

IMPACT OF TELEVISION ADVERTISING ON CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Advertising has become so integral part of human being and we cannot imagine any event, newspaper, magazine, TV serial, Cinema etc. without advertising. Advertising is a one of the important marketing tool as well as powerful communication medium. The basic objective of any advertisement is to increase sales, directly or indirectly by trying to make tall claims about product performance. The degree of impact of advertising on adults may be problematic but the outcome is devastating for children. Advertisers of Kids Products earlier used to appeal to the parents but now they appeal directly to children -- who do not have the emotional or cognitive tools to evaluate what's being sold to them. Television is no more just a source of entertainment for children. They show case they must have for a kid making them a consumer even before they have reached the age of 3. So enough precautions have to be taken up at the time of advertising for children. We investigate children's understanding of TV advertising that is their ability to distinguish between TV programs and commercials. The sample consists of 87 children, ranging from 4 to 14 years old were covered for this study. It is found from the study that Children are not only influencing their parents to buy their products but also to other product categories.

KEY WORDS

Advertising appeal, Communication medium, Tall claims, Precautions

INTRODUCTION

As per the child rights charter, a universal definition of "child" includes all persons under the age of 18. 40% of India's population is below the age of 18 years which at 400 million is the world's largest child population. And the truly old constitute less than 10 per cent of the total population. This is despite the fact that India has significantly increased its life expectancy, because the demographic bulge in the country is very definitely in the younger age group. So Advertisers are taking advantage of this by targeting on this age group.

Kids can actually recall and even enact commercials frame by frame with music track as well. A commercial is simultaneously interesting to fathers and daughters and mothers and sons. Because today's kid is neither a scaled-down version of an adult nor the spitting image of you 25 years ago but an individual who has his/her own personality, preferences and attitudes. We all are familiar with 'pester power', kids pestering their parents for collectibles. Nowadays kids are influencing a host of buying decisions and not necessarily for products meant for them. So enough precautions have to be taken by the marketers when their products target the kids. The following are some of the precautions have to be taken when the advertisements are directed to the children:

- (i) Children do not differentiate the advertisement and reality, so while preparing the advertisement for children, a marketer has to take into account of the inexperience of the children
- (ii) Parents should be advised to supervise whenever a product or an activity involves a safety risk.
- (iii) If a product is unsuitable to the children it should not be advertised in a kids oriented media.
- (iv) Children should not be portrayed in unsafe situations or engaging in actions harmful to themselves or others.
- (v) Advertisement should not portray as the children are pestering their parents because it will encourage the children to compel their parents for the products.
- (vi) There should not be any direct appeal to the children in the advertisement.

When there is a television commercial where the target audience is, say, an SEC A male between the age of 25 and 34, we cannot afford to ignore the fact that kids between 8 and 12 years are going to watch the commercial and offer unsolicited opinion about the commercial. This research has been conducted in Tamil Nadu to find out the impact of Television commercials on children.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Estimates suggest that children spend an average of 4 hours per day watching television and are exposed to as many as 25,000 commercials in a single year (Federal Communications Commission, 2003; Kunkel, 2001). Parents are powerless towards the influence of advertising on their children; they cannot do anything to ward off the assumed manipulation of needs. (Reinhold Bergler 1999). As has been shown several times in the literature (e.g. Butter et al.1981; Donohue, Henke, and Donohue 1980; Macklin 1983 and 1987; Robertson and Rossiter 1974; Stephens and Stutts 1982), some children are able to distinguish between programs and commercials and are aware of the intent of TV advertising, whereas others are not. There is a general concern of parents and other societal actors, that TV advertising may have a negative, intended or unintended, influence on children (Burr and Burr 1977; Goldberg 1990; Goldberg and Gom 1978; Grossbart and Crosby 1984).



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Specifically, TV advertising may lead a child to select material objects over more socially oriented alternatives, potentially increase parent-child conflict and may lead to a more disappointed, unhappier child (Goldberg and Gom 1978).

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the impact of Television advertisement on Children
2. To find out the media preference of Children
3. To find out extent to which children affect the buying decisions of parents

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary data has been collected for the research study in Tamilnadu, India. The research design involves descriptive style. Children of 4- 14 age groups have been included in the research survey. The sample size of 87 children was surveyed and the sampling technique used was convenience sampling. The research instrument used was questionnaire and it comprises both open and close-ended questions. Personal interview has been conducted among the target respondents. Percentage analysis was used to analyse the data.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table No: 1. AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

S.No	Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 8	16	18.4
2	8-11	40	46
3	12-14	31	35.6
	Total	87	100

Source: Primary Data

From the above table it can be inferred that most of the respondents (46%) belong to the age group of 9-12 and 36% of the respondents belong to the age group of 12-14 and the rest 18% of the respondents are below 8.

Table No: 2. GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS

S.No	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	48	55.17
2.	Female	39	44.82
	Total	87	100

Source: Primary Data

From the above table it can be observed that 55% of the respondents are male and the rest 45% of the respondents are female children.

