

A STUDY ON CHILDREN BUYING BEHAVIOR TOWARDS THE IMPACT OF ADVERTISEMENTS WITH REFERENCE TO CHENNAI CITY

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Abstract

In view of the globalization and privatization of the Indian economy, the competition in the consumer markets has gone up by many folds. In this highly competitive market, business organizations are leaving no stone unturned for coming out with flying colours in the market by creating greater awareness and long-run acceptability of their brands and products. Creation of awareness mostly depends on persuasive communication with the buyers and potential buyers. And here comes the role of advertisement. This research –based article is a study on the impact of advertisements on children's buying behavior. Children have become the prime influencers on purchase decisions of their parents and other family members directly or indirectly.

Keywords: Purchase Decision, Buying, Impact, Behaviour.

Introduction

Advertising may be in the form of printed material such as magazine advertisement, pamphlets, posters and billboards, etc, it may also be radio or television advertising or even electronic advertising on the internet. Advertising also involves all forms of promotion and sponsorship. So the different vehicles for advertising a product can be categorized as print media, broadcast media, direct mail advertising media, outdoor media, electronic media, promotional advertising media and miscellaneous advertising media. Advertising is an art of persuading others to purchase what the marketer has. Advertisement is one of the major tools that the leading business firms use for persuasive communication. The effectiveness of advertising depends on the extent the advertising message is received and accepted by the target audience. It analyzes the influence of different advertisements on children, the most preferred media by children, and the extent to which children affect the buying decision of their parents. Creation of product awareness depends on persuasive communication with buyers and potential Buyers. Nowadays, marketers are trying to attract children through various advertisements as most children spend lots of time in watching the television. They also enjoy seeing advertisements and have wonderful recall capability.

Advertising as a Tool for Influencing Children's Behavior

Most children not only purchase products of their own choice but also influence the buying decision of their parents and other family members directly or indirectly. As a wide range of products and services are consumed or used by children, many companies tend to target them. This has led to markets trying to understand the buying psychology or behavior of children. The children can become the initiator or influencer in purchase of any preferred product. Markets are well aware about this concept. So, they use advertisement as a tool to influence children's behavior.

Children – the target Audience

- Advertisements targeted towards children are carefully researched and designed to maximize their impact. Effective advertising refers to informing about the right product at the right time through the right medium.
- The television medium has in fact become an attractive and important place to advertise. On an average, children spend two hours a day in watching television.
- Children between the age of ten and fifteen spend about 20 hours per week watching TV. Nowadays, marketers pay special attention to target children as they are considered by many, the most vulnerable

audience, since they are easily lured by advertisement. With their amazing recall capability, children remember the advertisements and the names of products.

- Television has become the main medium for advertisements and many companies prefer to advertise their products through this medium as it has wider audience. Most children remain glued to the television and enjoy what they see.
- The marketer tries to attract children by various means of media, especially through advertisements in the TV and Magazines; Children initially take advertisements as entertainment, and being softhearted, get attracted towards the offers made by advertisements. However, another new emerging media is World Wide Web.
- These days many children have started using the internet and browse through hundreds of websites of their own interest. Marketers have observed both children's increasing use of the internet and the ability of the internet to provide a unique communication environment.

Objective of the Study

This research work is an attempt to study the impact of advertisements on children's buying behavior. The study was carried out with the objectives which are enumerated below :

- To study the attitude of children towards advertisements.
- To know the most preferred media by children
- To know the extent to which children affect the buying decision of their parents.

Sampling Design

A total of 500 respondents (children) from a few selected cities in Chennai were chosen for the survey. The cities included Washermenpet, Anna Nagar, Adyar, Thiruvannamiyur, and Tambaram. The sample constituted 500 school going children below 15 years (100n from each city) and was drawn the convenience sampling method.

Data Collection

The primary data was collected through questionnaires and partially through interviews. A multiple choice questionnaire was designed for this purpose. The questionnaires were filled by students in the presence of their teachers to ensure that the data collected was authentic.

