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# “Let Children be Children”: The Significance of the Dynamics of Advertising in Children LIVES Area of Interest: Consumer Behavior

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**Abstract**—Advertising influences the life and patterns of a child's life. One manifestation of its influence is believed to be 'pester power'. At its simplest 'pester power' can be defined as repetitive asking/requests for a specific item or service. Research suggests that it can emerge naturally, as a result of societal influence and/or can be the after effect of a specific advertisement or advertisement campaign.

This paper seeks to link between television advertising and its influence on child psyche and family spending and also to explore the dimensions already investigated by previous researchers in India and western countries.

The broad objectives of this study is to synthesize the effect of advertisement on children, to evaluate how far the advertisement changes the buying behavior of children and to measure the role of advertisement in their decision-making.

The data will be collected through the primary and secondary sources with supplementary emphasis on primary data since the research is empirical in nature. The accent will be trying to understand the toddler group and their behaviour as consumers. The sample size of the research is 100 and the data will be collected by administering questionnaire to children (18-21 years). The sampling area will be Bangalore Urban Area. The sampling method is stratified random sampling. Cluster Analysis will be carried out to constellate the toddlers as per the behaviour reflected. Data so collected shall be analysed, interpreted and statistically tested to arrive at conclusions.

The statement of hypothesis shall be tested through use of appropriate statistical techniques. Chi square will be used. T- test will be applied to compare the responses of the samples. The research will enable to investigate the potential constellations. The constellation of consumer will enable the companies to steer potential segment customers and will help in the branding exercise of the product.

**Keywords:** Pester Power, Advertising, Constellation Consumers

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The advertising industry has targeted children as consumers for nearly three decades and the debate surrounding advertising to children has existed for nearly as long.

Currently, advertisers promote a variety of products and services specifically to and through children. However, because children do not relate to television in the same way as adults, advertisers have used a number of devices.

Marketing race to put the brand on the top of the mind, creating brand equity, maintaining the brand loyalty has extended its net to influence the children to a extent that it has lost its path and walking on the unethical grounds, leaving our children in a vulnerable conditions. Of all marketing weapons advertising has the leading impact as its exposure is more, and is the most attractive media for children. The need is to establish certain standards to restrict advertising aimed at children.

The desire to restrict advertising aimed at children is based on three concerns, first, it is believed that advertising promote superficiality and values founded in material goods and consumption. Second, children are considered inexperienced consumers and easy prey for the sophisticated persuasion of advertisers. Third, advertising influences children demand for everything from toy to snack food. These demands create an environment of child-parent conflict. Parents' finds themselves having to say no over and over again to children whose desire are piqued by effective advertising.

This paper seeks to link between television advertising and its influence on child health and family spending. Television advertising found to influence diet habit particularly in terms of tendency to buy unhealthy food. The second factor is family disturbance due child influence on family spending.

## Marketing goal and advertising tools used to attract the attention of the child

Children represent three different markets. In addition to the direct money that children spend and the money they influence, children also represent a third major market and

perhaps the most significant and that is the future market. Advertisers recognize that brand loyalties and consumer habits formed when children are young and vulnerable will be carried through to adulthood. Retailers and marketers also aware of the fact that those who switch are less likely to be loyal than those who are nurtured from childhood.

Looking at the wide market opportunities throne by this segment marketer tries all the techniques and tools that are available to pursue the children. Some of them are listed below:

#### **Entertainment**

Before four or five years old, children regard advertising as simply entertainment. The qualitative research found, children actively enjoy television advertising. It entertains them and is part of the pleasure they derive from watching television. It is also part of a shared culture with family and friends. At early age 'feel good' advertisements associate child memory with brand which will be nourished by series of advertisement messages in years to come.

#### **Bright colors, cartoon characters and celebrity endorsement**

Between four and seven, they begin to be able to distinguish advertising from programs. Younger children remain relatively unengaged by the message content but may still be persuaded by the status of its celebrity source or the intensity of the message (color, sound). Consequently advertisers may appeal to younger children through the use of bright colors, lively music and the involvement of cartoon characters or celebrities and take the advantage of the affection children feel for those characters.

