

IMPACT OF ADVERTISING ON CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO EATING HABITS

Dr. T. N. Murty¹, Dr V. V. Ratnaji Rao Chowdary² and R. Srinivasa Rao³

¹Director, Nimra College of Business Management, Vijayawada, A.P., India
Email: thamminaina@yahoo.com

²Associate Professor, V. S. M. College, Ramachandrapuram, A.P., India
Email: drratnaji.vsmc@gmail.com

³Assistant Professor, Sir C. R. R. College, Eluru, India
Email: rsrmba.crr@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Advertising is a form of communication used to persuade an audience (viewers, readers or listeners) to take some action with respect to products, ideas, or services. Most commonly, the desired result is to drive consumer behavior with respect to a commercial offering, although political and ideological advertising is also common. Advertising is sole of everyone's' lifestyle, and the degree of impact of adverting on children is becoming devastating day by day. Advertisements showcase the 'must haves' for a kid making them a consumer even before they have reached the age of 3. On the contrary, advertisement are educating, updating and motivating the children to learn good thing as well. Thus the objectives of this research paper are to explore both the beneficial and harmful effects of media on children's food habits, and to identify how the advertising industry can be regulated by formulating unified laws to prevent the over-exposure of children to the ad world. It is emphasizing on directing children's towards imbibing healthy food habits in them by suggesting parents to be more aware & regulating the advertisement targeted on children. Using 'On the Spot' sampling method 100 children between 5-15 yrs age group and 50 parents are interviewed with the help of interview schedule and data collected is presented in the form of pie chart. The research paper concludes that advertising severely affect the eating habits of present generation children. The role of parents and legal system plays crucial role in preventing the anti-health ads influencing the children's eating habits.

INTRODUCTION

The advertising world is getting bigger each day, every minute and every second of the day, people are finding creative writers or designers to showcase their products in a very unique way to the final consumers to make a lasting impression on the people. The markets all over the globe are huge and it sometimes nearly becomes difficult to help recognize a genuine product, today companies are fighting to create their brand space in the markets which are so consumed and flooded by extra ordinary products, their features, their uses and of course the attractive pricing. But manufacturers often fail to note the effects of advertising on children who are stuck to television almost all the time when their parents are not around. Advertising does have good effects too, but the most prominent ones are the negative effects, which can have emotional, psychological effect on the minds of younger children in the

longer run. The competitive business world has left no space, which we can call decent and humble for younger children.

Positive Effects of Advertisements on Children

- Advertising makes the kids aware of the new products available in the market. It increases their knowledge about the latest innovations, in the field of technology as well as otherwise.
- Convincing ads, which center around healthy food products, can help improve the diet of a child, if they are attractive enough.

Negative Effects of Advertisements on Children

- Advertisements encourage the children to persuade their parents to purchase the products shown in the commercials, whether useful or not. The little ones tend to get adamant, if they are not bought the product.
- Children often tend to misinterpret the messages conveyed in commercials. They overlook the positive side and concentrate more on the negatives.
- Many advertisements in the present times include dangerous stunts, which can be performed only by experts. Even though the commercials broadcast the statutory warnings with the ad, the kids often try to imitate the stunts at home, with fatal results.
- The flashy advertisements broadcast in television generate impulse shopping in children.
- Children, after watching the glitter of commercials, often lose the ability to live a life without materialistic joy.
- The kids usually get more attracted towards the costly branded products, such as jeans and accessories. They disregard the inexpensive, but useful, ones that are not shown in the commercials.
- Advertisements have an indirect effect on the behavior of children. They might develop temper tantrums, when deprived of the latest toys and clothes that are shown in the commercials.
- The personal preferences in clothing, toys, food and luxurious of children are altered by the advertisements, to a great extent.
- Junk foods, such as pizzas, burgers and soft drinks, are heavily promoted during children's TV viewing time. This develops a craving for fatty, sugary and fast foods in kids, thereby affecting their health adversely.

METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has undertaken with the following objectives:

- To examine the opinion of parents regarding the impact of advertisements on children's eating habits.

- To study the reasons behind the purchase grant of children's demands.
- To know opinion of parents for regulating the TV Ads.
- To analyze the type of TV programs seen by children.
- To make appropriate suggestions to regulate the impact of Advertisements on children and to create healthy environment to the children in relation to advertisements.

Research Design

With the help of advertisements, companies are attracting the so called new segment in the market. i.e. children segment. This deals with various studies about the nature of the children, their likes and dislikes, parent's role in the decision making & the influence of advertising on the buying habits seen by the kids. The data collection was done using on the spot sampling in the form of personal interview. The researcher used various secondary sources for gathering data related to the research report.

Primary Data

Primary data is collected from the respondents with the help of interview schedule.

