

## **IMPACT OF PEDIATRIC ADVERTISING ON CHILD HEALTH: A CASE STUDY**

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### **Abstract**

Children are targeted to commercial word at the very young age. There are various products targeted to children such as, food, toys, student banking, clothing's, and cool drinks etc. which influence the children to buy the products. With the changing social structure, child exposure to television and other media has increased. Building Consumerism among kids is harmful and unethical. Children have little knowledge about the actual intention of the marketers i.e. profit making. The study reveals the perception of children towards different advertisements and tactics used by the children to convince their parents to buy the product. This paper looks to connect between TV commercials and its impact on kid's wellbeing.

**Key words: pediatric advertisements, perception, consumerism, child health**

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## **Introduction**

Advertising industry is one of the fastest growing industries in India. There are various products advertised every year. Children spend their most time watching television when they are at home; the pediatric advertisements which are targeted to kids are displayed more on the channels which are watched by the kids such as cartoon network, pogo, Disney channel etc. this makes the children to get exposed to different kinds of advertisements and they get to know about different brands, products available in the market.

Today due to shrinking sizes of family, increase in the disposable income and number of children, parents are willing to fulfill every demand of the child. Today's child play a greater role in buying decisions of the family with regards to their needs. These needs are either the outcome of their exposure to television advertisement or a solution to the natural need by means of advertised products. As result of it, Children are experiencing various health threats at young age, such as diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular disease, orthopedic abnormalities, asthma and high cholesterol levels, which are usually associated with adults (Cezar, 2008). Most of the food products advertised on television are HFSS product which are high in fats, salt and sugar; this may create many health problems in children.

This study is trying to link between pediatric advertisement and its impact on child health.

## **Literature review**

Cezar (2008), and Mark et al (2016), research studies reveal that food advertisement exposure of child leading to poor food consumption. Further these studies also deals with the unhealthy food product advertisement and its impact on child health. Since young children lack the ability to critically assess advertising messages and to understand their convincing intention.

Hawkes (2004), highlight in his study on regulatory gap in regarding to the advertisement of food item. At the country level promotion of food to kids and advertising should be regulated by laws reforms, self-regulatory codes and statutory guidelines.

Food marketing to preschool children summary report (2015) elaborated the impact of television on child food choice and the relationship between food promotions on television. Further the study reveals children who watch higher than the recommended amount of television per day were more likely to be overweight and have a higher energy intake than children who watched less than the recommended amount of television per day.

Singh (2014) says that rural children believe in what they watch on television. The study reveals impact of watching television on child moral building process from early age.

World health organization report (2009) summaries 115 studies conducted across the world. And it confirms that many forms of food product promotions are popular with, and engage children. In addition the marketing strategies go beyond the advertisement to lure the child customer with promotional add-ons. Research on recall of food advertisements in particular finds very high levels of awareness and enjoyment.

Karthikeyan et al (2013), Katke (2007) and Abdul et al (2014) studies reveals advertisement has greater impact on child health and family spending.

Comstock and Strzyzewskis (1990), Klein et al. (1993) and Singer et al. (1995) reveals the impact of excess television viewing on children psychological state of mind. It further states that child learn behaviors of jealousy, revenge, violent and controversy. Studies has shown that those children who watch television frequently, learn bad habits. For example they start drinking, cheating, smoking, stealing, class bunking and driving without license.

### **Commercialization and children**

There is a huge compilation in the Indian market for the goods targeted to children. Indian advertising market is projected to be the second fastest growing market in Asia after china. India's publicizing industry is relied upon to develop at a rate of 16.8 for every penny, Year-on-year to Rs 51,365 crore (US\$ 7.54 billion) in 2016, floated by positive industry conclusion and a solid GDP development of 7 for each penny or more (IBEF). Marketers use various persuasive techniques such as jingles, cartoons, fantasies, emotional appeal, celebrity endorsement,

offers/gifts and so on to attract kids and create desire in them to buy the product. Children starts to use the product advertised and the result will be either they become a loyal customer towards the brand if they are satisfied with the use or taste of the product or they drop out the use of the product if the product is not up to their expectations.

