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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE EFFECTS OF SUBLIMINAL MESSAGES ON HUMAN ATTITUDE CHANGE AND EFFECTIVE ADVERTISING

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Abstract

This discussion delves into the intricate realms of self-awareness and unconsciousness, shedding light on their profound influence on human behavior and society. Awareness, spanning from the womb to the grave, defines our conscious existence, while the unconscious silently records every sensory input, guiding our emotions and actions. Notably, the unconscious can be harnessed to manipulate individuals and communities through subliminal messages, a powerful tool wielded by advertising, marketing, and media. The infamous 1957 experiment by James Vicary, flashing "Eat Popcorn! Drink Coca-Cola!" in a cinema, exemplifies how subtle suggestions can shape consumer choices. Visual symbols in advertising can evoke feelings of credibility in consumers, perpetuating the allure of certain products or services. However, it's essential to be cautious, especially regarding children and their exposure to digital games, which may harbor hidden subliminal messages impacting their future behavior. The study underscores the sway of subliminal messages in advertising, ideology propagation, and economic interests. Nevertheless, the impact varies with age, gender, culture, and time, aligning with individual desires and beliefs. Negative usage of subliminal messages, when they are forced upon consumers, becomes detrimental to individuals and society. Therefore, comprehensive control measures and penalties for subliminal advertising are imperative. Particularly, vigilance is required in monitoring children's media consumption to shield them from harmful messages. In conclusion, subliminal messages hold immense potential for both harm and benefit. While they can be tools for manipulation, they can also aid personal growth and societal harmony. Striking a balance requires vigilance, regulation, and ethical considerations, ensuring that subliminal messages serve as a force for positive change rather than manipulation.

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Introduction:-

Since the dawn of civilization, some individuals have sought to exert control over others. These individuals have employed various techniques throughout history, adapting to the times. While in the past they may have used weapons like swords and shields, today they often manipulate people's minds more than tanks and guns. People

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shape their thoughts based on their perception. In fact, when perceptions change, involuntary changes in behavior can be observed. Thus, the human mind is governed.

The basis of subliminal messages is persuasion. In general, persuasion is the process of influencing attitudes and behaviors toward predetermined goals or purposes without coercion, under equal and mutual conditions. The presence of mutual willingness and equal conditions, as well as the absence of coercion, distinguishes subliminal messages from classical persuasion processes.

Subliminal messages are usually presented below the threshold levels of sensory perception. However, some are presented above the threshold through continuous repetition, taking advantage of the subconscious mind's sensitivity to continuous repetition and altering their structure partially or completely. Stimuli presented under physical constraints that humans can consciously perceive are not significant but can be perceived by the brain. Many neuroimaging studies have shown that stimuli/messages that are not consciously perceivable by any sensory organ affect the brain (Darıcı, 2015).

If you can successfully place your message in the minds of individuals or groups you've identified as your target and if you can naturally convey it to others, the process of subliminal persuasion has begun. Subliminal persuasion enables individuals to disseminate new information to their peers and change their own thoughts.

Although there is a common belief that subliminal messages always convey negative messages, this technique can be used to send positive messages and thus help achieve desirable behaviors. For example, it may be possible to support individuals who have a smoking habit in quitting by creating programs containing subliminal messages in television, radio, newspapers, magazines, the internet, etc. Media channels that attract a wide audience explicitly or implicitly send messages in the programs they offer. There are many messages that do not align with the societal moral values, such as national, religious, traditions, and customs, and attempt to negatively influence the subconscious mind and push people toward consumption (Küçükbezirci, 2013).

Methodology:-

One of the main contributions of our study relates to qualitative research, in which we collected and generated data from the library, including books and scientific articles from websites. Additionally, we gathered quantitative data from previously generated large datasets. We selected and developed a specific method of data collection to enhance our understanding of the role of sociologists and to encourage them to pay more attention to their responsibilities.

Subliminal Messages

Subliminal messages are specialized studies aimed at influencing the subconscious by going beyond the threshold of conscious awareness. Auditory or visual interventions that target the subconscious, which are sub-threshold conscious awareness, are called subliminal. The term "subliminal" has Latin roots and means "a stimulus to which the subject reacts unconsciously." Subliminal messages can also be referred to as advertising; in colloquial terms, they are known as hidden messages.

In fact, the conscious mind, which is responsible for all decision-making and necessary reasoning, has developed resistance to changes over time. This is why people do not easily change. However, there is another part of the mind, the subconscious, which can be programmed in a specific way and receive suggestions or commands without argument or debate. Those who can plan and give suggestions to their subconscious mind have experienced significant changes in their attitudes, habits, emotions, and behaviors (Karam, 2017).

Advertisers or political groups try various techniques and tactics to influence people. The goal of these techniques and tactics is to guide individuals by influencing their subconscious, apart from persuading them consciously. This is where subliminal messages come into play as subconscious advertising. Subliminal advertising is a technique that involves placing subconscious stimuli in advertisements by marketers to induce unintended advertising behaviors (Canals, 2014).

