

The Impact of Television Advertisements on Children's Behaviour: A Survey-Based Study

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Abstract

This research paper, “The Impact of television advertisements on children's behaviour” explores the impact of TV ads on children’s behaviour and evaluates the perception of these ads by various demographic groups. This research is a survey-based study. The survey questionnaire is designed to focus on demographics of the respondents, their TV viewing habits, perception of children in TV ads, and how these ads influence children’s behaviour. This research intends to give insights on how children are portrayed in Television ads and how such portrayals affect them. The role of parental controls and their opinions in regard to children’s exposure to TV ads is also been examined in this study.

Introduction

Television advertising serves as a very powerful media for marketing, it has a huge-mass marketing coverage, low cost per exposure, and also has a combination of visual, audio and motion which gives a greater appeal to the senses. Television advertising targets children as their consumers since times immemorial. A lot of brands started selling their products directly to children as early as 20th century in the west. Companies like Heinz and Palmolive published children’s stories that positively portrayed their products. (*Look Boys and Girls! Advertising to Children in the 20th Century, Rare Book Room Hallway Cases, Perkins Library, Duke University, May 5 - August 7, 2011*). The children become a potential advertising audience as they are susceptible to external influences during their developmental stage. The portrayal of children in advertisements and the impact of these advertisements on their behaviour is a crucial area of research. This research study aims to delve into these aspects through a well-designed survey.

Methodology:

This study is based on a survey conducted with a diverse sample of respondents belonging to Hyderabad – Secunderabad to accumulate data on their demographics, TV viewing patterns, perceptions of children in TV ads, and the apparent impact of these TV advertisements on children. The survey questionnaire was the main tool of collecting information, it included multiple-choice questions and open-ended responses to attain thorough insights required for the study. A google form was used to collect responses for the survey questionnaire for the reason of convenience and effective reach. A good number of 162 respondents have given their valuable insights for this research.

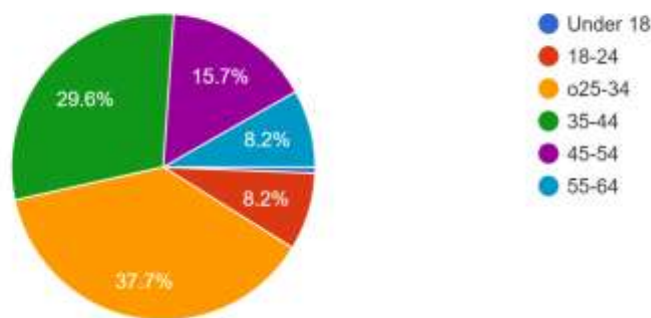
1. Demographics

This survey was planned in order to collect information on respondents' age, gender, occupation, and education level to comprehend the demographic distribution of the sample.

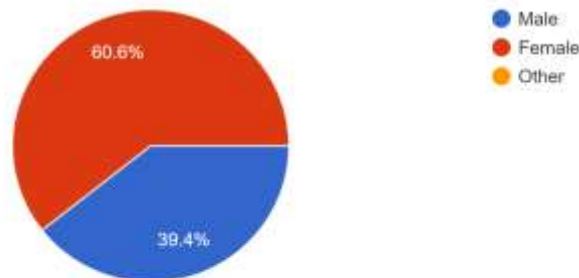
- **Age:** Respondents were categorized into seven age groups ranging from under 18 to 65 and above.
- **Gender:** Options like male, female, and other were included.
- **Occupation:** Groups included student, employed, self-employed, unemployed, and retired.
- **Education Level:** Covered primary school to doctorate.

The pie charts from the survey are demonstrated below to give a detailed statistical data about the four criteria on demographics.