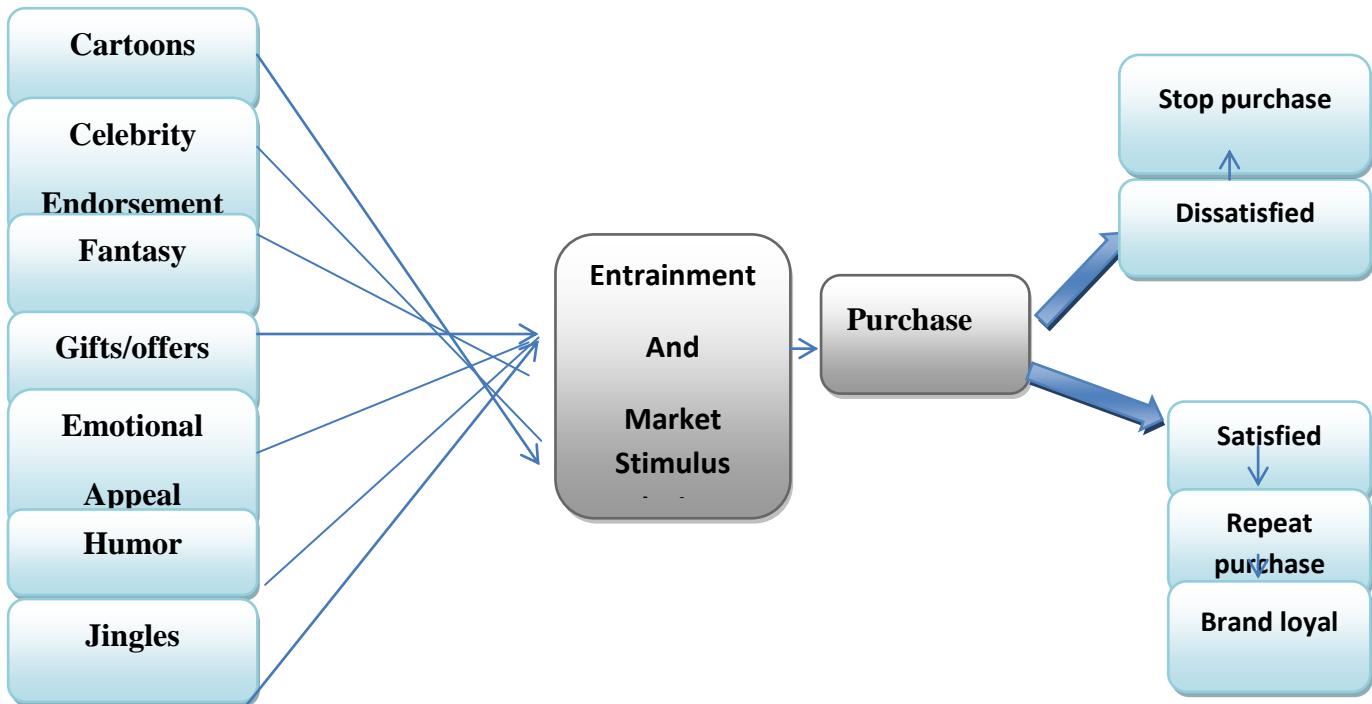


Chart-1: perception of children towards advertisements and children buying behavior process

### **Persuasive techniques by advertisers used to attract the attention of children.**

Children while watching the advertisements mainly focus on the concrete aspects of the product and they overlook the abstract nature of the relation between adviser and audience and they do not know or know little about the economic perspective of advertising to increase the business return (obgu 2013). Children spend most of their time watching television and they get attracted to persuasive techniques used by the marketers. This tempts them to have the product. Advertisements targeted to kids change the direct habit and lead to violent behavior of them and it hits the family budget by creating stress on parents (Katke 2006) .An advertisement using ethos will try to convince the child that the product is more reliable, honest, and credible; therefore, you should buy this product.

### **Cartoons, celebrity endorsement, emotional appeal, humor, jingles, fantasies and gifts/offers-**

These are the persuasive techniques used by the advertisers to attract the viewers. The advertisement which has gifts/offers like playing cards, hidden surprise gifts are mainly chosen by the kids because of the promotional techniques rather than the taste or use of the product.

### **Entertainment and market stimulus**

Children below the age group of twelve easily get attracted to cartoon, celebrity endorsement, music, fantasies, humor and fantasies in the advertisement. Most of the parents said that their children sing the advertisement jingles and imitate as shows in the advertisements. Children usually demand the products which are advertised. A child does not think whether the product is good or bad to their health they just consume what they like.