History of Underwater Messages

The history of subliminal messages dates to ancient times when persuasion tactics were used to influence the minds and actions of people in the world. Throughout history, people have employed various methods to persuade one another, and this practice continues to this day. However, it was not until 1859 that a different approach to

persuasion was introduced with the invention of the “tachistoscope” by the German physiologist A.W. Volkman. The tachistoscope is the most common system used for subliminal advertising in television or cinema. Sharpshooters and watchtower officers used this device to enhance visual acuity during World War II, further developing its use. The device’s lens cover opens and closes at 1/3000th of a second to project desired messages onto the cinema screen. These messages, usually displayed every five seconds, can be delivered at different intervals depending on the request and purpose (Küçükbezirci, 2013).

In fact, the principle of how the device works is quite simple. It rapidly presents a specific number of words or images, almost like a flash of lightning, at predetermined time intervals on a visual screen. By using a technique like displaying one image on top of another, the tachistoscope increases the speed of perception in the mind with the given images. From this perspective, such stimuli, whose goal is to guide human behavior through influencing the subconscious mind, are called “subliminal messages” and first appeared in the 1950s in the United States with the discovery of the tachistoscope.

In 1957, in the United States, when Vance Packard wrote “The Hidden Persuaders”, no one was aware of the existence of subliminal advertising. In his book, Packard talks about how many emotions and motivations, especially sexual desires, and fears, are directed by advertisers in the human brain.

The Tachistoscope Device

The first use of subliminal messages with this device took place in the mid-20th century in America. Studies have shown how the impact of commands placed in a movie displayed in a cinema can affect its sales, and interesting results have been obtained. The technique used was successful, leading to increased sales.

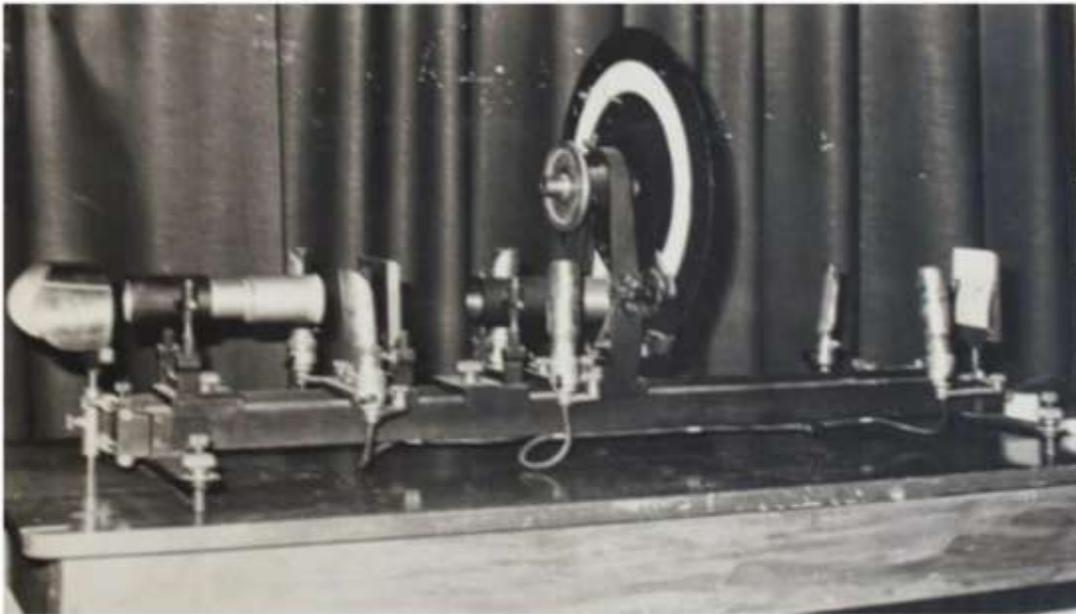


Figure 1:-The Tachistoscope Device. Refrenc: (İşli, 2016).

James Vicary conducted an experiment in 1957 during a screening of the movie “Picnic” at the Fort Lee Cinema in New Jersey to investigate the effects of advertising on consumer behavior. Every five seconds, Vicary flashed the messages “(Hungry?), (Drink Coca Cola), and Eat Popcorn)” rapidly on the screen. After watching the movie with these prompts, Coca Cola sales increased by 18.1 percent, and popcorn sales increased by 57.8 percent.



Kaynak: (<https://tr.pinterest.com>)

Figure 2:- The advertising of Popcorn. Reference: (Çetin, 2013).

A device called a tachistoscope is based on rapid image or image-based text display. Subliminal sounds also exist. Subliminal messages are conveyed through specific speech, music, or songs that we listen to but cannot hear with our ears, yet our subconscious mind can perceive them. The first audio subliminal message was broadcast on the famous international radio BBC.

In the 1900s, when this radio station did not receive much attention and was even neglected, a different technique was experimented with and succeeded. BBC, which wanted to prevent this decline, immediately formed a committee, and attempted to recover the radio using its special methods, developing a technique of their own. As soon as the radio went on the air, during the broadcast of news and music, messages were delivered to the subconscious mind through sound waves that you wouldn't understand, stating that the radio is the most useful and best tool; this technique worked. Radio attraction increased significantly, and the term "voice of the devil" disappeared.

In this way, audio, and visual subliminal messages, which were successful in the early attempts, attracted the attention of companies, imperialist countries, advertising groups, and political forces. This has become an area that increasingly interests many people in the following years.

