

Effects of TV Advertisements on Children's Behavior

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to study the effect of TV advertisement on children's decision making and how TV advertisements are affecting the young audiences and their buying nature. The study was conducted using primary data. A close-ended questionnaire was prepared for the parents of children between the age group of 5 to 10 years. A population of 200 parents was selected who are staying in Ranchi district and all families have a TV set at home.

On analysis, it was found that most TV advertisements focus on children because they are easy to influence. Television is not only selling entertainment but sowing unhealthy habits in them. Most advertisements were of fast foods, ice cream, chocolates, packed juices, and cold drink. The survey suggests that these advertisements influence children's behavior which eventually leads to unhealthy and indiscipline lifestyle.

Keywords: Advertisement • Television • Children • Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) • Persuasion

Introduction

Children are one of the most important parts of society who are not considered important in making decisions. Children are often considered as least important when it comes to hearing their say on something. But, when it comes to purchasing a product, it is observed that elders often buy things which their children like more than what they like for them. Since the industrialization and advancement of technology, children are exposed to TV and smartphones, the major source of how they want to view their life and surroundings [1]. Advent of TV and internet not only brought entertainment, but also advertisement which in the modern age is influencing children the most. TV is the perfect and most suitable apparatus which a child has access to.

Today, the majority of India has access to television, and it is involved between the people of multiple ages catering for the entertainment of every group. It has been found in a study by TV monitoring organization Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) that around 210 million houses own TV, an increase of 6.9% from 197 million in 2018. Moreover, the highest increment rate was witnessed among children of age between 2-14 years, a significant 9% over the last 3 years [2]. According to an article published in Times of India in June 2022, the government gives special focus on children ads to make sure to avoid companies diverting their growing brain in the wrong direction. Government also allocates a special

amount for advertisements for children. These advertisements are majorly based on happiness and fun appeal so as to make it most relatable for children.

Children watch TV according to their niche, and get a visual demonstration of different child favorable products in the form of advertisements. As a result, we can observe the children and their involvement in persuading their parents to buy products they watch on TV. There are several studies investigating the impact of advertisements on children's behavior but not much has been researched on this subject in Ranchi district [3].

According to article 1 in UNICEF, every human being below an age of 18 years can be considered children. But specifically, the children we are studying on are between the ages of 5 to 10 years. The advertisements made for children are often referred to as 'children targeted ads' which are specifically made for children to advise, inform, and influence them.

On defining advertisement, according to Prasoon Joshi and Brut Manning, it is a paid public communication to promote a product, service, brand or event in order to attract consumers and influence them to buy the product or service. Advertisement plays the paramount role today in every possible field. So, it also in one way or another has impacted children and their decision-making capabilities. In a fast-paced world, where even the parents are dependent on advertisement majorly for all their needs, children are

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seen persuading them for their part [4]. Children are undertaking major roles with the advancing time, and are also involved as independent consumers. So, children are considered a major primary market that can influence their parents in buying things and through the ads, advertising agencies also want to make a futuristic impact on growing heads which would in turn help them to attain sustainability in long run.

Persuasion through advertisements leads to decision-making among children. Decision making is the process of making choices by identifying a decision, gathering information, and assessing alternative resolutions. Children gather information from the advertisement they watch and persuade their parents to buy the products. Decision making is the last stage of an advertisement strategy which persuades the target audience to buy the product.

Objectives of the study

- To identify the behavior of children between the age of 5-10 after watching TV advertisements.
- To study the impact of advertisements on children food habits and behavioral change.
- To study the relation between children spending time on TV vs. their behavior after watching TV advertisements.
- To study the relation between children spending time on TV vs. their food eating habits.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between children spending time on TV versus their behavioral change

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between children spending time on TV versus their food eating habits [5].

According to Wijesundra, et al., in his paper "The impact of TV advertisement on children's behavior". Sri Lankan children are becoming aggressive and violent in nature. He discovered how badly a child wants a product which reflects as a negative side in their behavior.

The result of Halford, et al., research paper "Effect of television advertisement for foods on food consumption in children" is that the children are becoming over weight and obese in the influence of TV advertisement. It was found during the study that children's consumption of fast food has increased and they start consuming food unfavorable for their health.

