

# The impact of television advertisements on children behavior marketing essay



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## **Abstract**

Many parents believe that contemporary Television advertisements are changing the behavior of their children. Children demand more of the products whose advertisements they like. According to them, TV ads have a lot of impact on children who may resort to blackmailing and nagging their parents to purchase the advertised products. Whereas a few parents opine that TV ads are a source of knowledge to them. But no one can deny its importance as a factor that drives their product choice. The present study strives to find out whether children love watching television so much that they prefer it over social interaction, physical and developmental activities or they just use it as a leisure activity. TV ads also educate the children regarding many issues. It can also help in inculcation good habits and civic sense in them. This aspect cannot be left unseen. Today's interactive television is a huge ocean of knowledge to which the older generation was deprived. This study is an attempt to know which side of the coin is more powerful. Is TV advertisement a source of nuisance among our children or is it trying to make them better citizens of tomorrow?

## **Introduction**

Today, children are less innocent flowers and rather more practiced consumers with detailed knowledge of various products and brands available in the market. An average British child between eight and 13 is exposed to 22, 000 television commercials a year - 300, 000 if you include radio, television, print ads, billboards and the Internet. This places British youth third in the ranks of media-exposed kids in the world - after the US and Australia. (Martin Lindstrom, 2003) Today even in India, Television has come

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up in a huge way and advertising is a huge multimillion-dollar industry that has an enormous impact on the development of a child (Clay, 2000). Parents believe that there is change in the behavior of children when they watch television ads. Television ads sometimes have a negative impact on children since whenever they come across an advertisement, they demand to purchase the advertised product. Refusal of such requests often results in conflict. They think that children need some kind of protection from advertisements. (Sullivan, 2005) Television advertising offers product and brand-related ideas and information to children that results in purchase request to parents (Sullivan, 2005). This issue- to what extent television advertisements is effective in defining and changing the buying behavior of children-is worth investigating, and has motivated us to undertake this study. Indian marketers are increasingly targeting children because they find children are the only market segment that do not change their preferences rapidly and are easy to influence through advertisements.

## **Literature Review**

Many earlier researches have concluded that children participation in family purchase decision is increasing and television advertisements are playing important role in defining their product choice and buying behavior pattern.

Television advertisements are changing eating habits of children. Of all the product categories children like the advertisements of chocolates and snacks and they demand more of these products. Advertising food category brands is likely to increase the desire for the product among the children. Thus, the food category would appear to be the most effective level for any public

policy intervention. To make children aware of the health hazards consumer  
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educational campaigns and product labeling may also be used. (M. Mittal, 2010)

Galst and White (1976) in their studies attempted to measure the efficacy of television advertising in shaping the purchase-related behavior of children. They exposed children to food advertising in an experimental situation and then observed the effectiveness of food advertisements in influencing selection of products and brands in a natural situation (while shopping with their mothers).

In a similar study Reeves and Atkin (1979) also observed children's behavior while shopping, but the children were exposed immediately prior to the shopping trip, to television advertising in general and not only to food advertising. All of them observed a strong correlation between 'purchase influence attempts' with total number of hours of commercial television watched per week.

Buijzen and Valkenburg (2003) found that television commercials lead to increase in number of requests for advertised products which also increases number of product denials because parents cannot honor all requests made by their children. This makes the child unhappy. They observed a direct relationship between unhappiness and exposure to commercials. This may also be because when a child watches an advertisement, he compares his situation with the idealized world in the commercials and the gap between the two makes him unhappy.

Similarly, Hansen et al. (2005) found that television advertisements targeted at children force them to nag their parents due to the increase in desire in <https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-of-television-advertisements-on-children-behavior-marketing-essay/>

them to acquire the advertised product, thereby influencing the family buying decisions. Due to the constant exposure of children to television advertisements, they are able to differentiate between good and bad products and are in the situation to convince their parents easily to purchase the product they desire. The research study points that parents have agreed to the fact that children play a very imperative role in influencing decisions of the family, sometimes parents even seek their children's advice. Many parents consult their children when they want to purchase computers or mobile phones.

The value of the study undertaken by Margaret and Andrea (2008) has been to adopt a different research direction to the traditional approach in the literature, by exploring what advertising means to children, as opposed to the long-established tradition of asking "What does advertising do to children?" The children in the study very much enjoyed advertising, they frequently found it entertaining and they would also use it for their non-commercial information.