Types of Subliminal Messages:-

Subliminal messages can come in two forms: auditory and visual. Studies show that these types can lead to anti-social behavior, premature sexual arousal, cultural changes, suicidal tendencies, and even drug use. The concept of subliminal messages has always been questioned due to its negative consequences and is often criticized by skeptics (Soomro, 2014).

Nevertheless, individuals can improve various aspects of their lives using subliminal messages. In fact, when people decide to make changes in their lives, they can use subliminal messages. These subconscious messages can be used for various purposes: quitting smoking, losing weight, overcoming fears, relieving stress, or breaking bad habits. Some units or scales may be related to better learning, public speaking, improving sales skills, seduction, or peaceful pregnancy. These subliminal messages can be transferred to the unconscious mind through the visual system (for viewers) or the auditory system (for listeners). In the visual system, one way to do this is by using special software like Subliminal Power. After downloading it to the computer, it runs in the background. While people are working, the messages flash randomly with low contrast and for 100 milliseconds. Viewers do not consciously notice the message. People just need to select the subject or program of their choice and then run the software. However, this process is different in the auditory system. People can listen to subliminal tapes and CDs at work, at home, while

watching TV, doing household chores, or thinking about something else. The mind absorbs subliminal messages wherever people are, even during sleep. People who want to benefit from subliminal recordings can listen to them at any time of the day. People do not need to find a specific time to use these recordings. They can play them continuously throughout the day. The more people listen to them, the more noticeable the results. The only small effort people need to make is to listen to the recorded sounds. No other effort is required (Karam, 2017).

In fact, people do not need to find a specific time to use these recordings. They can play them continuously throughout the day. The more people listen to them, the more noticeable the results. The only small effort people need to make is to listen to the recorded sounds. No other effort is required (Karam, 2017).

There are various ways to send a “subliminal” message to an individual’s unconscious mind. The most common ones include:

1. Hidden auditory pathways in digital audio files. MP3 files, for example, are excellent for subliminal messages because they are playable and easier to manipulate and distribute.
2. Frames of 25 that are flashed through cinematic or television images as shorter flashes than can be consciously perceived by the eye and are repeatedly pushed into the unconscious mind.
3. Numbers, words, and hidden figures in advertisements, logos, and similar visual materials. This method is used in a wide range of advertising, from promoting a product to promoting a belief or perspective. Not those that are consciously seen and heard. This includes words, images, pictures, and shapes that are perceived at the unconscious level.

So, these subliminal messages can be used for various purposes and are delivered through both auditory and visual means.

1. Auditory Subliminal Messages:

The second element, namely subliminal messages, is placed beneath the upper element, which is a different kind of music. While the human ear perceives the first element, which is natural music, the second element cannot be consciously understood, and these messages are directly transmitted to the unconscious mind.

In Auditory Subliminal messages, the most common method, hidden messages are embedded in digital audio files. MP3 files are widely used as a means of subliminal messaging because playing, manipulating, and broadcasting them is very easy. The human ear can hear sounds within a specific frequency range. You listen to an MP3 with a subliminal message, but the hidden message is processed in your brain. Hearing is one thing; understanding is another.

These MP3s can be found anywhere on the internet, in email groups, or even in the background of your MP3 music. When you listen to these MP3s, you think you're only hearing music. If they contain subliminal messages, you can't hear them behind the music because they're not in a frequency range that you can hear, and your unconscious mind directly records these messages. Naturally, you experience what your unconscious mind has received without realizing it. In short, you're being hypnotized involuntarily.

For example, the message “buy more, buy more” is played under fast-paced music in some supermarkets. As an example, during the occupation of Iraq by the United States, subliminal messages were distributed under radio broadcasts and Quranic CDs, suggesting that resistance by Iraqis is futile, and Americans cannot be defeated.

2. Visual Subliminal Messages:

Visual subliminal messages are mostly created using various visual techniques in advertising, logos, movies, and TV series. In visual subliminal elements, the second image is hidden within the main image, and the human eye cannot consciously perceive it at first glance. The person looking at the visual element consciously processes and does not question the second image that the eye cannot consciously perceive. On the other hand, the unconscious mind perceives and registers the second image. Therefore, the second image, left outside the “awareness” processing function, goes directly into the unconscious mind.

People are now openly doing this. They provide all kinds of messages with films and advertisements. But why do they apply such a hidden square? The answer is very simple; because when we see it, it's not that effective. Because a person consciously chooses what they see, hear, reject, or accept. Because it has been presented to you as an option from the beginning. But this is something people can't see, hear, or feel, meaning it's completely below or above our perception frequencies. Do we have a chance to accept or reject such a thing? Of course not.

Harry Potter

The following example is a scene from the Harry Potter movie. In the image, capital letters spell out the word “PORN” prominently.



Figure 3:- The Harry Potter movie that capital letters spell out the word “PORN”.Reference: (Gör, 2019).

Facebook

When you open Facebook, it immediately puts a cover on it, increasing the number of users who send sexual messages unconsciously. So, I ask you, what is the relationship between clicking on the site and sexual intercourse? You know that your subconscious mind also manages your ID in the same way. It manages your sexual desires and hormones, and its goal is to increase consumption through these means.



