



ISSN: 0975-833X

RESEARCH ARTICLE

INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENT IN THE FOOD HABITS AMONG
THE CHILDREN IN KERALA

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 28th May, 2015
Received in revised form
15th June, 2015
Accepted 02nd July, 2015
Published online 31st August, 2015

Key words:

Niche market,
Eating habits,
Junk foods,
Targeted ads,
Need creation.

ABSTRACT

Advertising is a form of marketing communication used to persuade an audience to take or continue some action, usually with respect to a commercial offering, or political or ideological support. Advertising are usually paid for by sponsors and viewed via various media. Television is the most powerful media among them. Commercial ads often seek to create a need in the minds of people and to generate increased consumption. Another significant trend regarding future of advertising is the growing importance of the niche market using targeted ads. Advertisement of Food products mean for children is example of niche market advertising. It makes a child, a consumer even before the age of 5. The new generation of children are spending most of their time in front of television and their eating habits are somehow influenced with the advertisements. This research paper makes an attempt to find out the level of influence of television advertisement on the eating habits of children in Kerala. This study is based on the response of 150 parents who have child in between 3-10 years, in Malappuram and Calicut districts in Kerala. The data is collected with the help of an interview schedule. Data is analyzed with the help of simple percentage and presented in bar and pie diagrams. This paper concludes that TV ads severely affecting the eating habits of children and the government has to take necessary regulations to control the unrealistic offers and misleading acts in the ads at least for children based food products.

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Citation: Shabeer, 2015. "Influence of television advertisement in the food habits among the Children in Kerala", *International Journal of Current Research*, 7, (8), 19779-19781.

INTRODUCTION

Advertising as per Collins English Dictionary online, is a form of marketing communication used to persuade an audience to take or continue some action, usually with respect to a commercial offering, or political or ideological support. Advertising gives information in such a way that it creates interest and also demand for the goods among the consumers. Commercial advertisers of food products often try to generate increased consumption for their products or services. Advertising is at the front of delivering the proper message to customers and prospective customers. The purpose of advertising is to convince customers that a company's services or products are the best, enhance the image of the company, point out and create a need for products or services, demonstrate new uses for established products, announce new products and programs, reinforce the salespeople's individual messages, draw customers to the business, and to hold existing customers. Virtually any medium can be used for advertising. In 2014, a study conducted over 7 years found that the

television commercial is still the most effective mass-market advertising format. The study's findings stated that for every £1 (GBP) invested in TV advertising, it returned £1.79. It shows that Television is the most powerful and most commonly used medium in advertising. Another significant trend regarding future of advertising is the growing importance of the niche market using niche or targeted ads. Advertisement of Food products mean for children is example of niche market advertising. Advertisements of food products mean for kids are very popular in television. It occupies a huge amount of time in the break of all leading programmers. It is easy for the manufactures to attract the minds of children towards a particular product. But unfortunately they often fail to note the effects of advertisement on children who are stuck in front of the television almost all the free time. 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. They were only concerned about their profit rather than the quality of the product and their social commitment.

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Positive Effects of Advertisements on Children

- Advertising educates the children about the various uses of the goods, and also instruments them how to use it.
- Advertising makes purchasing easy as it gives the information regarding where to get it and at what price.
- Advertisement makes the children brand consciousness and protect against duplicate items.
- Convincing ads, which center on healthy food products, can help to improve the diet of a child, if they are attractive enough.

Negative Effects of Advertisements on Children

- Children may be attracted to consume junk foods thereby affecting their health adversely.
- Children will be more attracted with the acts rather than the quality of the product.
- Children will stubborn to purchase the product shown in the ads.
- Children usually get more attracted towards the costly branded products.
- Ads have an indirect effect on the behavior of children.
- Children often try to imitate the stunts performed in the ads, leads with fatal results.
- The normal and natural food habits of children may be altered by the advertisements. This may develops a craving for fatty, sugary and fast foods in kids, thereby affecting their health adversely.

Commonly Used Children Based Junk Food Categories

- Noodles
- Pizzas
- Burgers
- Potato chips
- Chocolates
- Soft drinks
- Biscuits

Methodology and Objectives of the Study

Relevance of the study

In the present fast life, no one have the time to cook their food. Everyone is looking for the junk foods for to meet their food needs. This habit of parents spreads to their children also. The attractive ads performed by the celebrities shown in television media are attracting the children towards the consumption of these junk foods. The unrealistic appeal made by these ads leads the children towards bad eating habits. In India, we don't have a strict advertisement regulation in this regards. This study tries to enlighten the society towards this issue.