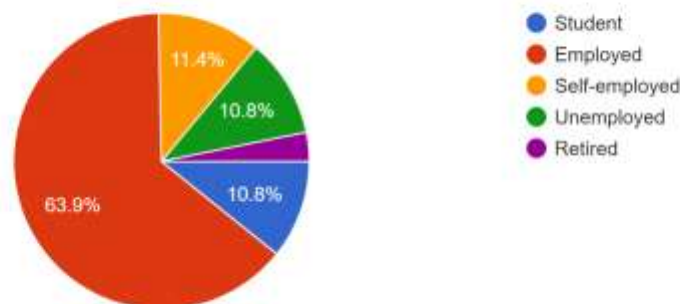
Age:
159 responses



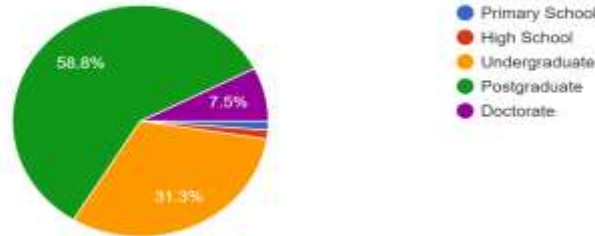
Gender:
160 responses



Occupation:
158 responses



Education Level:
160 responses



2: Television Viewing Patterns of the Respondents

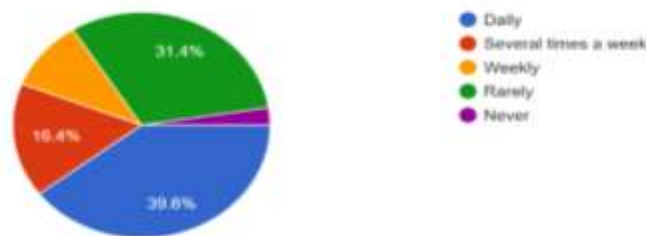
The respondents were asked about the regularity of their television viewing pattern and the kind of media content they typically watched.

- **Frequency of Viewing:** Daily, several times a week, weekly, rarely, never were given as options.
- **Content Types:** Included news, entertainment, sports, educational, children’s programs, advertisements.

The below diagrams give statistical data on TV viewing habits and the type of content the respondents usually watch.

Television Viewing Habits

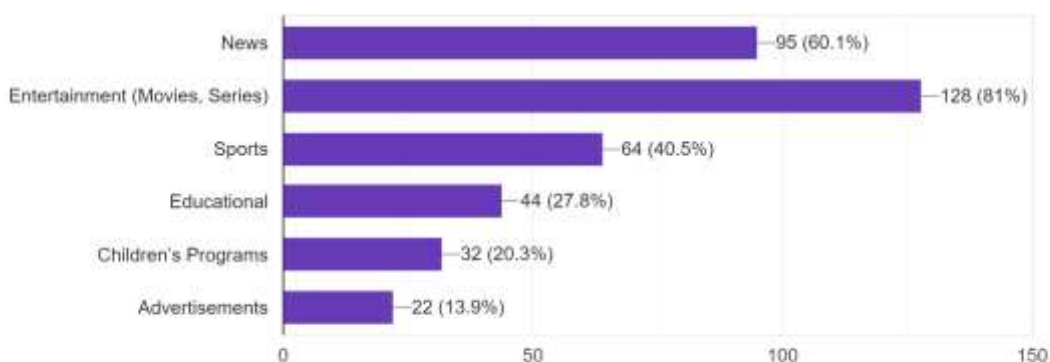
159 responses



How often do you watch television?

What type of content do you regularly watch on television? (Select all that apply):

158 responses



3: Perception of Children in TV Advertisements

This section of the survey discovered how often respondents have noticed children in television advertisements and what are their perceptions on how children are portrayed.

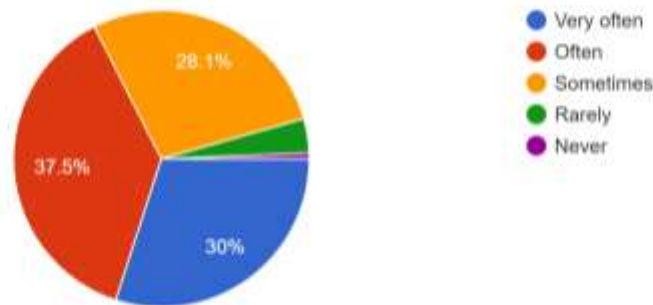
- **Frequency of Noticing Children in the TV ads:** Very often, often, sometimes, rarely, never.
- **Portrayal of Children in TV ads:** Innocent, mischievous, intelligent, naive, influential, consumers.
- **General Perception of the respondents on children in TV ads:** Positive, negative, neutral.

Below are the diagrams from the survey that depict statistics on perception of children TV ads.