Figure 4:- The Facebook Page on Google.Reference: <https://tinyurl.com/yudev58>

The Silence of The Lambs

“The Silence of the Lambs” is one of the most intriguing examples of film posters. Ancient symbols of death and rebirth (and related sexual inclinations) are visually presented on the movie poster. Pay attention to a skeletal figure in the shape of a butterfly on the poster and 7 images of naked women inside this skeletal figure.



Figure 5:- The Silence of The Lambs. Reference: (Çetin, 2013).

A Collection of Amazing Stories

Subliminal messages used in movies and TV shows often make a great effort to remain hidden and pass by as quickly as possible. In contrast, amazing stories utilize the images you see below for about 20-30 seconds. In fact, when subliminal messages are mentioned in a picture it uses, the first thing that comes to mind is the motif of a flower with hidden sexual text. This motif is used at every point to define subliminal messages or the subconscious.





Figure 6:- A short picture of a Collection of Amazing Stories serial. Reference: (Gör, 2019).

Subliminal Messaging Techniques

Experimental studies on unconscious perception date back to the nineteenth century. The tachistoscope, a device used to influence the recipient and send desired messages to the unconscious mind, was first used in 1859. Sharpshooters and officers in watchtowers were trained with this device to enhance visual acuity during World War II, further developing its capabilities. The lens cover of this device opens and closes in 1/3000th of a second to reflect desired messages onto a cinema screen. Due to this device, subliminal messages in images sent to the screen or cinema curtain are stored in the unconscious part of the brain with the power to alter behavior.

James Vicary, who conducted his first experiment using the tachistoscope in 1957 in the Fort Lee, New Jersey cinema during the screening of the movie "Picnic", achieved a 57.8% increase in popcorn sales and an 18.1% increase in Coca-Cola sales by sending his messages: "Hungry? Eat popcorn! Drink Coca-Cola!"

Johan Karremans from Radboud University in the Netherlands addressed the topic of "Persuading the Unconscious Mind to Like or Dislike a Specific Beverage" in an article. In his experiment, he focused on thirsty subjects and sent a message called "Lipton Ice" in one-thousandth of a second. After this experiment, when participants were asked to choose a beverage, 80% of them selected Lipton Ice. In another experiment, two fictional brands, "Delta" and "Theta", were used to send messages to the unconscious mind through a film. It was revealed that the message given by Bracken during the 90-second film was intended to promote the Delta brand. At the end of the film, when 1400 marketing professionals were asked to choose between the two fictional brands, Delta and Theta, it was found that 81% of the 1400 representatives chose the Delta brand, while 19% chose Theta (Ataş, 2018).

Subliminal Advertising

In the 21st century, our minds are exposed to numerous stimuli throughout the day. Hundreds of pieces of information and messages are conveyed to our unconscious mind, even when we are at home, school, work, on the road, or in any social environment. Many of these stimuli are transmitted to our unconscious mind when watching television programs or movies at home, browsing the internet on a computer or tablet, playing with a mobile phone, listening to the radio in the car, shopping in large markets, or simply passing by a billboard.

The concepts related to subliminal advertising or subliminal messages are now recognized by most people, especially in the Western world. However, not everyone has in-depth knowledge of this concept. It is useful to

consider what kind of hidden effects are necessary to establish some marketing connections before examining a few laboratory studies that directly address this question. At the very least, we can assume that an unconscious stimulus creates or reinforces a positive emotional response to that stimulus. Whether such a positive effect, if achieved, can have a motivational impact is another question. It is likely that the positive effect does not cause any harm and can logically influence the attractiveness of a product. A stronger prediction for unconscious effects considers some direct behavioral outcomes (i.e., purchasing). Since the previous estimates do not require interesting marketing outcomes, and the final estimate has clearly been stated, these hypotheses are referred to as weak and strong claims, respectively (Timothy, 2016).

The message of the unconscious mind continues to intrigue marketers, advertisers, psychologists, and the public. Experimental psychologists continue to develop and discuss complex methods for studying conscious and unconscious perception processes and their effects. Therefore, subliminal advertising, in its simplest definition, refers to advertising activities that aim to influence unconscious activities that individuals are unaware of and occupy a vast area of their brains, enabling them to take certain actions on specific issues. These activities can lead to significant changes in individuals, including altering political beliefs, updating social attitudes, and guiding purchasing behavior. The main logic behind subliminal advertising is to persuade individuals to think about a specific idea without their awareness. This concept was first introduced when major consumer stores argued that traditional advertising was becoming ineffective for individuals. Subliminal advertising techniques that have emerged in this field guide the intended audience by showing specific techniques such as subliminal written messages, hidden images that can steer them towards a specific object, words that trigger specific emotions, and more (Lindstrom, 2008). A portion that individuals consciously and willfully avoid exposure to is a reality. In fact, subliminal messages could not go beyond being a myth until research in this field showed that details containing unconscious objects could be presented to consumers (Sığınç, 2017).