According to Dr. Khanna, in the paper "Parents perception of influence of television advertisement on children" it was found that advertisements develop nagging, materialism and consumption of junk food among young children. Advertisement leads to family conflicts and found that parents were skeptical about the television advertisements. Food advertisements capture around 50% of TV ads among children which leads to unhealthy food habits [6].

In Rusell, et al., research paper "The effect of screen advertising on children's dietary intake: A systematic review and meta-analysis" it was found that advertisements increase the intake of food, hence

increasing diet intake under conditions of experiments compared to non-experimented children. Hence, advertisements increase the greater intake of calories among children and increase their chance of getting exposed to various food diseases.

According to Nassar and Zein research paper "Effect of television advertising on children in the Middle East" it was found that advertising leads to physical and verbal violence in children. The research did this study on children in the Middle East and also found that there was a social and behavioral change and other problems such as consumption of low nutritional food and increased obesity.

According to Hameed, et al., in his paper "Impact of TV advertisement on children buying behavior" it was found that children get highly influenced by TV advertisements and persuading their parents to buy their desired product. It was also found in his study that half of the food advertisements on TV in the US are based on fast food which degrades the health of children.

According to Priya, et al., in his paper "Impact of TV advertisement on children's buying behavior" that the attitude of children greatly influences the demands of products advertisements. It was found that advertisements for lower age groups were mainly for entertainment purposes whereas advertisements had the potential of creating a desired attitude among higher age groups [7].

According to L Harris, et al., in his paper "Priming effects of television food advertising on eating behavior" it was found that when children were exposed to advertisement, they consumed 45% more food. They conducted experiments for studying the impact of food advertisement impact and found that food advertisements are greatly influential and create an automatic eating habit on both children and adults.

Materials and Methods

This research paper is an impact study and hence it is an evaluation research design. Evaluation research according to T. Kellaghan in the international encyclopedia of education is defined as a form of disciplined as well as systematic inquiry to arrive at a conclusion or appraisal of a program, practice, object, activity, or system with the purpose of providing information that will be of use as a constituent in decision making [8].

Evaluation research according to Powell is a specific research methodology, a study that uses standard social research methods for evaluative purposes. It is a process to assess and employ special techniques unique to the evaluation of social programs.

So, evaluation research is a research design to measure social performance of an organization or even determine impact of specific program, activity, or any initiative. As this research is based on studying the impact of advertisement on children, this method was best utilized to frame the entire study.

Population and sampling

The population of the research is parents of children between 5 to 10 years of age, who currently reside in urban areas in Ranchi district, Jharkhand. As the research deals with the impact of advertisements on behavior of children, their parents are most suited to answer their child's behavior through their experience and observation [9].

Respondents for the study were selected in accordance with the non-probability-purposive and snowball sampling techniques to reach the parents as the purpose of sampling were parents having children of specific age group (5-10 years). All respondents were those who belonged to the urban population of Ranchi city and had television through which their child could view any kind of advertisement.

Purposive sampling, according to researchers, refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample [10]. In other words, units are selected "on purpose" in purposive sampling. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which research participants and respondents are asked to assist in recruiting other potential participants/subjects. It was used by the researcher to reach the potential population.

Data collection

This research took place in a time frame of 3 months, from 1st of June to 31st August, 2022 in Ranchi, Jharkhand. The time frame of June to August was specifically chosen by the researcher as children have their summer vacations during the month of May in Ranchi. The behavior of children while they spend most of their time with parents was the key which must have been fresh in the parents' mind [11].

Primary data were collected from 200 respondents comprising only parents of children of selected age group from Ranchi, Jharkhand. A questionnaire comprising ten close ended questions was provided to all the respondents through emails to evaluate the behavior of children after viewing advertisements. The questions were based on Likert scale. Likert scale is a scale used for rating in cases where opinions or behaviors are to be measured. It consists of statements in questionnaires or surveys where 5 options are provided to measure respondents' answers. There were two demographic profile questions and nine statements related to impact of TV advertisement on children's behavior and their food habits. The statements were as follows:

- **Statement 1:** My child forces me to buy the product after viewing it on TV.
- **Statement 2:** My child becomes stubborn if I don't buy the product they have viewed on TV ads.
- **Statement 3:** I am persuaded by my child's behavior to buy the product.
- **Statement 4:** Not buying the product that my child wants impacts my relationship with the child.
- **Statement 5:** TV ads have changed my child's food habit.
- **Statement 6:** TV ads have increased the obesity in my child as most TV ads promote unhealthy food with high calorie.
- **Statement 7:** My child has adapted certain violent habits (slapping, kicking, banging head against the wall) after viewing advertisements on TV.
- **Statement 8:** My child compares with other children to buy certain products they have viewed on TV, and
- **Statement 9:** My child imitates advertising heroes and celebrities after viewing the TV ads.

Data were analyzed through pie chart where 1 is strongly agree, 2 is agree, 3 is don't know, 4 is disagree and 5 is strongly disagree [12].

The questionnaire and data were validated using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 24.0). This programme was employed to statistically analyze the data and test the hypotheses of the study. The data collected from the survey were coded and fed in SPSS. Necessary parametric tests including Pearson's correlation were applied to the data for calculating the results.

Data analysis

According to quantitative data analyzed, researchers found out that there is a severe impact of advertisement on children, their behavior and even their food habits. Out of 200 questionnaires, only 177 got filled and the rest 23 were among the ones who didn't fill or understood or didn't fill up the questionnaire on time.

It was found that 18% of children spend more than 2-3 hours every day on TV whereas 15% of children spend 3-4 hours and 31% of children spend more than 5 hours every day on TV. The time spent by children on TV can be seen more in children of 7-10 years. 47% of parents agreed that their child forces them to buy a product after watching an advertisement on TV. 37% parents strongly agree and 42% of parents agree that their child gets stubborn if they don't buy the product they want from advertisements and more than 85% of parents accept that their child acquires violent behavior like slapping, kicking, banging head on walls, etc. If they don't agree to buy the product. Apart from the violent behavior, 42% of parents agree to the fact that their child's food habits are changed after viewing advertisements on TV.

Results and Discussion

Children: The influencers

Previously, there was no role of children in the purchase of products used in the household or by them. But recently, over the past few years, children have emerged as the initiators who, after getting influenced by an advertisement, persuade and influence their parents in buying the products [13]. Almost every parent agreed that they get persuaded or influenced by their child's choice, even by their stubbornness (Figures 1 and 2).

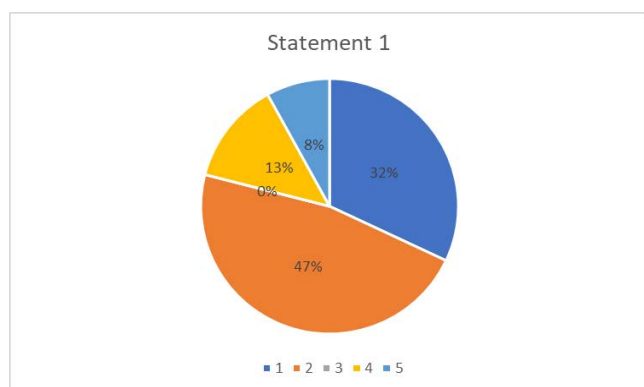


Figure 1. Percentage of parents' agreement on children forcing them to buy products after watching it on TV.

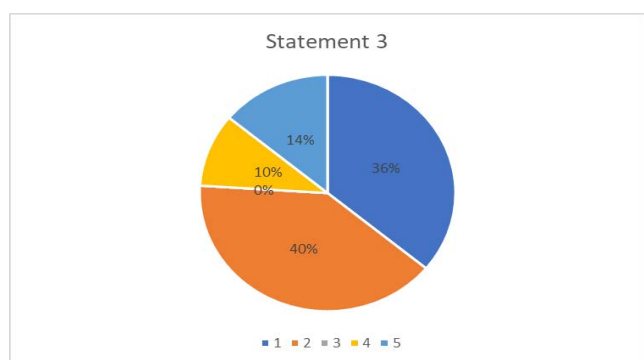


Figure 2. Percentage of parents' agreement on getting persuaded by their child's behavior to buy the product.