Analysis and Interpretation

Children get product related information from various media sources. Table 1 shows 52% children get their information through television advertisements 18% from hoardings and displays at shops, and another 19% from newspapers and magazines. Television advertisements as per the above data, is their main source. As an auditory and visual medium, television provides more information to children and leaves lasting impact. The hoardings which are displayed on roadsides are also important sources of information. The table also shows the only 6% children get information from the radio.

Table 1 : Media as Informational Source	
Source of Media	% of children
Television	52
Newspaper / Magazines	19
Radio	6
Hoardings on the Roadside or Display at Shops	18
Others	5

Source: Primary Data.

Table 2 shows that 85% children watch TV programs regularly while regular radio listeners are only 6%. It points out the fact that spread of TV audience is wider than radio listeners among children. TV, being the audio-

visual medium, is most enjoyed by children. Approximately 27% children read the magazines and newspapers regularly. Most of the children are habitual of those programs what they see or listen regularly. They also show their interest in reading particular magazines or columns in newspapers and time to time wait for them. However, it's the electronic media that enjoys a wider audience when compared to the print media.

Table 2: Spread of Different Media Among Children			
	Frequency of Media % of children		
	Regular	Sometimes	Never
TV Watchers	85	15	-
Newspaper / Magazines Readers	27	50	23
Radio Listeners	6	23	71

Source: Primary Data.

Product Advertisements Linked by Children

Children like various advertisements as per their choice and preference. They enjoy the contents of the advertisement. They show keen interest in some of the products because of their advertisements. Children remember many products due to their advertisements and most of the time they recall the advertisement immediately after seeing the product. A majority of children like advertisements which relate to food product and soft drinks. They find fun in such advertisements and feel that the product is fun to eat or drink.

Table 3 : Advertisements Linked by Children	
Product Category	% of children
Food Products	36
Soft Drinks	28
Entertainment Products	13
Toys	7
Fashionable and Trendy Clothes	4
Others Things	12

Source: Primary Data.

The data in Table 3 shows that 36% of the children like the advertisements which relate to food products. They find these ads really attractive. They even reprise the jingles while eating or drinking an advertised product. Thirty-one percent of the children like the advertisements on soft drinks. Advertisements influence the purchase decisions of children. They are the key decision-makers when it comes to buying food products like ice creams, soft drinks, chocolates, etc. even those advertisements that feature motorbikes, toothpastes, etc., are popular among children.

Role of Children in the Buying Decisions of Parents

Children not only help their parents in doing various chores but also help them in their buying decisions. Parents seek for the opinion of children regarding their choice and preference about various products. They purchase some products of their own choice, but are influence by others in numerous household purchase decisions. Due to influential impact of children in families, some purchase decisions are highly dominated by children.

Table 4 : Role of Children in Parents' Buying Decisions	
Role of Children	% of children
Help parents in their buying decisions	96
Do not help parents in their buying decisions	4

Source: Primary Data.

From Table-4, it appears that almost all parents seek the opinion of their children before buying any product which the family uses. In this way most of the children help their parents in their buying decision. At times children end up buying a particular product on behalf of their parents because of an urgent need or the lack of time to buy a product. Most often the need comes from parents or other elder family members, but they ask children to make the actual purchase. According to the study, only 4% children before purchasing products. However, children become can become stubborn and forcefully ask their parents to purchase products which they want. Parents keep a control on the purchase requests of their children. The Table 5, shows the opinion of children regarding the way their parents react to their purchase requests.

Table 5 : Opinion of Children Regarding the Way their Parents React to Purchase Requests	
Opinion	% of children
Agree	8
Mostly agree, but disagree sometimes	52
Disagree	9
Mostly disagree, but agree sometimes	31

Source: Primary Data.

An overwhelming 60% (52+8) respondents agreed that their parents agree/accept their purchase requests. They said that their preferences and purchase requests were hardly ignored by their parents. Fifty two percent of the children were of the opinion that their parents generally consider their purchase requests. Only 40% (9+31) respondents revealed that their parents mostly rejected their purchase requests. Most parents see the products from their utility and safety point of view and then consider the purchase requests of children accordingly.