Using the Unconscious Mind for Advertising

In studies examining the effects of advertising on human awareness, it has been revealed that people's perception of advertisements is generally one in a thousand. Individuals who pay attention to one-thousandth of it and retain it in their memory disregard the rest as advertising details. These details include elements such as colors, images, and lines used in advertisements (Acet, 2013; Çelik, 2000). These details enter the unconscious mind by being arranged in a specific order by the brain without completely leaving the memory. The reason for the importance of these details is that they enter the unconscious mind. In fact, the more pieces are identified with specific details, the more powerful and repeatable they become, and their impact on the unconscious mind increases. This increase plays a significant role in enhancing the effectiveness of advertising by influencing people's behaviors and decisions (Çelik, 2000).

Everything a person encounters in daily life is sent to the brain through the senses. Studies have shown that billions of data are sent to individuals' brains through their senses. Although people think they have forgotten, it has been proven that all data sent to the brain from birth to death is stored because of studies. However, it cannot be said that all of them are gathered in one area. Everyday tasks, food preferences, relationships with family members, business, and work-related information, etc., are stored in separate areas of the brain (Sığınç, 2017).

With advertising, the unconscious mind's part defined as the consumer or target audience was examined, and delivering a message to the audience for one purpose or another can activate them, leading to the direction of individuals' consumption habits. For this reason, the ability to analyze the consumer for advertising or knowing what the consumer wants demonstrates a strong position that guides consumer activities. In this regard, it can be said that for an advertisement to achieve its goal, it must present a structure that is as close to the consumer as possible and recognizes their needs (Acet, 2013; Çelik, 2000).

Subliminal advertising must be appealing to the unconscious mind and, therefore, cannot be clearly seen by the target audience. The areas of its use are also very broad, depending on the popularity of the materials used (Sungur, 2007). For example, specific broadcasts such as television programs can influence the construction of social reality (Schrum et al., 1998; Ogden & Schrum, 1997). It can also affect the perception of advertising messages in the media (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997). In this regard, subliminal advertising can also be used in publications that are popular in society. The effectiveness of these messages occurs when the audience or target individuals are influenced by stimuli presented to them without their awareness, and as a result, the transition from the unconscious to awareness occurs when they desire to purchase a specific product (Sığınç, 2017).

Subliminal advertising has superior characteristics compared to regular advertising. In these cases, while people can resist advertising that they directly see, they cannot resist messages given in advertising created as subliminal advertising. In other words, subliminal advertising is advertising that does not allow the creation of opposing views and directs and manages individual actions. However, for subliminal advertising to achieve this goal, it is expected that the target audience will show a high level of interest in these advertisements. Since this situation is not very valid for everyday life, subliminal advertising is required to create the expected effect by providing a wider range of methods (Bişkin, 2014). In this regard, advertisements containing subliminal messages are advertisements whose goal is to persuade users to directly purchase a product beyond the primary goal of the advertising industry, advertising the product and making it attractive to the user (Sungur, 2007).

The Factors Influencing the Unconscious Mind: Sexual and Death-Related Themes

Since unconscious processes are aspects that affect individuals psychologically, advertising is also considered as a field of influence in psychology. Its goal is to create a connection between the product being offered and the individuals who purchase it. To establish this connection, the desires and emotions of individuals must be directed towards a product. Due to this necessity, advertising companies strive to act more effectively in attracting customers towards their products by using advertising strategies that appeal to the unconscious mind. In this regard, the most scientific approach is for advertising companies to seek the assistance of specialized psychologists to influence the emotions and feelings of consumers. As a result of these efforts, messages are sent that align with the expectations of the target audience, making it easier for these individuals to use the products (Sığınç, 2017).

Several global values have been incorporated into advertising from a psychological influence perspective. The first one is the discreet presentation of concepts related to sexual desire or sexual preferences, which are considered taboo in any society. Another is the theme of death, which introduces elements of engagement, violence, or fear in individuals and is portrayed as the end of life. Since birth and death are two completely contrasting concepts, the unconscious mind separates these two concepts. Individuals experience numerous events throughout their lives, and while they sometimes naturally encounter these events, some of them consider them highly significant. At the beginning of these significant events are the concepts of birth and death. Although the unconscious mind places them separately, they are considered as two complementary existential realities. This allows advertising that covers fundamental existential themes such as sexual desires or death to be more successful. In fact, accepting objects that have inherent potential will be easier for individuals (Sığınç, 2017).

Sexual concepts and love play a significant role in utilizing unconscious messages in advertising (Acet, 2013). However, it should be clarified that such objects or messages can be presented in a way that is not immediately apparent in advertising. Examples can be found in advertisements published in this area. Behind the cover of the 1971 issue of Time magazine, a corn cob with the word "SEX" written on it can be seen. After the advertisement, a \$1.5 million increase in sales was achieved. In a study conducted to examine whether, after this success, there is a random factor like popcorn and cola, 60% of the participants stated that when the advertisement was shown to the study participants, the object used in the advertisement evoked emotional states such as satisfaction, sexual desires, excitement, and romance (Sungur, 2007).

Research on the concept of sexuality and why explicit sexual objects make people respond to these advertisements has shown that such objects stimulate parts of the amygdala and the accumbens nucleus in the human brain (Acet, 2013). When these parts are alerted, individuals feel a stronger inclination towards the presented content and feel obliged to watch and remember more of the objects or advertisements containing them (Darıcı, 2012). It can be said that the impact created on consumers through sexuality is also achieved with themes related to aging and death (Sığınç, 2017).