Perception of Children in TV Advertisements

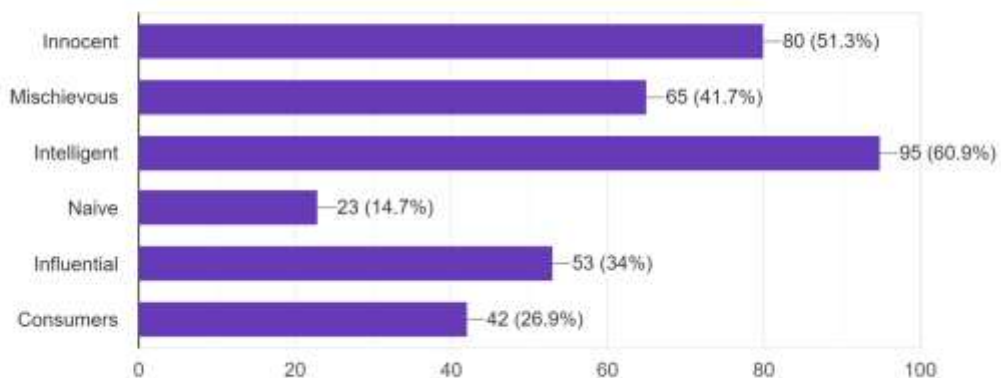
How frequently do you notice children in television advertisements?

160 responses



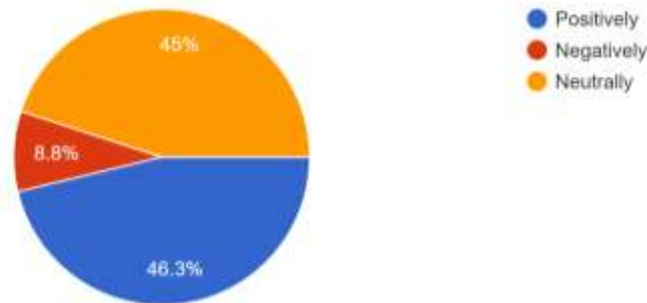
In your opinion, how are children generally portrayed in television advertisements? (Select all that apply):

156 responses



How do you think the children are portrayed in TV advertisements?

160 responses



4: Impact of Television Advertisements on Children

The respondents of the survey have given their opinions on how television advertisements influence children's behaviour and the observed changes.

Influence of TV Ads on Children's Behaviour:

1. 94 (59.9%) respondents have said that these TV ads encourage consumerism among the children.
2. 115 (73.2%) respondents viewed that these ads influence their food choices.
3. 52 (33.1%) respondents said the ads shape the perceptions of normalcy.
4. 61 (38.9%) said the ads impacts the self-esteem.
5. 28 (17.8%) opined the ads promote some healthy habits, and
6. 36 (22.9%) viewed that the ads encourage creativity in the children.

Observed Changes in Children:

7. 70% said Yes.
8. 20% not sure of observing any changes in the behaviour of the children after watching the TV ads.
9. 10% said they have observed no changes

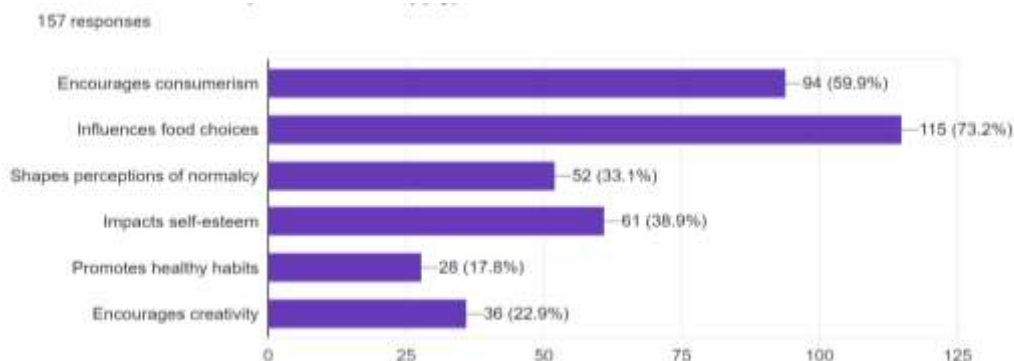
Explanation of changes observed among children that watch TV ads:

10. 45.5% respondents said the children mimic the behaviour and phrases of the TV ad characters.
11. 31.8% observed children showing traits of nagging and pestering parents to buy the products that children watched in the TV ads.
12. 12.9% said these ads contribute to the creation of brand awareness and brand loyalty in the children.
13. Small number of respondents observed competitive behaviour with friends and dissatisfaction with the already acquired products among their children.