#### **Witty and stylish imagery message**

The majority children have generally grasped the intention to persuade by the age of eight, while after eleven or twelve they can articulate a critical understanding of advertising.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **(Adler et al., 2004)**

The advertising sectors deliberately tones down the influence and possible adverse influence of the product they are advertising. They tend to portray an innocent aspect of daily life in their commercial and hope that this innocent aspect of life would not only attract the attention of potential customers but would also influence them.

#### **(Rice et al., 1988)**

Children have been enjoying an unmatched level of attention from marketers and marketing researchers. Young children are more influenced from the TV advertisements as compared to other age groups. And they generally believe in what advertisements have to say about the products. If the advertisements are not very complex, and it says something

new, then, likelihood of attracting children's attention would increase

#### **(Wellman, 1990)**

Children up to five years old are generally fond of hearing the same story again and again. This repeated transmission usually enhances their attention towards the ads, and in a few cases, it was found that the children tend to lose interest due to repeated transmission of the TV commercials. A direct relationship was found in the repetition of commercial and ability to attract children's attention

#### **(Barcus et al., 2004)**

The advertisers prefer to advertise their products to children due to its deep impact. In view of the children's importance of influencing purchase decisions the advertisers not only target them at home through television but also target them through advertisements in class rooms and schools stated earlier,

#### **(John, 1999)**

Children's attention towards the advertisements is highly dependent on factors, that it must be simple, and second is that it must contain something new for the children. As children start viewing TV from early childhood, then, it becomes difficult to explain them that primarily they should eat for the necessary nutrients not for just pleasure.

#### **(Roberston et. al., 1979)**

The growth stage of a child plays a role in the effect of commercials. Children do not understand what and why sales pitch is used. So, one of the major reasons for television advertising is to change the attitude and behavior of the audience. Adults while watching television advertisements understand them though a process known as cognitive filter.

#### **(Carroll, 1984)**

But, once the children reach a level of understanding advertisements through all these four processes of interpretation, they have developed mature comprehension process of interpreting advertising contents. Children below 7-8 years group don't have the ability to understand the TV commercial's cognitive development method. Egocentrism is the common trait of this age group, which means that this age group lacks the ability of perceiving another person perspective

## **3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The area of our research is to study how advertising has an impact on impressionable minds of the children & how it affects their psychology & health. Advertising comes in different forms such as television, print, radio & internet. So using such various communicating devices how the products are advertised to the so called new segment in the market. Our research project usually deals with various studies about the nature of the children, his likes & 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 in the form of questionnaire & personal interview. We had used various secondary sources for gathering data related to the research report.

**4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

For the current study the researcher will undertake the impact of advertisement on children and find out reasons and analyze the views and opinions of children regarding the effects of advertisements on them.

**5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY:**

The scope of this study is to ascertain the impact of advertisement on children and to educate the children parents about impact of advertisement on children.

**6. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

Broad objective “To know the influence of advertisement on children”

- To find out the effect of advertisement on children.
- To know the type of advertisement children prefer.
- To find out how far the advertisement changes the buying behavior of children.
- To measure the role of advertisement in their decision-making.

**7. HYPOTHESES:**

Based on the literature survey the following hypotheses are developed, and will be tested to describe the relationship among the dependent and independent variables. Hypothesis written below are null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis (HA) that will be tested to find out if there is any relationship between the variables.

H0: Type of advertisements and purchasing of a product are independent.

H1: Type of advertisements and purchasing of a product are dependent.

**8. METHODOLOGY**

This study employs quantitative research methods to examine the impact of advertisement on children

**9. DATA COLLECTION:**

- Primary data:

The data is collected by administrating questionnaire to children (18-21 years) , the research will be briefly explained to them.

