to judge the situations, defining feelings in terms of joy, hope, love, fear. Apart from the above-mentioned factors, we hypothesize that impulsive buying is affected by feelings of stress and joy. Such response is analogous to the properties of the 'hot cognition' system (Loewenstein & O'Donoghue, 2007). Hence, we put forward our next hypotheses:

7. H_0 : In case of purchase decision under incidental affective states of mind, impulses do not play a major role.

H_1 : In case of purchase decision under incidental affective states of mind, impulses play a major role.

8. H_0 : Incidental affect is not accentuated by feeling of stress or enjoyment.

H_1 : Incidental affect is accentuated by feeling of stress or enjoyment.

Based on the prior discussions, we hereby address a critical issue- matching of pre-existing concepts. We will be hypothesizing that the consumers develop a familiarity towards the stimuli which they had previously seen and either responds to such stimuli in a positive manner or on a negative manner, there is usually no 'in-between' response for these feelings. It has been found that more intense mood states give rise to greater 'levels of arousal' (Srull, 1983) and hence, better recall. This event of 'better recall' can be attributed to incidental affect, as we have already mentioned that incidental affect requires more complex and atypical stimuli, and more complex the stimuli is, the more intense is the thought-process. Another focal point is 'whether or not the context is recalled at the time of judgment' (Pocheptsova & Novemsky, 2010). This becomes critical because if experiences of a judgment made earlier are present at the times of making any evaluation at the present, 'memory-based judgments are likely to incorporate incidental affect' (Pocheptsova & Novemsky, 2010). As such, we put forward our hypotheses related to this:

9. H_0 : Pre-existing ideas when re-exposed to consumers, consumers do not treat such ideas in a positive manner.

H_1 : Pre-existing ideas when re-exposed to consumers, consumers treat such ideas in a positive manner.

10. H_0 : Consumers do not develop a familiarity towards concerned products when re-exposed to pre-existing ideas.

H_1 : Consumers develop a familiarity towards concerned products when re-exposed to pre-existing ideas.

11. H_0 : When re-exposed to pre-existing ideas, consumers engage themselves in heuristic processing of information.

H_1 : When re-exposed to pre-existing ideas, consumers engage themselves in substantive processing of information.

But, how do consumers choose their options. Loewenstein and O'Donoghue (2007) proposed that the consumers are usually myopic in their choice, while making decision, and show a lack of aversion to loss when faced with situations regarding immediate or later paybacks. Another feature of incidental affect is lack of aversion to loss. People under incidental affective states will show, less aversion to loss and will indulge in more impulsive behavior. Hence, we put forward our hypotheses:

12. H_0 : Under incidental affective states of mind, people look for future rewards.
 H_1 : Under incidental affective states of mind, people look for immediate rewards.
13. H_0 : Consumer's behavior under incidental affect has been found to be sensitive to probability of outcome.
 H_1 : Consumer's behavior under incidental affect has been found to be insensitive to probability of outcome.
14. H_0 : Under incidental affect, consumers do not display a lack of aversion to loss.
 H_1 : Under incidental affect, consumers display a lack of aversion to loss.

Research Design

- a. Research approach: A quantitative design was used for this study. It involved collection of primary data from the respondents with the intention of extending the results to a wider population. As such, a questionnaire survey was deemed suitable for the purpose. Since the aim of the study was to generalize the role of incidental affect in purchase decision, a quantitative method was adopted. Further the data that resulted was subjected to statistical analysis to represent it and to elaborate on the relationship between them.
- b. Research Participants: A total of 60 participants were sampled conveniently from Kolkata region. Only consumers within the age group of 20-40 years were selected. This particular age group was selected because this age group focuses on various factors like color, smell, apparel design among many others. As Gerald Zaltman and Robin Higie Coulter (1995) pointed out that thought occur as images, this age group tend to link products with different images that are associated with social status or as a mark of excellence or with aristocracy. This becomes evident when *Ernst Dichter*, another researcher on consumer behavior, completed his research with Chrysler and linked convertibles with mistresses and sedans with wives (*The Economist*, 2011). Prior appointment was fixed with the willing respondents and questionnaire containing purpose and instruction was handed over to them. Further information about the respondents is described in Table 1.
- c. Measuring instrument: The responses were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first part contained general information about the respondents that has been described in Table 1. The next two sections dealt with incidental affect and integral affect and contained 16 and 21 questions respectively. The questions in the last two sections measured the respondent's response regarding incidental and integral affect. The responses were collected using a five-point Likert Scale. Using closed-ended questions facilitated the collection of data and easy analysis.
- d. Reliability: The concerned questionnaire has been tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha is an index of reliability associated with variation accounted for by the true score of the underlying construct. This questionnaire had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .865 which indicates that the questionnaire can be considered good enough to employ.

