

A Comparative Study on Effect of Television Advertisements on Rural vs. Urban Children and its Subsequent Effect on their Purchase Decisions

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Abstract :

The study aimed at exploring rural and urban children's perceptions towards television commercials. The universe of the study consisted of a sample of 400 children living in three districts viz, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Chandigarh of Punjab. The respondents were in the age group of 8-12 years. Various schools were visited in the two cities and the response of children was recorded. Non-probability convenient sampling was adopted for selecting the respondents. Factor analysis and regression was employed and it was concluded that children (both rural and urban) had almost similar perceptions regarding influence of television advertisement on their purchase preferences. As compared to their urban counterpart's rural children strongly believed that advertisements are authentic and support products that carried a tag of quality.

Keywords: Commercials, Children Perceptions, Family Purchase Preferences

Introduction

The consumer behaviour of children has been a thoroughly researched area since the 1950's. Over the years there have been vivid changes in children's perception regarding different advertisements being featured on different forms of media. The rapidly changing pace of knowledge processing and dissemination has made it imaginable for children to understand the dimensions of purchasing and procuring at a speedier rate than adults.

The environment provided to children at home has a strong effect on their socialization criteria and also leads to shaping of their consumer behaviour. The more the access to information, the better connected and informed they emerge. These days, children are the centre of attention in a family and have a strong say in the family decision making. The family purchase preferences are strongly determined by the likes and dislikes of the children. Behaviour changes occur quickly in children as compared to any other age group. Television has led to exposure, merging of national boundaries and amalgamation of different cultures.

Television and other modes of media help in shaping children's attitude towards products and their usage. However, it is essential to understand that there is a difference in the impact of television advertisements in the lives of urban and rural children.

Marketers pay exceptional interest to this group distinguishing them as a key and futuristic market. Influential factors like increase in the number of working mothers, nuclear families, dual income of parents, more television sets in the household, increased number of advertisements depicting children as opinion leaders has led to an upsurge in their knowledge about product availability and consumption. Majority of advertisements aired on television are formations of vivid minds. The striking audio and visual effects of these messages apprehend the minds of children instantly after which they influence family purchases.

In the rural areas, cinema and radio were the most popular modes of information dissemination before television became popular. After television was introduced it rapidly became a very successful medium providing entertaining as well as progressive communication. Rapidly it became available in almost every household in urban as well as rural India.

Viewing preferences change with age. Young children prefer watching advertisements and programmes featuring their favourite cartoon characters and elder ones prefer Bollywood and sports celebrities. They relate to them, try to copy them and try to copy the life style and mannerisms. Attention and recall of television commercials is usually higher in a repetitive series (Gorn and Goldberg, 1980). However, later in the series accuracy of recall falls down due to a fall in the attention (Grass and Wallace, 1974). Children lacking parental care spend more time with television and are more affected by the content. Viewing excess television leads to an escalation in their demands regarding products that are advertised. However, in the Indian villages children are prodigious fan of television. And spend moderate to high amounts of time in front of television sets which can be highly enlightening for children but can also have deleterious effects when viewing upsurges above a definite level.

Ingenious marketers have always trusted on the supremacy of advertisements to get their messages across. Advertisements highlight messages and images which in turn help in building strong brand associations. They work on appeal creation which helps them in reaching reach different audience groups effectively. Rational appeals highlight logic and emotional appeals showcase humour and fear and are very advantageous in creation of an influential advertisement targeting at children. The most distinctive appeals in television commercials aimed at male children focussed on action, adventure and sports whereas in case of female children the appeals used were motherly care, physical attractiveness, and love (Buijzen and Valkenburg, 2002). Animated characters, their action and voice may effect a young child's attention towards an advertisement and may lead to product recognition, and develop a positive attitude toward a product (Neeley and Schumann, 2004). Sports model endorsers also have an optimistic influence on children's product switching behaviour and helps in building brand loyalty (Steve Dix et al., 2008).

Children's attitudes towards a brand and their purchase intentions are largely determined by their liking of the commercial. When children like a commercial, the chance that they also like the brand and ask their parents to buy the brand is greatly enhanced (Derbaix and Bree, 1997; Moore and Lutz, 2000; Phelps and Hoy, 1996).