Sexuality, which is the most significant weakness of humanity, and death, which is its greatest fear, are supposed to be embedded in the minds at a young age through subliminal messages. In the critical period when a child's personality is formed, their attitudes and behaviors are influenced by hidden messages such as sexual desires, slaughter, violence, and fear in cartoons. Special emphasis is placed on sexuality in subliminal messages, with the aim of undermining the moral structure of children and society.

Technology and the Subconscious Mind

The fact that individuals consciously or unconsciously receive messages from a source has significantly increased with the expansion and development of communication channels through technology. In the century we live in,

communication and information transfer from source to receiver can be achieved simultaneously with the advancement of technology. The desired message can be sent from one end of the world to another, but technology that operates at very high speeds comes with its own set of challenges. One of these challenges is the messages that are sent to the subconscious mind. Every day, every hour, even every minute, individuals can be exposed to subliminal messages. Many mass media outlets, including the internet, films, music, advertisements, books, newspapers, television, and computers, in short, any of the channels used for communication, can be used to transmit instructions to a specific target's brain, perform desired tasks, and send messages to the subconscious for self-conscious and unconscious manipulation (Küçükbezirci, 2013).

Computer Games and Subliminal Messages

As we know, most young people today spend more of their time playing computer games. With the increasing addiction to technology, even young children have mastered computer games. Due to technological advancements and the growing addiction to computer games, it is possible to convey messages to the human mind even in digital games. Unfortunately, this danger is evident in many of today's games. Some of these games, which are designed to convey messages about issues such as war, religion, and gender, are unfortunately produced in our country. Therefore, people have a great responsibility in this regard. The responsibility of the people here is to prevent the spread of games containing subliminal messages and even some Islamophobic symbols in our society and country. Society needs to be aware of this issue and consider potential negative effects (Ataş, 2018).

Subliminal Messages in Videos

Both video and subliminal messages combine audio and visual elements. Our era is the era of technology. Technology has advanced so much that we can now take pictures, record videos, and instantly share them with everyone on social networking sites using the phone in our pocket. In the past, before we could record videos, we needed a video camera, a cassette tape for recording, and a player for playing that cassette. However, today we can do all these things simultaneously and for free with the phone we have. The same applies to photography.

Today, where videos can be easily recorded and watched, there may be billions of videos available on the world's largest video sharing site like YouTube. We can now have access to videos on any topic on YouTube. Television channels now upload any program to YouTube. Various TV programs such as series, movies, news, entertainment, and magazines are easily accessible on the internet. Therefore, we don't need to watch any videos on the TV channel where they are broadcast. After publication, we can now watch these videos repeatedly on the internet.

It can be said that videos have a very wide range in terms of subliminal messages. Programs broadcast on various types of television, DVDs/CDs, clips, in short, various audiovisual files, can contain subliminal messages. Subliminal messages are sometimes seen in cartoons, commercial advertisements, TV series, movies, and clips.

The Influence of Subliminal Messages

While subliminal messages are skillfully and repeatedly used, there is a debate about their effectiveness on the intended audience. It cannot be expected that subliminal messages have the same impact on all individuals and societies. As mentioned, each person and community have their own cultural patterns, emotions, thoughts, behaviors, desires, and beliefs. Therefore, each subliminal message will have different effects on everyone. The question here is whether subliminal messages are as effective as claimed. Do all hidden messages achieve their goals? While significant budgets are allocated to the production and broadcast of advertisements, are consumers entirely passive in response to these stimuli? These questions and similar ones compel us to discuss information such as the power of subliminal messages, how hidden stimuli affect different situations, and their effectiveness.

Marketing and advertising researchers have not reached definite results regarding whether advertisements with subliminal stimuli have the capacity to persuade consumers or not. Recent research in social cognition has shown that unconscious branding affects individuals' attitudes, choices, and behaviors (Kaya, 2016).

To measure the impact, Gülz and colleagues (Serttaş&Darıcı, 2014) conducted an experiment on subliminal messages using brands like Coca-Cola, Lipton Iced Tea, and Spa Roud. According to their findings, individuals with specific product needs (e.g., extreme thirst) tend to favor products with subliminal messages. This experiment provides valuable data on the effects of subliminal messages.

On the other hand, Ailsworth and colleagues examined the relationship between gender and subliminal messages, finding that these messages have different effects on women and men. According to the conducted experiments, subliminal messages in advertisements increase happiness in men but do not affect women. These messages do not directly impact cognitive evaluations of brands but indirectly influence consumers' attitudes toward brands (Serttaş&Darıcı, 2014).

In a scientific study by Kutlu Kaya on this subject (Kaya, 2016), it was revealed that unconscious stimuli are more effective in influencing attitudes, choices, and behaviors when accompanied by metabolic needs such as thirst or hunger. Kaya shared the extensive findings of their study as follows: Our findings suggest that subliminal advertising can be easily implemented. According to our estimate, exposure to subliminal messages increases the likelihood that a person chooses that beverage when they are thirsty simultaneously. Studies with subliminal stimuli have shown that individuals exposed to such messages make choices that align closely with these messages. The likelihood of this choice also increases with thirst. It cannot be said that such stimuli have no effect on individuals who do not feel thirsty. However, the desire to achieve a result that fulfills the metabolic need of the body at that moment is higher (Kaya, 2016).