- e. Research procedure: The questionnaire was handed over to the respondents on the weekends, especially on Friday evening and Saturdays, and usually within 10th of month, when people are in spending spree. The questionnaires were handed over to the respondents and were required to fill it up in the presence of the interviewer.

Statistical analysis:

The data gathered was analyzed using statistical tests like Chi-square at 5% significance. The hypotheses were tested on the basis of the Chi-square. Other statistical tests include regression analysis for model fit and correlation tests. Data was analyzed using three different computer applications- IBM SPSS, SPSS AMOS, and R Studio.

Results & Discussions

From the computed value, we can conclude that incidental affect has a significant impact on the purchase decision of the consumers. Table 2 shows the results of Chi square test at 5% significance.

Apart from the above X^2 values, significant regression values have been found between 'excitement' and 'peripheral' ($r^2=.691$), which means that the elements of 'excitement', for example, a favorite product, a long-sought product enters the consumer's cognitive system via peripheral route, as hypothesized. Also, good experience with a product, leads to better purchase decision and consumers use little processing resources. As such, information travels via peripheral route. Significant r^2 has been found between 'satisfaction' and 'peripheral' ($r^2=.673$). On the other hand, interesting negative correlation has been found between 'price' and 'purchase decision' ($r^2=-.20$), which indicates that consumers do not consider price to be a major factor while considering purchase of a product which induces an 'excitement' in her. This virtually removes the possible outcome of integral affect while considering the purchase of an above-mentioned product. Insignificant correlation (though positive) has been found between 'discounts' and 'purchase decision', which indicates that impulsive purchase has a little role to play in affective responses. (PCC=.205)

Crucial relationship pertaining to the establishment of primary premise is the relation between 'service' and 'purchase decision' ($r^2 =.601$) which indicates that positive evaluation of the environment is transpired into purchase decision. This makes incidental affect much prominent in purchase decisions. To further strengthen the stance of incidental affect. Insignificant correlation has been found between 'first product' and 'excitement' (PCC=.035) and between 'urge' and 'first product' (PCC=.185), which indicates that incidental affect doesn't come into play in case of specific products with pre-existing ideas, like pleasant experience at store, a surprise gift, or even a bad experience. Further encouraging results have been found between a new set of variables. As hypothesized, incidental affect is accentuated by feelings of stress ($r^2=.801$). Analogous to this finding are the feelings of 'upset' which means that incidental affect is accentuated by feelings of being 'upset' ($r^2=.682$). At the same time integral affect is quite functional in case of 'cautious' shoppers ($r^2=.700$) which means that integral affect is functional where there is sufficient cognitive space. The linear relation between impulses and purchase decision can be pictorially represented as given in Fig.1

The relation between information processing style and computed variables can be expressed as given in Fig.2

Another important relation between Central route and Peripheral Route and the computed variables can be represented as given in Fig.3.

Discussion

Before we round up the discussion, few pertinent issues need to be discussed which will further reinforce the necessity of conducting research on affect. Such a study will not only help to construct a comprehensive

structure of affect, but will also help to unfurl a whole new horizon to the practice of IMC. As the above study shows that *windfall gains* triggered by discounts are purely impulsive purchase and not affective. We have already established that impulsive behavior has a little role to play in affective responses. Hence, we can deduce that giving discounts does not necessarily ensure affective responses. The reason why affective responses have been considered to be better than impulsive responses is the fact that impulsive behavior has always a negative feeling, a repentance, associated with it and this later on acts a source of negative affect. But, incidental affect rarely has such negative feeling. Also, there is enough indication that price is not a concern for the age group studied. This means that once affect has been successfully infused, consumers are ready to move to any limits to pursue it. This leads to even an intense question. How can affect be infused so efficiently? Any comprehensible answer to this question would be mammoth, but in a nutshell, it can be said that as Kotler (1974) pointed out that ‘atmospherics’ should play an efficient role, we should concentrate on the surrounding environment and try to make it more pleasurable. Again defining the term ‘pleasurable’ would require mammoth space, it can be said that since such pleasurable environment readily transpires into the purchase decision, it should be treated with utmost enjoyment. Not only will this pleasurable situation ensure current sales, but will also ensure future sales, as incidental affect is dependent on pre-existing motives and experiences.

