



Impact of Advertisements Children and Youth Media on Consumer Behavior

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Abstract:

Children must have certain basic information processing skills to fully understand advertising messages. This article investigated three issues currently causing concern: purchase. Advertising to Children with respect to purchase request behavior and aggression, evidence of gender stereotyping was more pronounced. What influence has food and behave rage marketing had on the dietary patterns and health stratus of American Children and Youth. There is growing evidence that the early life environment is an important determinant of obesity later in life. Children and youth are subsequently exposed to influences from an array of marketing venues and vehicles including school based marketing, promotions, television and movie product placements, and marketing through the Internet, digital television, and mobile phones. Moreover, integrated marketing communications have begun to permeate the lives of children and youth. Like adults, children and young people acquire new information and knowledge. The family is the first socializing agent because parents and older siblings take action as sources of information and provide social supports and pressure that affect children's behaviors. Whether influenced by their parents and siblings, or children by food and other goods and influence the purchasing decisions of their parents and caregivers.

Keyword: Marketing communication, advertising and digital television.

Introduction:

Advertising is hardly a recent human endeavor; archaeologists have uncovered signs advertising property for rent dating back to ancient Rome and Pompeii. Town criers were another early form of advertising. As an industry, advertising did not take off until the arrival of the various mass media: printing, radio, and television. Nevertheless, concerns over advertising targeting children preceded both radio and television. The British Parliament passed legislation in 1874 intended to protect children from the efforts of merchants to induce them to buy products and assume debt. They

must be able to discriminate, at a perceptual level, commercial from noncommercial content, and they must be able to attribute persuasive intent to advertising and to adjust their interpretation of commercial message based on that knowledge.

Compounding the growth in channels for advertising targeting children has been another development: the privatization of children's media use. Many children also have unsupervised access to computers, meaning that much of the media (and advertising) content that children view is in contexts absent parental monitoring and supervision.



These two trends—the growth in advertising channels reaching children and the privatization of children's media use—have resulted in a dramatic increase in advertising directly intended for the eyes and ears of children. It is estimated that advertisers spend more than \$12 billion per year to reach the youth market and that children view more than 40,000 commercials each year. These figures represent dramatic increases over those from the 1970s. Food and beverages are now marketed to children, youth, and their families in ways that are dramatically different. Advertising does not exist or operate in isolation from other aspects of marketing activities. In most advertising, the commercial is an element of a larger marketing design. Children and youth are subsequently exposed to influences from an array of marketing venues and vehicles including school based marketing, promotions, television and movie product placements, and marketing through the Internet, digital television, and mobile phones. Moreover, integrated marketing communications have begun to permeate the lives of children and youth.

Objectives: To assess the role of television as tool for childhood obesity impediment.

Methodology: Review of the available literature about the relationship between television and childhood obesity, eating habits and body shape awareness.

Development and Advertisement:

Basic developmental research on egocentrism and perspective taking, along with a great deal of evidence specifically examining developmental differences in the comprehension of persuasive intent within advertisements, establishes clearly that most children younger than 7–8 years of age do not

recognize the persuasive intent of commercial appeals. Nonetheless, a key conclusion of the task force, which is supported by a strong base of empirical evidence, is that young children below 7–8 years of age clearly lack an understanding of the persuasive intent of television advertising.

The Effects of Advertising on Children

The impact of television advertising on preschool and elementary school-aged children occurs at multiple levels, including the relatively immediate product-persuasion effects intended by the advertiser as well as broader and/or more cumulative types of influences that accrue from exposure to large numbers of commercials over time. For example, a cereal ad may have the immediate effect of generating product-purchase requests and increasing product consumption, but it may also contribute to outcomes such as misperceptions about proper nutritional habits or parent–child conflict should a child's purchase-influence attempt be rejected by the parent. Each of these distinct perspectives is addressed below.

These products and their spokes-characters have been found to be featured in programming and publications frequently viewed by minors, and reviews of this research (including the Surgeon General's analysis) conclude that advertising of them contributes to youth smoking and drinking. Critics have also expressed concern regarding the prevalence of advertising of violent media, such as movies and video games, targeting children.