Children acquiring violent behavior as already mentioned, 38% of parents strongly agree and 47% parents agree that their child's behavior gets violent if they don't buy the product their child wants from them. Researchers found out that children's behavior is greatly influenced by the advertisements that get stubborn and violent, forcing their parents to buy the product regardless of their budget (Figure 3).

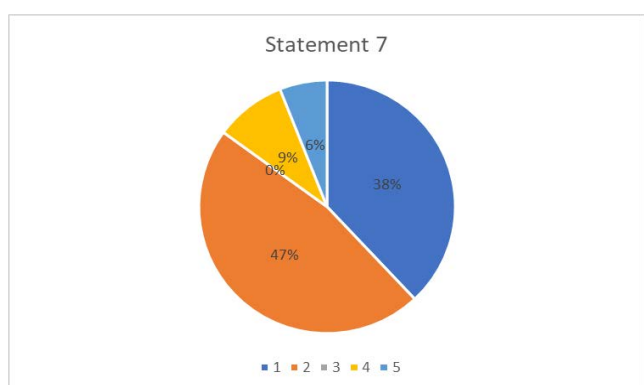


Figure 3. Percentage of parents' agreement on children adapting violent habits.

Unhealthy food habit

Researchers found out that there are numerous fast-food advertisements on TV, directly targeting children who get easily influenced as can be validated by the data that 41% of parents

strongly agree to this. This in turn, increases food poisoning and obesity rate in thousands of children every year (Figures 4 and 5).

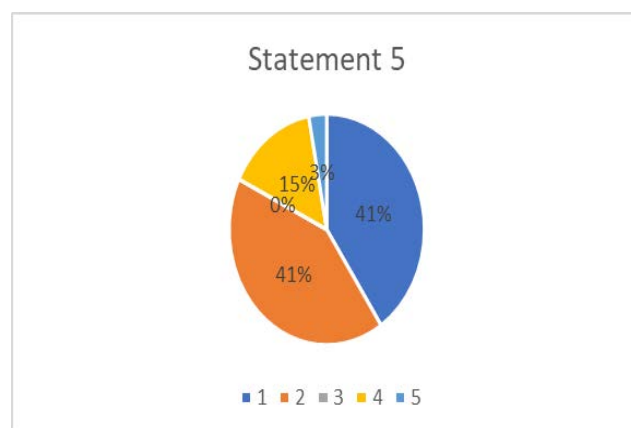


Figure 4. Percentage of parents' agreement on TV ads changing their child's food habits.

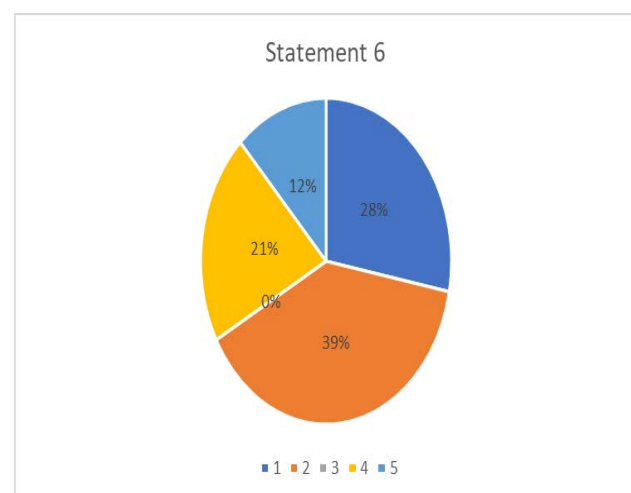


Figure 5. Percentage of parents' agreement on TV ads increasing obesity among children.

Hypotheses testing

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between children spending time on TV versus their behavioral change.

In order to analyze the relationship between children spending time on TV versus their behavioral change, a Pearson product-moment correlation test was conducted.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between children spending time on TV versus their behavioral change. There was positive correlation between the two variables, $r=0.275$, $n=177$, $p=0.001$. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and say that there is a positive impact of children spending time on TV and their behavioral change. **H₀₁** is rejected. The scatter plot summarizes the results (Figure 6).