The findings of these studies show that subliminal messages are effective, but this effectiveness varies depending on the situation, gender, and age. Subliminal messages do not make something nonexistent obvious; rather, they stimulate our unconscious motivations, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and desires, guiding us to act, choose, and decide based on our needs. Therefore, subliminal messages are most effective when created at the right time and tailored to individuals and age groups. For example, products like water and ice cream are advertised more in the summer, during hot times. It is more challenging for subliminal messages in advertisements watched on a cold winter day to stimulate our unconscious. Subliminal messages delivered to an individual who is already full are also uniform and have a weak impact. For this reason, subliminal messages are more effective when we need them and are ready for them. In other words, the power of subliminal messages is proportional to our unconscious desires and needs.

Effective Use of Subliminal Messages

Sigmund Freud introduced the concept of the unconscious mind, while Carl Jung expanded upon it with extensive research. Scientists who later delved deeper into this topic probably never guessed that the concept of subliminal messages would garner so much attention, and the unconscious mind would attempt to be guided through various tactics and techniques. Nowadays, publications related to the unconscious mind have proliferated to the extent that bestselling books are often about subliminal techniques. Moreover, major corporations allocate budgets to use subliminal techniques for their products. Advertisers put great effort into influencing the unconscious mind and leave their mark under its special effects. Today, even countries allocate significant budgets and conduct research to examine the brain. Politicians use these effects for advertising purposes to influence individuals and society. The negative aspect of using the unconscious mind for manipulation, as well as the positive aspect, which opposes our interests, exists.

When all of this is examined, the question arises: “Can't we use this power of influence for our own beneficial results, despite others trying to use many features of our unconscious mind and its power of influence?” The answer to this question is simple. Since our unconscious mind is very effective, we must evaluate this matter not only with its drawbacks but also with its benefits. Since our unconscious mind is a tool for influence and guidance, we can use this tool to create useful outcomes. In other words, we can transform something that can be harmful into something beneficial.

Numerous articles and videos have been created to make the use of subliminal messages beneficial to us. This information suggests that with many unconscious techniques called personal growth, it is possible to change some of our behaviors, emotions, and thoughts. Today, psychologists and specialists use these techniques for patients and clients. In fact, subliminal recordings are created, and positive commands are given to the unconscious mind. Some subliminal messaging programs exist as well. When these programs are installed on a computer, texts quickly flash on the screen without the user's awareness. In these programs, which include positive affirmations, the color, display speed, and duration on the screen are adjustable. Programs like “Subliminal Mind” and “Subliminal Vision” produce highly effective results. By repeating commands such as “you feel comfortable, your happiness increases every day, you start thinking positively, you work more easily, your self-confidence grows, I am safe,” negative emotions and thoughts can be transformed and altered. Again, by using the same instructive sentences, embedding them in any

music or song, we can listen to them at a frequency that is not audible to the ear but is perceived by our unconscious mind.

It is possible to use these techniques to live a happier and more comfortable life by changing negative emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, dealing with recurring stressful situations, and breaking negative beliefs and fixed patterns. In particular, the ability to use subliminal messages in the field of health is also discussed. Unconscious techniques can be used in the psychological treatment processes of patients and coping with stress. Health institutions, based on providing benefits rather than profits from their service sector, have preferred subliminal advertising methods in their advertisements to continue their activities in harmony with major sectoral changes and offer more services. However, in the healthcare sector, it may be suitable to use subliminal advertising for promoting products or services rather than purchasing them so that individuals can act with awareness when they need opportunities and receive the most suitable healthcare services. Additionally, with this method, public awareness about health can be raised, and effective advertising can be done about bad habits. (Havareh, 2014)

Today, research, publications, and even numerous projects are being developed regarding the positive use of the subconscious mind. In examples of the benefits of subliminal messages in projects, it may be possible to support individuals who have a smoking habit by creating programs containing subliminal messages to help them quit smoking. A more productive and organized society can be created with positive advertising messages such as “Read a book”, “Study”, “Dispose of trash in the garbage bin”, so that they are integrated into school routines (Prokhorov, 2015).

Publications that have entered our lives with books like “The Power of Positive Thinking”, documentaries like “The Secret Law of Attraction”, and publications repeatedly mentioning concepts like “Quantum Thinking Techniques” in the world of personal development attract a lot of attention. Jung’s quote, “Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate”, shows that there are so many beliefs, desires, knowledge, and thoughts in our subconscious that we forget to look for the cause of many events. Instead of looking outside, we experience them within ourselves. Rumi’s quote, “What you seek is seeking you within”, confirms this. For this reason, these publications that explain some usable techniques about the subconscious mind also demonstrate that the subconscious can be used beneficially. However, like any topic, there are also publications that contaminate a lot of information in the world of personal growth, and it has recently increased.