Kara Chan (2008) concluded that understanding of brands is weak among rural children consumers. A managerial implication is that brand/image advertising will work better among urban children than among rural children. Marketers targeting at rural children should employ direct sales appeal rather than lifestyles or image appeals. As rural children put more trust in brands than urban children, marketers should consider exploring the underdeveloped rural children's market. It is not known if trust in brands is positively related with brand loyalty for rural Chinese children.

## **The Indian Context**

Television viewing tops the list of preferred activities among Indian children. A survey by AC Nielson also showed that on an average an Indian child watches TV for about three hours on weekdays and 3.7 hours on weekends and the time spent in front of television increases with age (The Child, Branded, 2004). Television plays an important role in influencing purchase decision of children in India. A study done by Media Consumer Insights division of communications services major Group M which covered about 700 respondents in 13 countries revealed that Television advertising influences the purchase decision of the Indian children the most with 77% of the respondents indicating television advertising as key influencer driving children's purchase decision (TV Ads Influence Kids Most, 2003). Children are found to be an important audience who watch television and influence family purchase decisions and so marketers are now targeting them. Television commercials lead to frequent demand for the advertised product and many of the parents succumb to the demands of children. Many parents agree that children play an important role in family's buying decisions.

## **Research Methodology**

An empirical research has been undertaken in order to achieve the following objectives.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

To study the manner in which children spend their spare time.

To analyze the influence that they get from watching the ads.

To study whether children remember the ad content.

To evaluate the role played by children in family purchase decisions.

To study whether ads create awareness about social issues.

## **Tools of Data Collection and Analysis**

The study employs primary data collected by communicating with the parents with the help of a structured questionnaire. Before undertaking the survey, pilot survey was undertaken with 30 parents. Their views were incorporated in the final questionnaire.

The survey has been carried out in Navi Mumbai during July-August 2010.

The study employed non-probabilistic quota sampling. In the sample size of 110, 55 fathers and 55 mothers were surveyed. The analysis of data was carried out using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

A closed-ended Questionnaire was used for the purpose of data collection.

The parental perceptions of various issues selected for the studies were collected on a 5-point Likert scale (5-strongly agree; 1-strongly disagree).

## **Findings and Interpretations**

### **Children watch TV during spare time.**

#### **Table 1**

Frequency

Percent

Disagree

2

1. 8

Neutral

4

3. 6

**Agree**

**80**

**72. 7**

**Strongly Agree**

**24**

**21. 8**

Total

110

100. 0

94% of the parents agreed that their children watch TV in their spare time.

**Children prefer watching TV to playing with friends.**

**Table 2**

Frequency



Percent

**Strongly disagree**

**16**

**14.5**

**Disagree**

**57**

**51.8**

Neutral

13

11.8

Agree

18

16.4

Strongly Agree

6

5.5

Total

110

100.0

66% of the parents disagreed to the fact that their children preferred to watch TV to playing with friends.

## **Children have a favourite channel which they watch daily.**

### **Table 3**

Frequency

Percent

Disagree

10

9. 1

**Agree**

**64**

**58. 2**

**Strongly Agree**

**36**

**32. 7**

Total

110

100. 0

91% of the parents agreed that children do have a favourite channel which they prefer to watch.

## **Children enjoy watching commercials.**

### **Table 4**

Frequency

Percent

Strongly disagree

4

3. 6

Disagree

27

24. 5

Neutral

32

29. 1

**Agree**

**43**

**39. 1**

**Strongly Agree**

**4**

**3. 6**

Total

110

100. 0

42% children enjoy watching commercials.

**Children imitate the actions performed by the actors in commercials.**

**Table 5**

Frequency

Percent

Strongly disagree

4

3. 6

Disagree

27

24. 5

Neutral

32

29. 1

**Agree**

**43**

**39. 1**

**Strongly Agree**

**4**

**3. 6**

Total

110

100. 0

42% of the children, that too of the ages between 5 to 9 imitate the actions performed in the commercials.

**Children memorize most jingles and songs.**

**Table 6**

Frequency

Percent

Strongly disagree

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18

16. 4

Disagree

15

13. 6

Neutral

23

20. 9

**Agree**

**46**

**41. 8**

**Strongly Agree**

**8**

**7. 3**

Total

110

100. 0

49% of children can sing most jingles and songs.

## **Children demand advertised products.**

### **Table 7**

Frequency

Percent

Disagree

9

8. 2

Neutral

4

3. 6

**Agree**

**66**

**60. 0**

**Strongly Agree**

**31**

**28. 2**

Total

110

100. 0

88% of the parents agreed that their children demand for the advertised products. (children of all ages)

## **Children trouble their parents if they don't buy demanded products.**

### **Table 8**

Frequency

Percent

Strongly disagree

4

3. 6

Disagree

15

13. 6

**Agree**

**82**

**74. 5**

**Strongly Agree**

**9**

**8. 2**

Total



110

100.0

82% of the parents agreed that their children force them to buy the products demanded.