- Secondary data:

Data is collected from selective sources of data like journals, websites, textbooks, company brochures, magazines, and news papers

**10. SAMPLING:**

- Sample size:

For the study 100 samples is chosen from the population in bangalore city, the questionnaire is administered for 100 samples

- Sampling type: stratified random sampling

**11. LIMITATIONS:**

- Inadequate data
- Time constraints

**12. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.**

**Testing of hypothesis**

Hypotheses formulated are:

H0: Type of advertisements and purchasing of a product are independent.

H1: Type of advertisements and purchasing of a product are dependent.

Level of Significance ( $\alpha$ ) = 5%

**SPSS OUTPUT**

Case Processing Summary						
		Cases				
		Valid		Missing		Total
		Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Type of Advertisements		100.0%	0	0.0%	100	100.0%
*Purchase Opinion						
Type of Advertisements * Purchase Opinion Cross tabulation						
Count						
		Purchase Opinion		Total		
		no	Yes			
Type of Advertisements	animated	5	22	27		
	emotional	4	17	21		
	humor	16	12	28		
	persuading ads	11	13	24		
Total		36	64	100		

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.640 <sup>a</sup>	3	.005
Likelihood Ratio	13.011	3	.005
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.56.

Table value of Chi-square for 3 d.f. at 5% Level of Significance = 7.815

**Result:** Pearson Chi-Square Value (12.640) >  $\chi^2$  table Value (7.815), H<sub>0</sub> is rejected.

**Inference:** Advertisements with endorsements create easy remembrance for the customers for the advertised brand or product as the customers associate the brand with the celebrity and can easily register the brand. Some products or brands will hold a stronger position in the mind of the customers compared to others from the same category. Position of a brand in the mind of the customer is always relative. When a brand's name is recalled before others it is called top of the mind positioning of that brand. Advertising also helps in creating Top of the Mind Awareness of a brand and aims at facilitating brand recall. The focus of this paper is to understand if TV advertisements have an impact of youth purchase decisions

### 13. FINDINGS

1. 75% of parents agreed that the child influences them while buying products.
2. In this survey all the 100 respondents watch the advertisements.
3. An average Indian child watches 14 hrs of Television each week.
4. 85% of the respondents influenced by the advertisements.
5. Maximum of the people use television as a media to watch the advertisements.
6. When asked the parents of children if their child helps them while making any shopping decision, in 88% of the cases it was found that the child used to influence the buying decision of the parents.
7. Maximum 28% of the respondents watch humour advertisements and also 21% of emotional 27% of animated and 27% of persuading ads watch by the respondents.

### 14. SUGGESTIONS

1. Children live in a world of fantasy. The companies should create innovative ethical advertisements that can influence them in the right direction.
2. The element that appeals most to kids in magazine, Internet, radio and TV

advertising is humour, but the company should design the right sort of humor.

3. The regulatory board should ensure that the advertisements targeted at children are truthful and socially responsible.
4. Marketers should see children as a future as well as a current market because brand loyalty at a young age helps in continued sales later.
5. The companies have to educate children to understand the purpose and context of marketing communications so that it helps them to develop the skills to critically interpret commercial communications in the context of their daily lives.
6. Parents should keep a watch as to the advertisements that their children watch in the television since it has been found that the parents agree to the fact that the advertisements are definitely influencing their children.
7. Parents should involve their children in their purchase decision making because today's children are up to date about the various brands available in the market. They are also a good source of information for their parents to buy a right product for their family.
8. Parents should be a guide to help their child become aware of advertising and how it affects him.
9. Parents should start discussions with their kids to learn what they think about advertising, and talk about their thoughts on the issue.

### 15. CONCLUSIONS

Advertising affects children and commercials influence children which can be seen in their constant demands for products advertised on television. There can be many negative effects of advertising on children if parents are not careful.

Although advertisements help us to become aware of the products in the market, they have their negative effects also. Children today are exposed to all types of advertisements on the various media like the television, print media and internet as well. In fact, everyone is bombarded by advertisements everywhere nowadays. Children in general are more susceptible and get easily influenced by advertisements.

Parents should teach their children of how to be critical of ads and how to become less influenced by the messages in the ads. Parents need to teach their children the importance and value of money.

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