Table No: 3. MEDIA PREFERENCE AMONG CHILDREN

S.No	Preference	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1,	TV	70	80.45
2.	Radio	04	4.59
3.	Newspaper/Magazine	10	11.49
4.	Internet	01	1.149
5.	Outdoor	02	2.29
	Total	87	100

Source: Primary Data

It can be inferred from the above table that majority of the respondents (80%) prefer TV when compared to other media. About 12% of the respondents prefer Print media while rest of the media such as Radio, Outdoor and Internet are less popular among children.

Table No: 4. PREFERRED PRODUCT CATEGORY

S.No	Preference	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Food Items	27	31.03
2.	Oral/Personal care	10	11.49
3.	Soft drink	23	26.43
4.	Fashion / Dress	27	31.03
	Total	87	100

Source: Primary Data

It is found from the above table that Food items and Fashion/Dress are the equally liked product categories in advertisement by children with 31% each. 26% of the children prefer soft drink advertisement whereas only 11% of them like Oral/Personal care advertisement.

Table No: 5 MEDIA HABITS OF CHILDREN

Category Media	Daily	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Total
TV	75(86.2%)	08(9.2%)	03(3.5%)	01(1.1%)	87(100)
Newspaper/Magazine	13(14.9%)	16(18.4%)	25(28.8%)	33(37.9%)	87(100)
Radio	13(15%)	23(26.4%)	26(29.9%)	25(28.7%)	87(100)
Internet	0(0%)	08(9.2%)	08(9.2%)	71(81.6%)	87(100)
Outdoor	30(34.5%)	17(19.5%)	11(12.6%)	29(33.4%)	87(100)

Source: Primary Data

It can be inferred from the above table that 86% of the respondents view TV daily and 35% of the respondents come across outdoor media daily. 15% of the respondents hear Radio and read Newspapers/Magazines daily; where as 82% of the respondents are never exposed to Internet.

Table No: 6 PREFERENCES FOR ADVERTISEMENT OR PROGRAMME/NEWS

S.No	Preference	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Advertisement	37	42.52
2.	Programme	50	57.47
	Total	87	100

Source: Primary Data

It can be inferred from the above table that 57% of the respondents like to watch Programmes/News in TV where as 43% of the respondents like to see advertisements.

Table No: 7. PARENTS SEEKING OPINION FROM THE CHILDREN IN PURCHASE DECISION

S.No	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Seek	54	62
2.	Do Not Seek	33	38
	Total	87	100

Source: Primary Data

It can be inferred from the above table that 62% of the respondents are asked to give opinion by their parents in buying decisions and 38% of the respondents are not considered in buying decisions.

Table No: 8 ACCEPTANCE OF PARENTS TO THEIR CHILDREN'S REQUEST

S.No	Acceptance	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Accept	52	59.8

2.	Do not Accept	35	40.2
	Total	87	100

Source: Primary Data

It is inferred from the above table that 60% of the respondents' requests are accepted by their parents and 40% of the respondents' request are turned down.

Table No: 9. INFLUENCES OF ADVERTISEMENT ON CHILDREN FOR REQUESTING THE PRODUCT

S.No	Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Always	18	20.7
2.	Some times	50	57.4
3.	Not at all	19	21.8
	Total	87	100

Source: Primary Data

It can be inferred from the above table, 21% of the respondents' request is always based on advertisements and 57% of the respondents' request is sometimes based on advertisement. And 22% of the respondents do not consider advertisement for their request.

Table No: 10. CHILDREN'S PESTER POWER FOR A PRODUCT / BRAND BASED ON ADVERTISEMENT.

S.No	Pestering	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Pester	52	59.8
2.	Do Not Pester	35	40.2
	Total	87	100

Source: Primary Data

It is observed from the above table that 60% of the respondents have insisted their parents for purchase of particular brand/Product after seeing the advertisement.

FINDINGS

- It has been found out that most of the respondents prefer TV as most preferred media which they watch it daily.
- Advertisements related to Food items and Fashion/Dress are the most preferred among the children.
- Significant number of respondents watch or TV to see advertisement in it.
- Most of the respondents are asked to give opinion by their parents in buying decisions.
- Only 40% of the respondents' parents do not accept their children's request for buying a product/brand.
- And only 20% of the respondents' request of product/brand which is not at all based on advertisement.
- Children below 8 consider advertisement as reality.

CONCLUSION

As advertisements have good impact on the children, advertisers can make use of it in a positive way. Children are not only influencing their parents to buy their products but also to other product categories. Advertisers can develop a campaign which can capture the attention of children. They prefer advertisements which involve cartoons, toys, graphics, and jingles/Music. So, the advertisers can ensure these elements in their advertisements. Children are able to remember and recall many of the advertisements they see. So advertisements have great impact on children. They like to possess/consume products which are relevant to them and also to their parents. Advertisers may use this opportunity for their favour but at the same time ensure that they are not misleading children since children are not able to differentiate what is real and unreal.

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