Review of Literature

Berry and Polly (1968) reviewed the effect of children's attitude towards television commercials and their effects on the buying behaviour of the family. They explored the purchase behaviour in context of ready-to-eat breakfast cereals and concluded that the forcefulness by a child could increase the likelihood of the child having his favourite brand purchased. The study emphasized that children exerted more influence on purchase decisions in families with higher incomes. The study established

that there exists a significant positive relationship between children's socio-economic background and the extent of brand preferences for various products.

Schdeva (1999) examined the effects of children on the behaviour of the family. It was emphasized in the study that working status of parents is forming a strong financial base for the family, expensive activities are becoming common in such families. Children are more like friends to their parents. They seek their opinion while procuring products.

Wimalasire (2004) in his study stated that in the early 19th century, children were not considered as consumers in their own rights but only extensions to their parents' purchasing power. With the arrival of television and other forms of media, children have acquired their own rights and they have become an imperative target for the marketers. The study concluded that believe that children have become active participants in the family purchase decisions. Not only has there been an upsurge in their purchasing power, their say in the family purchase decisions has also increased. The study mentioned a detailed categorisation of tactics used by children to provoke their desired purchasing behaviour. Pressure tactics, upward appeal, exchange tactics, coalition's tactics, ingratiating tactics, rational persuasion, inspirational appeals and consultation tactics included some of them.

Scherr et al. (2018) examined joint influences of parental socialization via mass media on children's display of emotions. The effect of parental approval of their child's expression of emotions, on the child's approval of TV characters expressing the emotion, and the influence of both on the child's expression of emotions within the past seven days is confirmed for the sadness, anger, emotions fear, and happiness. The study concluded that socialization of emotions via mass media is driven by internalized parental socialization but has a relatively stronger effect on the child's expression of emotion that adds to the variance explained, especially with regard to anger and happiness.

Alessio et al. (2009) examined a new measure of children's attitudes toward TV advertising. The self-report scale was given to a sample of 300 children in the age category of 8 to 10-year-old. Their parents were administered a questionnaire that evaluated their socioeconomic status, educational level, and peer influence. Factor analysis was applied and it was found that three factors; enjoyment, credence and behavioural intention reflected constructs of children's attitudes toward TV advertising. The study also concluded that the credibility of television advertising decreases significantly across age groups.

Many studies have been conducted to investigate the effect of advertisements on the attitude of children. However, there lies a need to compare the perceptual differences between the urban and rural children towards television advertisements. Hence, a sample of rural and urban children has been taken to gauge the capability of television advertisements which influence the perceptions of the children. The broad objectives of the study are:

- To explore the children's perceptions towards television advertisements.
- To understand differences in the perceptions of rural and urban children towards television advertisement.

Methodology of the study

The study aimed at exploring rural and urban children's perceptions towards television commercials. The universe of the study consists of children living in three districts viz, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Chandigarh. They had a fair share of children from the rural and urban populations. A sample of 400 respondents was chosen from the population with the help of non-probability convenience sampling. The respondents were in the age group of 8-12 years. Various schools were witted in the two cities and the response of children was recorded. Research was conducted using a pre-tested and structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated and administered to the respondents. Secondary data was also collected from sources like journals, magazines and internet. The data was analysed with the help of statistical techniques factor analysis and t test.

Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic profile of the respondents under study is depicted in table1.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the Respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male(Boys)	168	42
	Female (Girls)	232	58
Age	8-9	75	19
	9-10	110	27.5
	10-11	109	27
	11-12	106	26.5

From the above table it can be viewed that the sample consists of 42% boys and 58% girls. Moreover, the sample is fairly spread overall the four age categories which depicts a fair representation of the sample.

Factors Effecting Children Perceptions – A Factor Analytical Approach

Factor analysis has been used to identify the underlying constructs and investigate relationships among the key influence of television advertisement targeted at children on family purchase behaviour. To test the suitability of data, reliability test has been conducted. The following steps have been conducted to analyse the data. The correlation matrix is computed and examined. It discloses that there are enough correlations to go ahead with factor analysis.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy has been computed which is found to be .470 (Table 2). It is indicating that the sample is good enough for sampling.

The overall significance of correlation matrices is tested with Bartlett Test of Sphericity (approx chi square = 768.211 and significant at .000) provided as well as support for validity of the factor analysis of the data set.