Objective: The study has undertaken with the following objectives:

- To find out the changes in the food habits of children with the influence of advertisements
- To find out the parents role in the decision making of purchase of food products for their children.
- To find out the reaction of children on various food product advertisements.

- To make appropriate suggestions to regulate the impact of Advertisements on children
- To create healthy environment to the children in relation to advertisements.

Research Design

The junk food marketing companies with the help of advertisements are attracting the so called new segment in the market. i.e. children segment. This study deals with the reaction of the children on various advertisements of food products, 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 for the purpose of the study was done using on the spot sampling in the form of personal interview. The study is mainly based on the primary data, and the secondary data is also used to supplement and support the primary data.

Primary Data

Primary data is collected from the respondents with the help of a structured interview schedule. A sample 150 parents who were having children in between 3-10 years, were randomly selected from Malappuram and Calicut district for the purpose of this study.

Secondary Data

The secondary data is collected from books, journals, dailies, and thesis 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 various food product companies.

For the purpose of the research, the respondents were asked to react on the following questions

How children spending their free time

- Watching TV
- Indoor play
- Outdoor play
- Sleeping
- Reading, music etc

The impact of Television advertisement on the eating habits of Children.

- Positive/ Negative

Conscious about the health impact of the junk foods on your children

- Yes/ No

Like to purchase junk foods for your children

- Yes/ No

Reason for purchasing children based food products.

- Stubbornness of children
- Good for the children
- Suits with lifestyle

- To make the children happy

Is there any need for legal regulation for the ads of children based food products in television?

- Yes/ No

If yes, what type of regulation should be implemented (Recommendations...)

Result Analysis

Parents when asked about the way their children spends their free time, 48% of respondents (72) responded that their children are spending most of their free time in front of the television. 37% are responded that the children are engages either in indoor (21%) or outdoor (16%) games. 9% are responded that the kids are spending their free time either in reading books or listening and playing music and 6% are responded that their kids loves to sleep when free.

Chart showing the free time spending of children

The study shows that, Parents when asked about the impact of advertisements on eating habits of children, 73% parents (110) responded that the impact is positive and only 27% (40) responded that the impact is negative. The data clearly states that the television advertisements are influencing the children and it has a positive impact on developing their food habits. The children like to consume the food products showing the television advertisements. Parents when asked about the consciousness of the health impact of the junk foods on the their children, 90% (135) replied "Yes" and only 10% (15) are not taking care of its health issues. The responds of the question related to the interest of parents regarding purchasing junk foods for children reveals that 84% of the parents (126) don't like to purchase junk foods for their children and only 16% (24) are thinking otherwise. Parents when asked about the reason in which they take the purchase decision of junk foods for their children, 62% of the respondents (93) responded that their children aggressively demand some food product and dominate the purchase decision due to its advertisement on television. 17% (26) responded that they allow the purchase because they think that the product is good for the health of children, 12% (18) allow as the purchase due to the suitability of the product with their lifestyle and 9% (14) feels that the product makes their children happy when purchasing it.

Chart showing the reason for purchase decision

Around 95 % (142) of the parents surveyed responded that there is need for regulation as far as food product related Advertisements are concerned. When asked about what type of regulation should implement, they were on the opinion that, the message in the advertisement should be realistic and any unrealistic offers should not be part of it. The ingredients and their nutritional facts should be well revealed in the ads itself. The presence of Celebrities should be avoided at least in the ads of children based products.

Findings

- It is found that majority of children are spending their free time watching television.

- Majority of the parents are on the opinion that television ads have definite influence on the eating habits of children
- It is found that even though majority of parents are well conscious about the health of their children and don't like to purchase junk foods for their children, compelled to purchase these items due to stubborn of children who were influenced by the television ads.
- Presence of Celebrities and their appeal have some clear impact on the demand of the children for the junk foods.
- It is found that In India, there are no specific advertising laws that regulate ads of children based junk foods.

Suggestions

- It is suggested that the parents should lead their children in various useful activities to spend their free times and to make it more productive
- The parents should shown their love towards their children by advising them the harmful impact of consuming junk foods and to follow the traditional home made food as their food habit.
- Convince the children that the celebrities performing in the ads are not giving the real information and they were paid for it.
- The government should insist the companies to print the harmful effects of junk foods and carbonated drinks.
- The government should take strict actions like banning the companies for unrealistic appeal and hiding the harmful contents.
- The government should develop strict advertisement law at least in case of children based food products.

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