Children's Comprehension of Television Advertising: Children must acquire two key information-processing skills in order to achieve mature comprehension of



advertising messages. First, they must be able to discriminate at a perceptual level commercial from noncommercial content; and second, they must be able to attribute persuasive intent to advertising and to apply a degree of skepticism to their interpretation of advertising messages consistent with that knowledge. Each of these capabilities develops over time as a function of cognitive growth and intellectual development (John, 1999; Young, 1990).

District School based Advertising that targets young children

As schools face serious economic pressures and challenges, advertisers are increasingly offering resources to educators in return for access to school children as audiences for their commercial messages. While the funds derived from advertising may be put to good use, local decision makers often lack any broad-based understanding of the issues this report raises, which document young children's unique vulnerability to commercial persuasion. We believe the evidence in this realm makes clear the inappropriateness of directing advertising to this young age group. This recommendation, however, is not meant to imply that the task force finds school-based advertising targeting older children either acceptable, reasonable, or without concern. Unfortunately, the paucity of research in this area does not yet allow us to understand the potential consequences of the growing commercialization of the school environment, or permit us to make sound, empirically based recommendations at any broader level.

The issue of Fairness in Advertising to Young Children

This review of research indicates clearly that advertising exerts substantial

influence on children's attitudes and behaviors, and these effects reach well beyond moving product desire from one brand to another. Although it is true that effective commercials can successfully influence even the most intelligent adult, research in this area indicates that young children who lack the ability to attribute persuasive intent to television advertising are uniquely vulnerable to such effects. Children below age 7-8 years tend to accept commercial claims and appeals as truthful and accurate because they fail to comprehend the advertiser's motive to exaggerate and embellish. When advertised products appeal to them, children are more likely to focus on the concrete aspects of the product and consequently overlook the abstract nature of the relationship between the advertiser and the audience viewing the commercial.

Children and young people in advertising

- ✚ Marketing targeted at children and young people
- ✚ the sexualisation of children in advertising
- ✚ the promotion of unhealthy body images in advertising
- ✚ gender stereotyping
- ✚ the promotion of consumerism targeting children, and
- ✚ The privacy of children and young people where direct marketing is concerned.

Sexualisation of Children in Advertising

The sexualisation of children and young people particularly in advertising is an issue the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian has long spoken out against. Over the past



decade, the fashion industry has started using younger models and now commonly portrays 12 year –old girls as if they were women. Camera angles averted eyes, wounded facial expressions, and vulnerable poses mimic the visual images common in pornographic media. By sexualizing children, advertisers may be suggesting to adults that children are interested in and ready for sex. If children perceive beings sexy as an important part of their lives, they may miss out on activities that better foster physical and cognitive development, such as sports.

Images of children and young people in advertising should be respectful, reflect positive, healthy lifestyle choices and show realistic image of what it is like to be young. Adult ideals should not be imposed on children and young people for corporate benefit.

Special Ethical Issues in Marketing to Children

Children are an important marketing target for certain products. Because their knowledge about products, the media, and selling strategies is usually not as well developed as that of adults, children are likely to be more vulnerable to psychological appeals and strong images. Thus, ethical questions sometimes arise when they are exposed to questionable marketing tactics and messages. For example, studies linking relationships between tobacco and alcohol marketing with youth consumption resulted in increased public pressure directly leading to the regulation of marketing for those products.

The proliferation of direct marketing and use of the Internet to market to children also raises ethical issues. Sometimes a few unscrupulous marketers design sites

so that children are able to bypass adult supervision or control; sometimes they present objectionable materials to underage consumers or pressure them to buy items or provide credit card numbers. When this happens, it is likely that social pressure and subsequent regulation will result. Likewise, programming for children and youth in the mass media has been under scrutiny for many years.