Secondary Data

The secondary data is collected from books, journals, dailies, thesis and prevision research reports on the related issues. Apart from the secondary data is also collected from internet for getting the data about the various statutory rules and regulations on advertising. The data is also collected from the websites of food chains like McDonalds, Pizza hut, Dominos...etc.

DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

Parents when asked about the impact of advertisements on 'Eating habits' of children, 79% parents responded that the impact is negative and only 21% responded that the impact is positive. This is mainly due to those advertisements, which motivate the children to consume healthy food like milk, Egg, and health drinks.

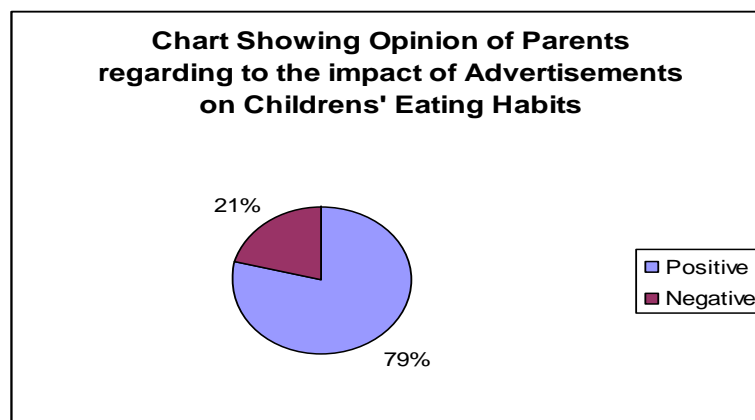


Chart- 1

About 60% parents responded that their children aggressively demand some food item and dominate the purchase decision due to its advertisement on TV, remaining 40% Opined that can't say.

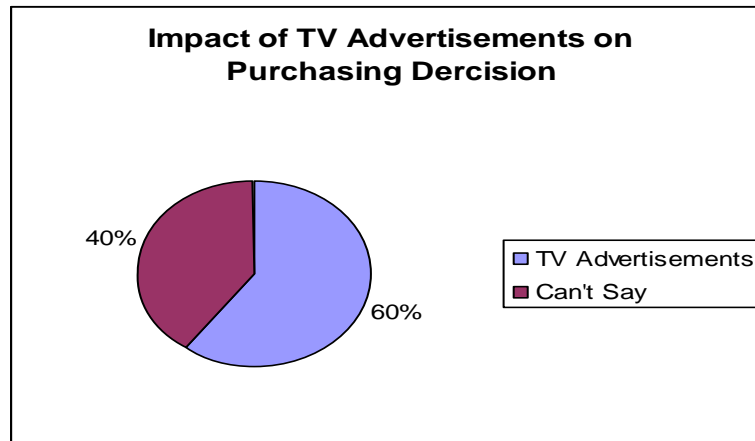


Chart- 2

Parents when asked about the circumstances in which they grant the purchase demands of children initiated from advertisements, 40% responded that they allow the purchase because the product is useful and needed, 28% allow as the product is affordable, 19% allow as there is some innovative content, 7% parents allow because owning product is status symbol and 10% parents allowed the purchase for no specific reason, but just to get rid of the demand of the children and irritation causing out of it.

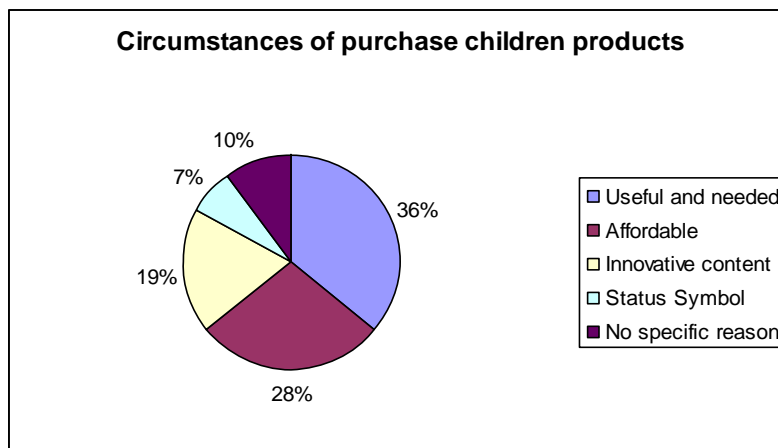


Chart- 3

Nearly 92 % of the parents surveyed feel that there is need for regulation as far as food related Advertisements are concerned. Of these about 66% say that, either the advertisements of unhealthy food products should be banned or the Ad Message should be regulated by including the warning against excess consumption. 12% parents say that all the food Ads targeting children should be totally banned and about 22% say that the use of children in food advertisements should be banned, as when children themselves advocate such products, it becomes difficult for the parents to convince their kids for not eating.