Table2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.470
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	768.211
	Df	276
	Sig.	.000

Hence, all these three standards indicate that the data is suitable for factor analysis. Principal components analysis is employed for extracting factors.

Communalities

The squared factor loadings for all factors for a given variable are the variance in that variable accounted for by all the factors, and this is called the communality. The ratio of eigenvalues is the ratio of explanatory importance of the factors with respect to the variables.

Rotation Method

Orthogonal rotation with varimax was applied (Table 3). The latent root criterion is used for extraction of factors. As per it, only the factor having latent roots or values greater than one is considered significant. All the factors with latent roots less than one are considered insignificant and disregarded.

There are only five factors having no values exceeding one in our study. The percentage of total variance is used as an index to determine how well the total factor solution accounts for what the variables represent together. The index for present solution equals 67.4% of the total variation.

Table 3. Rotated Component Matrix

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
S1	.496	-.020	-.051	.121	.426
S2	-.557	-.016	.345	-.176	-.147
S3	-.615	-.038	-.124	.024	.079
S4	-.005	.018	.520	.142	.060
S5	.167	.173	-.420	.024	-.099
S6	-.120	.788	-.003	-.193	.190
S7	-.012	-.023	.033	.048	-.413
S8	.263	-.186	.079	-.418	.037
S9	.267	-.130	.344	-.036	-.297
S10	-.024	.738	.016	.074	.193
S11	-.060	.085	.295	.143	.523
S12	-.331	-.101	-.132	.316	-.300
S13	.334	.386	-.093	.117	-.448
S14	-.184	-.359	.178	.058	-.084
S15	.550	-.011	.005	-.089	-.032
S16	.165	.155	.159	-.683	.135
S17	.217	.175	.606	.065	-.092
S18	-.005	.448	.192	.114	-.240
S19	-.082	.254	-.566	.203	-.028
S20	-.063	-.004	.363	.415	.137
S21	.037	-.211	-.380	.104	.025
S22	.116	.126	-.035	-.047	.678
S23	.278	-.013	.204	.399	.103
S24	.344	.019	.012	.672	-.029

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

There are only five factors having no values exceeding one in our study. The percentage of total variance is used as an index to determine how well the total factor solution accounts for what the variables represent together. The index for present solution equals 67.4% of the total variation. Table 4 indicates the factor loadings of each variable.

Table 4. Statements and their Factors Loadings

Factor	Name of dimension	Statement	Factor loading
Factor 1	Authenticity	I often want the product to be advertisement on TV	.496
		TV advertisements enlighten me about the new products.	.557
		TV advertisement helps me to locate better products.	.615
		I find TV advertisements reliable.	.431
		I find TV ads appealing, the animated characters used in the advertising keeps me busy	.550
		I firmly believe that an advertised product carries a label of quality.	.544
Factor 2	Entertaining	TV advertisements are pleasantly prepared and attractive	.788
		TV advertisement does not mislead them to make wrong purchases.	.738
		I find TV ads entertaining, I like the tempo of the jingles used in TV advertisements.	.559
		I feel TV advertisement provides meticulous information about products.	.548
Factor 3	Informative	T.V advertisement are beneficial for product usage	.520
		T.V advertisement makes my product attaining decision simpler	.520
		I do not like T.V advertisement as they are not enjoyable or pleasing.	.678
		I watch TV advertisement for excitement	.544
Factor 4	Believability	I only pay consideration towards the content of TV advertisement	.518
		I find TV advertisements convincing	.578
		I like most of the advertisements that I watch on TV	.683
		I firmly believe that an advertisement product carries a tag of quality	.515
Factor 5	Usage	It feels virtuous to watch advertisement of products already purchased by self	.513
		I feel TV ads provide exhaustive product information	.523

		I feel TV ads keep me up to date	.448
		Products advertised on television are distinctive as compared to products that are not advertised.	.678

The following factors have been identified (as depicted in Table 4).

Authenticity

This is the most important factor. In this factor children expressed that they wanted to procure products that were being advertised on television, as they felt that advertisements helped them in finding appropriate and reliable product information. They were also of the opinion that advertised product carried a label of quality. They found find television advertisements appealing and held the belief that the animated characters used in the advertising kept them busy.