In the United States, marketing to children is closely controlled. Federal regulations place limits on the types of marketing that can be directed to children, and marketing activities are monitored by the Better Business Bureau, the Federal Trade Commission, consumer and parental groups, and the broadcast networks. These guidelines provide clear direction to marketers.

Online marketing of foods to children's

- Marketing of food to children on the internet is even more complex since the boundaries between content and pure advertising is often less clear than on television. Only a minority of advertisers include reminders distinguishing content from pure advertising.
- One study has shown that children find it harder to recognize advertisements on websites than they do on television; 6 year olds only recognized a quarter of the ads, 8 year olds recognized half of the ads, and 10 and 12 year olds recognized about three quarters of the ads.
- The majority of food brands advertised to children on TV is also promoted on the internet and often includes online games



which are heavily branded, i.e. "averages".

- Averages can provide a more highly involving and entertaining brand experience than what is possible with conventional media.
- Websites also contain other brand-related content such as television commercials, media tie-ins, promotions, viral marketing and website membership opportunities.

Controlling the TV: Parental Initiatives

Managing TV more effectively means being choosy about what and when you watch. It also means sometimes choosing another activity instead of watching TV. Some parents help their children manage their TV viewing with formal rules about how much they can watch and what they can watch. Others manage less formally, turning off the TV when they feel it has been on too long or changing the channel when they think the program is inappropriate (Rodgers, 1994).

Think about what your goals are in managing television. You can write them down, talk about them, and remember your goals may change as you grow and change. Here are several sample goals: to have my child see less violence; to make sure my child is watching shows that are right for his age; to help my child enjoy good TV programs; to prevent my child from learning stereotypes; to encourage my children to play outside more; and to help my child learn to manage TV on her own (Rodgers, 1994).

To achieve your goals, you can talk to your family about the way they use television. You can provide them with

guidelines for using TV in the home. You can make rules about television. If you make rules for your children or give them guidelines, make sure that they really achieve your goals. So you want your child to play outside more. If you tell her that she cannot watch cartoons, it may or may not help. A better rule might be that she can watch TV after she has played outside (Rodgers, 1994).

Listed below are some guidelines parents can offer their children. What to watch: we don't watch shows with fighting in them, we'll choose your programs together, and we can watch the following show together. How much to watch: two hours of TV per day, 5 programs per week, only on weekends, and one program to watch after chores (Rodger, 1994).

Result: The reviewed studies showed the following: television watching replaces more dynamic activities; there is a positive relationship among time spent watching television and being heavy or fat on populations of different age; obesity popularity has better as well as the number of hours that TV networks give to children; for the duration of the last 30 y, the rate of children watching television for more than 4 h per day seems to have better; children are showing to a large number of important unhealthful stimulations in terms of food eating when watching television; over the last few years, the number of television food commercials targeting children have improved particularly, the present use of food in movies, shows and cartoons may lead to a false impression of the notion of healthy food and motivate an excessive intake of poor nutritional food; and obese subjects shown in television programmes are in a much lower percentage than in real life and are depicted as being



unattractive, unsuccessful and ridiculous or with other negative traits and this is likely to result in the different European countries have different TV legislations.

Conclusion:

Children in the United States deserve the same protection against advertising as that afforded to adults. Existing law is specific in requiring that commercial messages be clearly identifiable as such to their intended audience. Certainly, it would be impossible to protect young children from exposure to all advertising on television. But as we have documented, there is a significant amount of advertising uniquely designed for and specifically directed to audiences of young children. Which advertising influences children and adolescents? Some authors argue that children are critical consumers who are capable of defending themselves against the possible negative effects of advertising, such advertising efforts, in our view, are fundamentally unfair because of young children's limited comprehension of the nature and purpose of television advertising, and therefore warrant governmental action to protect young children from commercial exploitation. As children get older, they increasingly display irritation and skepticism while watching commercials. Finally, behavioral effects studies of advertising focus on the extent to which children are persuaded by advertisements. The different national regulations on programs and advertising directed to children could have a role in the different prevalence of childhood obesity in different European countries. Television could be a convenient tool to spread correct information on good nutrition and obesity prevention.

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