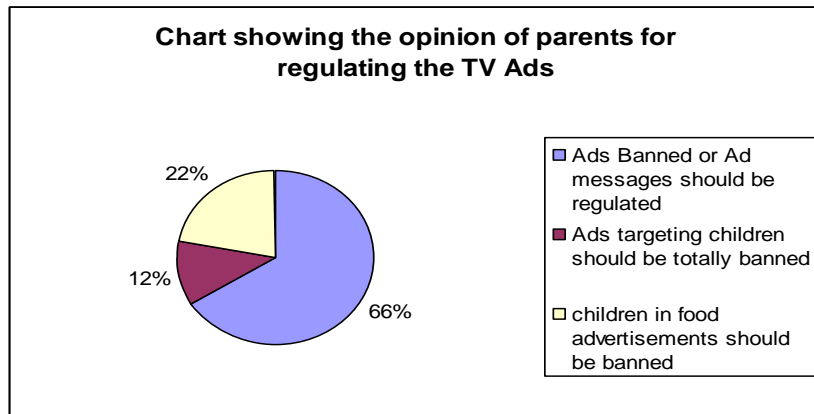


Chart- 4

Around 80% of children watch TV while eating which may affect their food intake.

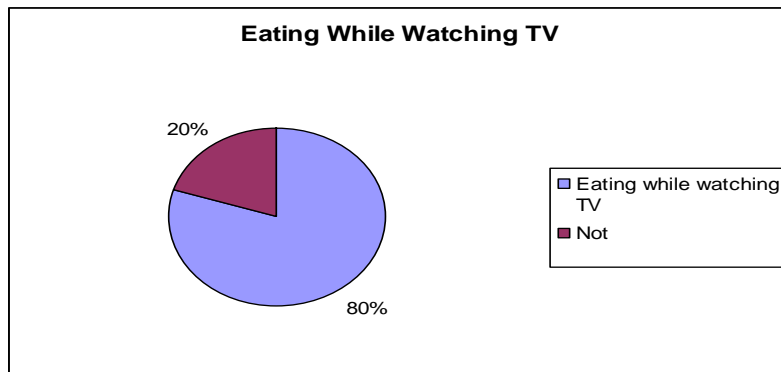


Chart- 5

Children when asked about the type of program they generally watch on television around 75% of the children watch cartoon channels, 56% watch movies, 16% watch serials and especially children reality shows, and only 4% see advertisements. The ads which are shown on cartoon Channel are invariably seen by the children and thus impact children psychology.

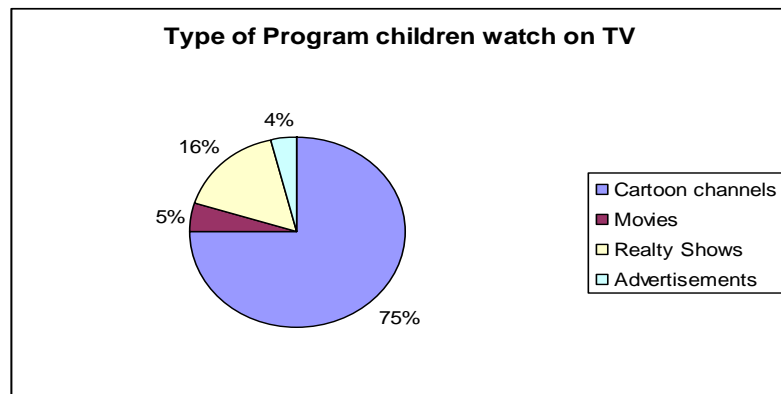


Chart- 6

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- It is found that majority of parents opined that there is a definite impact of Ads on eating habits of children.
- It is found that majority of children influenced by TV advertisements.
- It is found that majority of parents purchased children's' products which are needed and useful.
- It is found that majority of parents opined that ads should be banned and regulate relating to the children food items.
- It is found that generally children are watching TVs while eating.
- It is found that Children prefer to watch cartoon channels.
- It is found that In India, there are no specific advertising laws that relate to children and food related advertisements in particular.

SUGGESTIONS TO REGULATE THE IMPACT OF ADS ON CHILDREN EATING HABITS

- It is suggested that Parents may be educated and they educate their children about advantages of eating healthy and disadvantages of unhealthy food.
- It is suggested that Government may insist on companies to print statutory warnings on junk food & carbonated drinks like tobacco products.
- It is suggested that Government may develop advertisement laws.
- It is suggested that Government may also take care while formation of rules and regulations in advertisements taking.
- It is suggested that any food ADs should be scrutinized with regards to the claims they are making and the food ingredients should meet some standards laid down by recognized organization like WHO.
- It is suggested that TVs should be poses a limit on advertising time.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The present study has aimed to know the existing Ad Media on Children Eating Habits in the Society. There is a scope to study in Service Sector and also manufacturing sector and other means of media like print, direct and other media.

SOCIAL RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The Society comprises of the farmers, peasants, workers, agro based industries, management, Government and general public. The present study is of much relevance to urban area by using modern Ad media.

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