Effect of Advertisement on the Buying Behavior of Children

Advertisements have a major impact on the buying behavior of children. They lure children in trying the advertised brands. Some advertisements target various desires or wants of children and influence them in purchasing that product. Advertisements also influence their attitude and purchase behavior. To what extent advertisements influence the buying behavior of children is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 : Influence of Advertisements on Buying Behavior of Children	
Influence	% of children
Often	7
Sometimes	72
Rarely	17
Not at all	4

Source: Primary Data.

A total of 72% of the respondents were of the view that ads did sometimes evoke their desires in buying a product. For purchasing an advertised brand, children use their pocket money or ask their parents to buy for them. Only 7% respondents said that they wanted to buy a product soon after they saw the advertisement. Nearly 21% of the children expressed that advertisements rarely or never influenced them in buying something.

Influence of Advertisements for Buying Advertised Brands

Advertisements generally have a positive as well as a negative impact on children. They bring a change in the attitude and mindset of children through various psychological approaches. Some advertisement influence the purchase behavior in such a manner that children begin to insist their parents to purchase the advertised brand for them. The Table 7 shows the data relating to the influence of advertisements in forming pestering nature of children.

Table 7 : Influence on Advertisements	
Influence	% of children
Often	3
Sometimes	58
Rarely	14
Not at all	25

Source: Primary Data

Some times, 58% of children confessed to pestering parents to purchase certain products after watching an ad. While 13% of children rarely insist their parents about buying a product, 26% don't insist at all to have the advertised product. Only a very small percentage of 3% of respondents candidly revealed of often pestering their parents to buy products after watching advertisements.

Findings

1. The study also observes that for certain products categories like personal care products and dress materials, children tell preferences to their parents, but the final decisions regarding the purchase of such products are taken by their parents. Parents at their own interest purchase some products. Here children say a little about such products like vehicles, electronic goods, grocery items etc.
2. It is observed that TV advertisements are most preferred by children. Television is the largest information supplier to them. Eighty-five-percent children like watching the TV.
3. When asked to recall advertisements, most of the respondents recalled advertisements of food products and soft drinks immediately. Among the soft drink ads most of the children recalled celebrities like Shah Rukh Khan, Sachin Tendulkar, Aamir Khan and Aishwarya Rai. It was observed that among various kinds of celebrities, movie stars and sports personalities are easily remembered and the respondents are quick to recall the ads which celebrities endorse.
4. It is observed that children play a vital role in their parents' buying decisions. A large number of parents seek the opinion of their children before purchasing the products specially meant for them.
5. The study highlights the spread of different media among children. It is found that most of the children like to watch TV. Marketers are of the view that televisions the best media for advertising. Children are also influenced by displays or hoardings found on the roadside. Newspapers and magazines also occupy a significant place. It shows that radio has least approach to this age group.
6. It has been observed that children get interested to purchase the product after viewing its advertisements. They are eager to purchase a product, if any offer is made on that product.
7. It was found that most of the respondents were aware about the celebrity advertisements. Among various celebrities, movie stars, sports personalities have much influence on children. A total of 58% children were interested in buying the product advertised by their favorite celebrities.

8. The study reveals that children consider various product features while purchasing a product. They are attracted by the packing and the bonanza schemes, offered for product promotions. Most importantly the purchase behavior of children is price sensitive. They get information about products from various sources but before purchasing them, 58% children don't consult their parents.
9. Another observation has been that children insist their parents to purchase advertised brand for them. Sixty-one percent children committed that they usually force their parents to buy advertised products.

Conclusion

The study also reveals that children find advertisements exciting. They think that the purpose of advertisements is to entertain. Some children were also of the opinion that advertisements provide information about new arrivals. The study reveals that children help their parents in their buying decisions and parents mostly react positively to the purchase request of children. Most of the time, parents ask the choice or opinion of their children before purchasing family products. They prefer to purchase such products, which are not only liked by them, but also liked by their children.

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