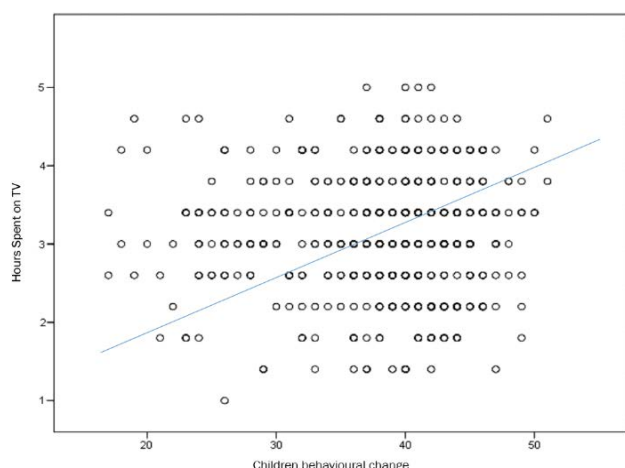


Figure 6. Relationship between hours children spend on TV and behavioral change.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between children spending time on TV versus their food eating habits.

In order to analyze the relationship between children spending time on TV versus their food habits, a Pearson product-moment correlation test was conducted.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between children spending time on TV versus their food habits. There was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r=0.214$, $n=177$, $p=0.001$. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and say that there is a positive impact of children spending time on TV and their food habits. **H₀₂** is rejected. The scatter plot summarizes the results (Figure 7).

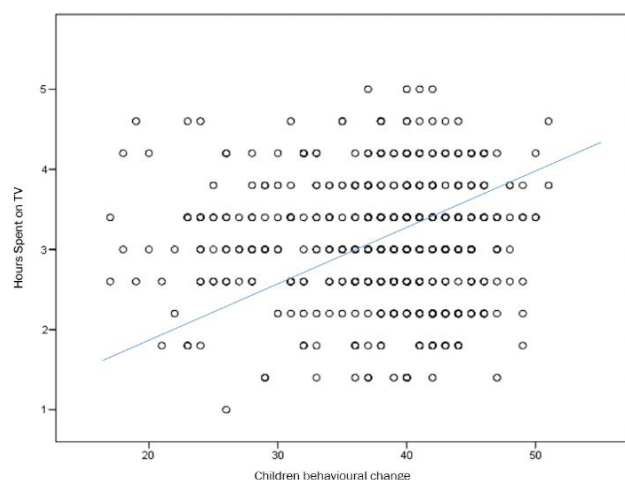


Figure 7. Relationship between hours children spend on TV and changing food habits.

Conclusion

Studying the data collected from 177 parents, this research evaluated and explored the impact of advertisement on children of 5-10 years of age in which it was found that children of Ranchi, Jharkhand are getting severely influenced by the advertisements and persuading their parents to buy the products. The parents

strongly agreed on getting influenced by their child's choices, either through stubbornness, persuasion or nagging. The study also found out that children acquire violent traits like banging their head against the wall, kicking or slapping if their wish of buying specific products from the advertisements they watch on TV doesn't get fulfilled. Furthermore, the overexposure of TV to children increases the risk of poor food habits which in turn increases obesity and other junk food consequences on health. Further, through the study, it is clear that advertisement goals are being accomplished to the very best by the agencies on their target audience which is spreading a negative influence on children. They are becoming stubborn, violent and lead an unhealthy life right from childhood. Apart from the downside, there were still 38% of parents who disagreed that their child acquired violent behavior like kicking or banging their head.

It was seen that children spending more time on TV are more violent and stubborn in comparison to children who have less screen time. Watching more TV impact their food habits as well as their behavior towards parents, other family members or peer group members.

Also, statistical tests reveal that there is a strong relationship between children spending time and their behavioral change or food habits. The more screen time children have the more violent they become and also TV strongly impacts their food habits.

Children are the future of the country and their parents must at least take care of the unhealthy food habits acquired by them and on the basis of the entire study, researchers suggest the involvement of parents in making children understand the best for their mental and physical health, regardless of what is shown in various advertisements.

Limitations of the Study

- Out of 200 questionnaires, the researcher did not receive back 23 questionnaires due to negligence of respondents.
- This study is limited only to the urban population of Ranchi, Jharkhand.
- Television was considered during the study and other media platforms like radio, newspapers or digital media were not considered.

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