Below diagrams give a precise statistical figure on the impact of TV Ads on children

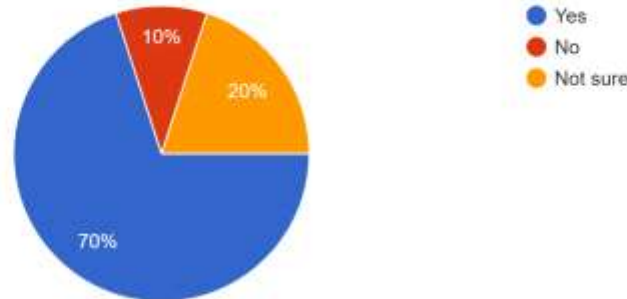
Impact of Advertisement on Children

How do you believe television advertisements influence children's behaviour?



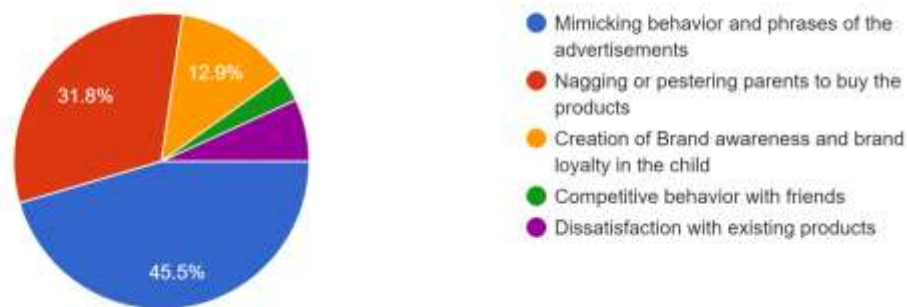
Have you noticed changes in children's behavior after watching certain advertisements?:

160 responses



If yes, explain the changes you have observed:

132 responses



5: Parental/Guardian Control and Opinion Over Children's exposure to TV ads

This section of my survey examined parental opinions on controlling children's exposure to television advertisements and the measures parents suggest.

Parental Control Agreement:

- 32.5% Strongly agreed that child's exposure to TV ads should be controlled by parents.
- 49.7% respondents agreed that parents should control the amount of TV consumption by children.
- 14.6% were neutral about whether they should control the TV watching habit of their children.
- Small portion of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed on controlling the consumption of TV by children.

Suggested Measures:

- 85 (53.8%) respondents said there should be Stricter regulation on TV advertising content by the advertising regulating agencies in India.
- 77 (48.7%) respondents said there should be time restrictions for advertisements targeting children.
- 57 (36.1%) people expressed that there should be increased parental controls on children in concern with TV ad watching.
- 68 (43%) have said that children should be educated about the TV advertising with the help of educational programs.

Use of Parental Controls:

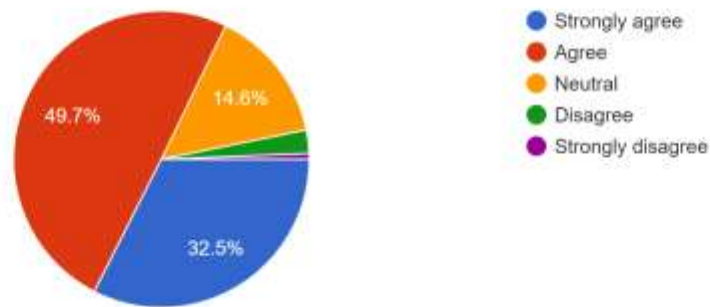
- 45.2% said Yes to use of parental controls to limit children's exposure to TV ads.

2. 31.2% said No to use of parental controls to limit children’s exposure to TV ads.
3. 23.6% were not sure of the use of parental control and chose not applicable option.

The below are the statistical representations of the data about parental controls over the amount of TV Ad exposure of children.

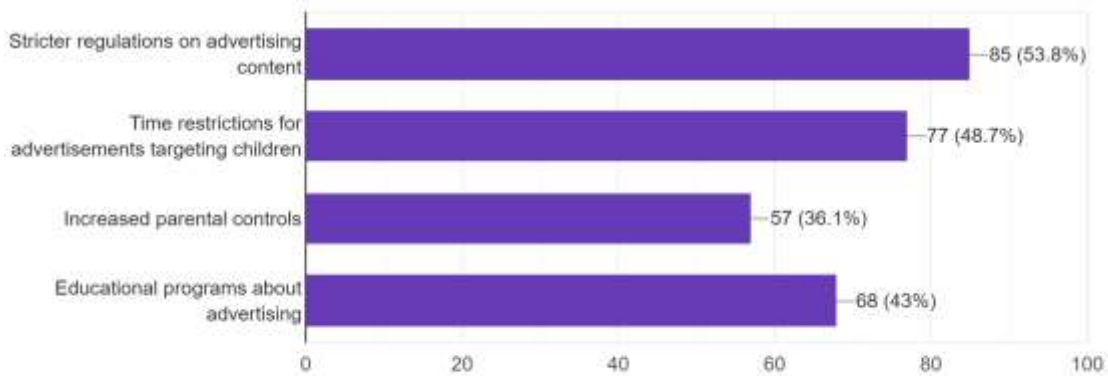
Do you think parents/guardians should control the amount of television advertisements children are exposed to?:

157 responses



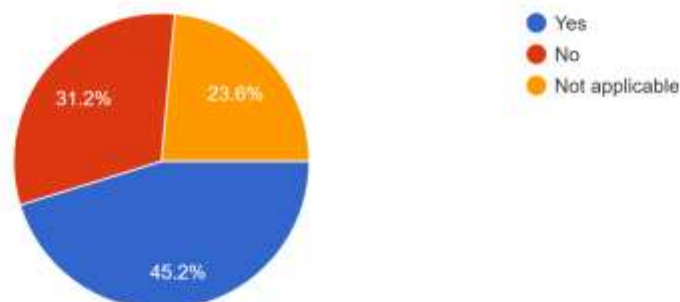
What measures do you think should be implemented to manage children's exposure to television advertisements? (Select all that apply):

158 responses



Have you ever used parental control to limit your child’s exposure to television advertisements?:

157 responses



Section 6: General Feedback

This section of my survey included open ended questions about the most significant impact of television advertisements on children and, the respondents were asked to provide any additional comments or suggestions on the impact or influence of these ads on children.

Results

The survey results showed a high frequency of television viewing among 89% of respondents from 159 total responses. The significant proportion of 89% respondents, in which 39.6% watched TV daily and 16.4% watched TV several times a week.

128 (81%) respondents watched entertainment programs and 95(60.1%) watched news commonly. Followed by other programs like sports (40.5%), educational related programs (27.8%), children's programs (20.3%) and advertisements (13.9%).

Perception of Children in Advertisements:

- Most of the respondents of the survey noticed children in television advertisements often or very often.
- Children were commonly looked upon as intelligent (by 60% respondents), innocent (by 51% respondents), and influential (by 34% respondents) with many respondents also viewing them as consumers.
- The portrayal of children in TV advertisements was largely seen as positive and neutral.

Impact on Behaviour:

- The respondents of the survey believed that television advertisements most significantly encouraged consumerism and influenced food choices among the children who watched these TV ads.
- Many respondents observed changes in children's behaviour after watching TV advertisements, predominantly in terms of increased consumer desires and changes in food preferences.

Parental Control and Opinions:

- Most of the respondents strongly agreed that parents should control the amount of television advertisements children watch or get exposed to.
- Popular measures that respondents suggested include stricter regulations on advertising content by the regulatory agencies and increased parental controls.
- Many respondents have mentioned using of parental controls to limit exposure to advertisements.

General Feedback:

- Encouragement of consumerism was the most important impact of TV advertisements on children as reported by the respondents.
- Additionally, many respondents commented on the ethical implications of targeting children in television advertisements by various brands and, they have expressed that there is a need for more educational programs to teach children about advertising.

Discussion

The findings of this survey-based research suggest that television advertisements influence children's behaviour to a great extent and one cannot escape from the television's pervasive nature. The perception of these advertisements varies across various demographic groups. The reported high frequency of children's appearance in TV ads and their portrayal as intelligent, influential and innocent characters indicate that the advertisers follow a strategic plan to reach and resonate with both the children and their parents. This encourages both the children and parents towards having brand consciousness and brand

loyalty. The behavioural changes, regarding consumerism and food selection, match with the existing literature or research work on the impact of advertising on children.

The emphasis on parental controls and regulatory measures by the respondents throw light on the need for responsible advertising practices by the advertisers and greater awareness among the parents. The feedback highlights a balanced approach that protects children from possible negative influences of TV ads, at the same time allowing them to gain from positive and educational content

Conclusion

This research paper highlights the substantial impact of television advertisements on children's behaviour and the varying perceptions of these advertisements across different demographic groups observed from the survey. The findings of the research are in support of the need for stricter regulations and enhanced parental controls to reduce and manage children's exposure to television advertisements. Future research could look into the long-term effects of advertisements on children's development and the efficiency of different regulatory measures in educating the children about the TV ads.

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