Unrealistic promises, passive phrases, and exaggerated claims can also make people disillusioned. Publications like “Getting Rich in 10 Steps”, “Curing Diseases in 1 Day”, “Think and Immediately Get What You Want” are empty and unscientific, but their titles attract attention and distort the subject, pushing many people into action. It leads to a loss of self-confidence and negative consequences. What matters is that all the work done to create an ethical and happy individual and society is valuable when principles and ethical rules are observed. Positive use of subconscious studies that serve this purpose will undoubtedly yield positive results. Therefore, subliminal messages can be used positively, and if used for personal and social well-being, they help create a society of healthy and happy individuals who motivate others, provide opportunities to produce new and useful things, instill respect, love, unity, and togetherness in social relationships, and promote such values.

Social Evaluation of Subliminal Messages

Subliminal messages are conveyed to individuals and society through repetitive advertisements that appear everywhere. The change in an individual, who is a member of society, indirectly signifies a change in society over time. Subliminal stimuli placed in advertisements and publications create new perceptions, alter cultures, and establish new cultures. Imperialist countries, with their ethnocentric outlook, seek to achieve this by creating different notions and images through films, products, and major brands to steer all world societies towards embracing their cultural values and purchasing their products and services.

To expedite and sustain this, they allocate significant budgets to subliminal messaging campaigns, ensuring that their advertisements are disseminated worldwide. Not only imperial powers but also many politicians, ideological groups, and companies within national governments strive to infiltrate and guide their people. It is evident that politicians often resort to subliminal messages for their political goals. Companies, on the other hand, explore nearly every avenue to sell their products. Hence, individuals and society are constantly exposed to subliminal messages through advertisements.

Today, advertising distribution tools have expanded. Advertisements that were previously published in magazines, newspapers, and radios are now presented to the target audience not only in these mediums but also on television channels, cinemas, public spaces, private and public transportation, shopping centers, entertainment venues, the internet, and mobile phones. It is a social reality that advertising is highly effective. Baudrillard suggests that the continuous and pervasive nature of advertising makes society a consumer society.

Conclusion and Discussion:-

If we provide a general definition for the concepts of self-awareness and unconsciousness; the conscious movement that begins with a person's first alertness in the mother's womb and continues until death is called awareness. The unconscious is a structure that exists outside of our conscious awareness and records everything moment by moment, including sounds, images, and even odors that our awareness cannot perceive.

Human behaviors and emotions are shaped based on the stored records in the unconscious. Unconscious messages that people use to shape others, groups, and even societies in line with their own will and try to disseminate more through mass media can be a threat to individuals and communities. Individuals who involuntarily expose themselves to such messages enter a process of shaping in the desired direction of the message sender. One of the most tangible examples of influencing the unconscious mind with subliminal messages used in advertising, marketing, films, cartoons, advertisements, and music is James Vicary in 1957 at the Fort Lee Cinema in New Jersey in the movie "Picnic" with the message "Eat Popcorn! Drink Coca-Cola!" This led to an increase in popcorn sales and Coca-Cola.

On the other hand, by using visual symbols, especially in the fields of advertising and marketing, in the consumer's unconscious, the feeling can be created that purchasing the advertised product or service gives them credibility. One of the most common techniques in advertising is to show the image of two different brands of a product and place it in the consumer's unconscious, making the advertised product far superior to the other.

Although people think that children are happy with uncontrolled purchases of digital games, it can create problems that children may face in the future or lead to changes in their behavior. However, people should be aware of hidden enmity and not forget that the new generation is poisoned by digital games. Subliminal messages that may have been played in games, movies, or TV series should be taken seriously, and people should be aware of this issue. Films that can be a bad example for children should be removed from children's minds. In addition, games that our ancestors used to play should be shown to children. Imported cartoons should not be given priority over our own cartoons and games for children. In this regard, necessary sensitivity should be exercised, and children should be kept away from foreign films and games as much as possible.

In this research, as we have explored so far, it becomes clear that subliminal messages have the power to influence and guide individuals and society, both for advertising purposes and for adopting ideological perspectives, as well as for economic and commercial interests. However, this influence and commanding power may vary depending on age, gender, culture, and time. Depending on our desires, needs, and beliefs, the strength and degree of subliminal messages' impact on our subconscious can differ.

Negative use of subliminal messages occurs when a specific economic and political power influences consumers and target audiences through advertising beyond the threshold of perception and contrary to their will, indirectly shaping their choices and decisions. In such cases, subliminal messages, and other advertising attempts to create awareness and influence the subconscious are harmful and dangerous for individuals and society. If positive use of subliminal messages is employed, it benefits the individual and society. Various unconscious techniques are used for personal growth and contribute to the development of self-confidence, happiness, and well-being. In this regard, subliminal messages are useful. Studies with subliminal messages that promote awareness and feelings of love, respect, unity, and cohesion in society will also be beneficial if implemented.

However, a comprehensive control mechanism and penalty system must be established for subliminal advertising, both individually and socially. It is worth noting that although subliminal messages are not visually perceptible, they are still used in various advertisements. For this reason, especially programs, series, and films that children watch should be examined, and the games they play should be monitored. To prevent children from being exposed to subliminal messages related to violence, fear, and sexual inclinations in advertisements, cartoons, and other publications, control must be exercised.

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