### **Purchase**

Here child pressurize their parents to buy the product. Various techniques are used by child to pressurize parents to buy their desired goods (which they learned by advertisements). The child also use emotional strategies to influence the buying decisions of the parents,

### **Satisfied, repeat purchase and brand loyal**

Child in the age group of 3-6 doesn't even distinguish between the television program and advertisement and who do not have the emotional and cognitive tool to evaluate what is been sold to them also influence the product purchase (Richard ) They want the advertised product which give pleasure because its glorified, fantasy and puffery appeal.

An advertisement using pathos will attempt to evoke an emotional response in the consumer. Sometimes, it is a positive emotion such as happiness (NCTI 2009). These psychological satisfactions results into repeat purchase. Their stars the process of building consumerism at early age of child begin.

### **Objectives of the study**

- To study perception building process in Pediatric advertisement
- To study impact of advertisement on child health

### Research methodology

For the purpose of study simple random sampling method is used. The sample size of the survey is 100 parents in the age group of 25 years and above with income from Rs20000 per month and above is considered for the study. The parent means mother father guardians and grandparents. 3 respondents have one child, 50 have two children and 47 have single child. Questionnaire was structured to study the time spent by child watching television and his/her role in the purchase decision of various food products. Child health has classified into two categories namely, physical health and mental health. Irritating behavior, expression of anger, and crying are the parameters taken for measuring the mental health of the child.

### Research findings

1. Time spent by child watching television.
- 2.

**Table:1-Time spent by child watching TV in a day Cross tabulation**

Count

	How much time does your kid spend watching TV in a day					Total
	0-1 hours	2plus hours	3 plus hrs	4 plus hr.	5 hr & above	
2-3years	8	11	5	4	0	28
4-5years	0	13	10	2	0	25
6-7 years	0	14	18	3	0	35
8-9 years	0	9	20	8	1	38
10 yr.& above	0	4	17	5	0	26
Total	8	51	70	22	1	152

It is observed that child less than 3years also watch television up to four plus hours. Children between the age of 6 years and above are more exposed to the television advertisement as they

spent more time watching television. Greater the exposure higher is the influence of advertisement.

### 3. Correlation between age of child and time spent by child watching television.

Table:2- Correlations

	age of child	how much time does your kid spend watching TV in a day
Pearson Correlation	1	.338**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
N	99	99
Pearson Correlation	.338**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
N	99	100

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is significant correlation between age and time spent by child watching television. Similar finding were recorded by studies conducted by Karthikeyan et al (2013), Abdul et al (2014) and Katke (2007)

### 4. Correlation between age and diet habits and mental health of the child.

Table : 3- Correlation between age and diet habit/mental health

	2-3years	4-5year	6-7year	8-9year	10yr.and above
Average hours spent	2.17	2.56	2.68	2.9	3.03
Influence of television advertisement on diet habits of child r=	0.35	0.41	0.52	0.48	0.46
Influence of television advertisement	0.36	0.39	0.45	0.38	0.36

on child mental health r=					
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Average time spent watching television has recorded the increasing trend along with the increase in the age of the child. Study reveal a close association between age and diet habits of the child. Child showcase irritating behavior, frustration, cry when it fails to get the product he demand for ( which he most of the time learned from watching television) similar results were recorded by studies conducted by Strzyzewskis (1990), Klein et al. (1993) and Singer et al. (1995).

### **Issues associated with advertisements and its impact on children and their family-**

- Tooth decay, diabetes, obesity are some of the health issues found in the children now a days this is because of advertisements which are targeted to children
- The puffery and fantasy advertisement should be avoided to the children it has greater impact on child mental health and may also cause damage to the physical health.
- Watching television for more hours can also affect the physical health of the child making children less involved in physical move.
- Mental health of the child is also affected for not having the products which they desire for.
- Diet habits of the child is affect because the children consume lot of junk food advertised in the television which has low nutrients and not good for health.
- Violent behavior in children can be seen if they do not get their desired product.

### **Conclusion:**

There is need for collective actions taken by all segments of the society to control the adverse impact of advertisement on child health. Parents, governing bodies and the corporate houses should join the hands for better future for children. There are several healthy and educative messages can be replaced for wrong/ misleading messages by these commercials. Children should never be part of marketing process.



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