## **Parents purchase the products demanded by their children.**

### **Table 9**

Frequency

Percent

Strongly disagree

4

3.6

Disagree

46

41.8

Neutral

17

15.5

Agree

39

35. 5

Strongly Agree

4

3. 6

Total

110

100. 0

39% of the parents agreed that they buy the products demanded by their children, means its clear that maximum parents do not buy the products demanded by their children.

### **Few advertisements create awareness among children regarding some recent issues.**

#### **Table 10**

Frequency

Percent

Strongly disagree

2

1. 8

Disagree

25

22.7

Neutral

22

20.0

**Agree**

**57**

**51.8**

**Strongly Agree**

**2**

**1.8**

Total

110

100.0

53% of the parents agree to the fact that ads create awareness.

**Ads contribute in developing healthy habits among children.**

**Table 11**

Frequency

Percent

Disagree

17

15.5

Neutral

25

22.7

**Agree**

**60**

**54.5**

**Strongly Agree**

**8**

**7.3**

Total

110

100.0

62% of the parents agreed that ads contribute in developing healthy habits among children.

## **Ads help in inculcating civic sense in children.**

### **Table 12**

Frequency

Percent

Disagree

6

5. 5

Neutral

19

17. 3

**Agree**

**72**

**65. 5**

**Strongly Agree**

**13**

**11. 8**

Total

110

100. 0

77% parents agreed that ads do help in developing a civic sense in children.

## **Parents do take childrens' advice before buying a product which they may use.**

### **Table 13**

Frequency

Percent

Strongly disagree

4

3. 6

Disagree

15

13. 6

Neutral

27

24. 5

**Agree**

**56**

**50.9**

**Strongly Agree**

**8**

**7.3**

Total

110

100.0

58% of the parents agreed that they do consult their children before making a purchase.

**Children should not watch TV at all.**

**Table 14**

Frequency

Percent

**Strongly disagree**

**57**

**51.8**

**Disagree**

**44**

**40.0**

Neutral

3

2.7

Strongly Agree

6

5.5

Total

110

100.0

91% of the parents disagreed to this statement.

**Relationship between the age of the children and the Ad elements that they like.**

**Table 15**

AdElements

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Total

Animations

Cartoon Characters

Celebrities

Fun Element

Catchy Music

Child Actors

Age

5-9

31

15

0

2

2

6

56

10-14

17

6

2

6

2

0

33

15-20

0

0

2

3

16

0

21

Total

48

21

4

11

20

6

110

Children between the age of 5 to 14 enjoy watching animations and cartoon characters whereas children between the age of 15 to 20 like the catchy music element in the ads.

## **Conclusion**

It is a fact that children spend their spare time watching TV. However, they also enjoy playing and interacting with friends. Hence, TV can no longer be typecasted as an “ Idiot Box” Most of the children have their favourite channel. And with the advent of the interactive TV by various companies like Reliance, Tata, etc, it is becoming a source for mass education and awareness.

Children of almost all ages demand for advertised products, however only few children trouble their parents to buy them. Parents do not always purchase the products demanded by the children. The Ad elements which attract the audiences differ from age to age, hence proper planning of the element should be done depending upon the target market. TV Ads can help

in social learning in children from early age, help in inculcating healthy habits in them and to some extent also help to develop civic sense in them. However, this is just the beginning of the era, these attempts still have to go a long way. All parents opined that TV watching is not at all bad for children as long as they are watching appropriate channels and their TV hours are rationed.

### **Marketing suggestions**

For products targeting to kids below the age of 11, advertisers must use more of creative animations or cartoon characters.

For instant triggering of the demand, companies should give variety of gifts like doll accessories, toys, cars, game, tattoos, etc, it works instantly with children.

In order to gain the attention of the early teens, the advertisers must focus on the catchy music or some sort of a fun or a witty element in the Ad.

Advertisers can have smart children as models for even heavy products like white or brown goods in order to grab the attention of the tiny decision makers of the homes.

More of social awareness campaigns must be done by the companies to build their brands and catchy slogans must be used so as to have brand awareness as well as its recall.

More of advertises carrying a social message or trying to inculcate a good habit should be released; this would lead to a win-win situation for both the parties.