Entertaining

The second factor is entertaining. Children were of the opinion that television advertisements are entertaining, they appreciated the music and jingles used in advertisements and believed that they usually project meticulous information about products. However, there are respondents who believe that some television advertisements are deceitful and can mislead them into wrong purchases.

Informative

Most of the children were of the opinion that advertisements are helpful in making their procurement decisions easier as they provide apt product information They also felt that advertisements create an excitement and create a motivation to acquire a product.

Believability

Children expressed that they paid attention towards the content of television advertisement and also found them convincing. Advertisement made them believe that a product carried a tag of quality.

Usage

The children expressed that they felt virtuous when they watched advertisements of products that were they were already in possession of. They believed that television advertisements provide exhaustive information and keep them up to date about products. They were also of the opinion that Products advertised on television are distinctive as compared to products that are not advertised.

After exploring the factors influencing children perceptions towards television advertisement, an attempt has been made to understand the differences in the perception of the rural and urban respondent (children) towards television advertisement. The following null hypothesis is proposed.

H₀: There is no significant difference in the perception of rural and urban respondents towards influence of television advertisement on their purchase decision.

Table 5: Evaluation of Perceptions towards television advertisement on the basis of geographic region

Perceptions towards Television Advertisement	Geographic Region	Mean	Std. Dev	t-value	D.F.	p-value
Authenticity	Rural	4.3991	1.132	-5.485	398	0.000***
	Urban	3.6773	1.423			
Entertaining	Rural	4.4368	0.765	0.465	398	0.639
	Urban	4.3756	1.029			
Informative	Rural	3.8785	1.017	0.113	398	0.897
	Urban	3.9123	1.233			

Believability	Rural	4.3029	1.056	-5.471	398	0.000***
	Urban	3.8708	1.217			
Usage	Rural	3.7832	0.975	0.126	398	0.876
	Urban	3.8453	1.210			

The results of the test indicate that the perceptions of the respondents (children) on the basis of their geographic region (i.e. rural and urban) are significant for factor authenticity (t-value= -5.584, d.f.=398, p-value=0.000) and believability (t-value= -5.471, d.f.=398, p-value=0.000). However, for factors entertaining (t-value= 0.465, d.f.=398, p-value=0.639), informative (t-value= 0.113, d.f.=398, p-value=0.897) and usage (t-value= 0.126, d.f.=398, p-value=0.876), the mean differences in the perceptions were found to be insignificant. The values of means convey that perceptions of rural respondents (children) are stronger than the urban respondents (children) as the mean score of rural respondents is higher than the mean score of urban respondents for Authenticity (mean of rural respondents =4.2991 & mean of urban respondents = 3.6773) and Believability (mean of rural respondents = 4.3029 as compared to urban respondents mean score = 3.8708). However, factors; Entertaining, Informative and Usage showed insignificant results. This implies that perceptions of rural and urban respondents towards influence of television advertisement are almost similar.

Henceforth, the null hypothesis has been rejected partially as the perceptions of rural and urban respondents towards various television advertisements are significantly different (for authenticity and believability).

Conclusion

The result indicated that children from urban as well as rural areas have a positive attitude towards television advertisements and contemplate it as a vital source of acquiring information about brands. They nurture a strong desire to procure products that are being advertised on television and feel that information from an authentic source helps them in making appropriate purchase decisions. Television advertisements are envisaged as appealing by children. The use of animated characters, sports and other celebrities keeps children intrigued. The music and jingles used in advertisements are immensely appreciated. Advertisements create an enthusiasm and create an inspiration to acquire a product. Children feel worthy when they watch advertisements of products that they already possess which implies that they feel more loyal and connected to a brand if it is advertised.

Children (both rural and urban) have almost similar perceptions regarding influence of television advertisement on their purchase preferences. All children were of the opinion that advertisements guarantee the authenticity of products, make them believe that a product carries a tag of quality and enables indubitable usage of products. However, as compared to their urban counterpart's rural children strongly believed that advertisements are authentic and support products that carried a tag of quality. They also believed that they paid more attention to the content of television advertisements.

Television advertisement is the main source of Indian children's knowledge about different brands and it is this knowledge that comes handy in family decision making. The notion that children are indecisive and easily influenced is a myth and creativity needs to be enhanced in television advertisements.

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