Limitations and future researches

Though the future of incidental affect seems quite promising, there are certain obstacles in its way of being studied widely. Affect is actually a psychological concept, and its study in consumer aspects includes intensive laboratory study as well as intense medical introspection. This makes the study tough to continue because implementing medical procedures in consumer behavior makes things more obscure. Also, it needs mentioning that results obtained in the laboratory are tough to extend to the marketplace. Researchers should carefully select the issues from the unfathomable pool of affect. One such area that requires introspection is the complexity of the messages and how complex should the stimuli be so as to induce proper affect in consumers. In conclusion, it can be said that the journey of affect is long and future researches should be directed so that new dimensions can be explored.

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Tables and Figures:

Table 1: distribution of age, gender, occupation and income

Gender		Age		Occupation				Income (in INR)			
Male	Female	20-30 years	30-40 years	Married	Paid employment	Business	Student/Trainee	<10,000	10,000-20,000	20,000-30,000	>30,000
38	22	32	28	32	54	3	3	8	10	12	30

Table 2: Computation of X² value

Research hypotheses	X ² value	Degrees of freedom	Computed X ²	Inference
Purchase decision	12.592	6	2.619	H ₀ accepted
Processing resources	49.80	35	76.11	H ₀ rejected
Involvement	11.07	5	13.32	H ₀ rejected
Message route	50	35	67.11	H ₀ rejected
Complexity of message	17	9	21.70	H ₀ rejected
Deliberative system	17	9	17.623	H ₀ rejected
Impulses	23.68	14	20.38	H ₀ accepted
Stress & Enjoyment	30.14	19	48.7	H ₀ rejected
Information processing	58.12	42	106.51	H ₀ rejected
Immediate reward	11.07	5	11.10	H ₀ rejected
Lack of loss aversion	23.68	14	53.70	H ₀ rejected

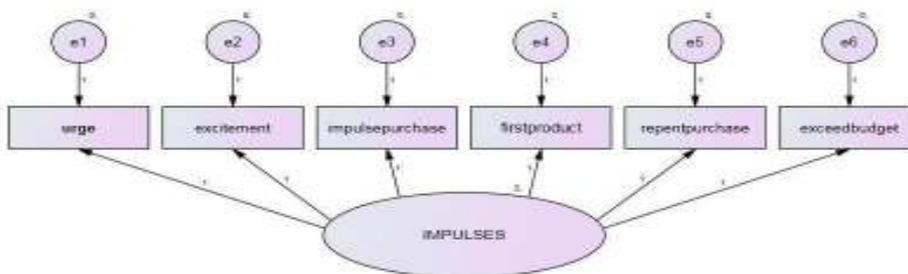


Fig 1: relationship between 'IMPULSES' and other observed variables

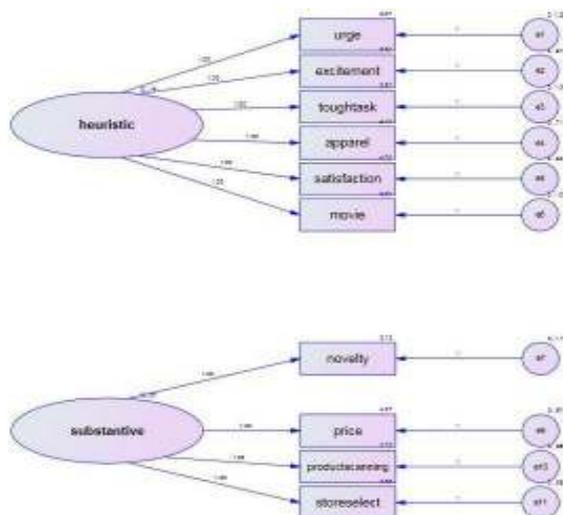


Fig 2: relationship between processing styles and other observed variables

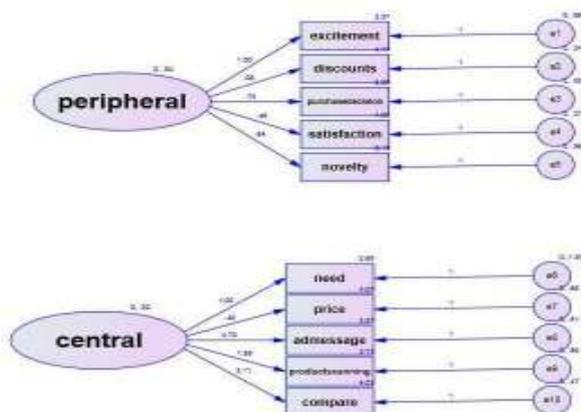


Fig.3: Relation between routes of message efficiency and observed variables