

ATTITUDE OF MOTHERS TOWARDS TV ADS: A COMPARISON OF WORKING AND HOMEMAKER MOTHERS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: To study the attitude of working and homemaker mothers towards TV advertising and its effect on their children.

Methodology: Self structured questionnaire and convenience sampling technique was used for data collection. The Sample comprises of 400 mothers (age: 25 to 45 years) of children (age: 8 to 16 years). The response was generated regarding 32 statements related to different aspects of TV advertising measured on a five point Likert Scale.

Findings: Factor Analysis of working mothers revealed 8 dimensions while homemaker mothers revealed 7 dimensions. Both mothers find TV ads informative for their children. The attitude of working mothers is more liberal and favorable towards TV ads than homemaker mothers. While, working mothers are bothered about ads being persuasive and materialistic; homemakers find TV ads featuring adult content and unhealthy eating habits worrisome.

Research limitations: Although there is a possibility of applicability of the conclusions about attitude towards TV ads to other parts of the country, no such general applicability beyond the respondents of Punjab is claimed. The sample selected comprises of urban and economically stronger population.

Value of Paper: This study is useful for both ad-makers and policy-makers. TV ads have indelible influence on children as they are the most impressionable segment of the TV viewing population. So, ads should be such that they achieve higher sales but also leave a positive impact on young minds.

Keywords: TV advertising, children, attitude, behavior, working mothers, homemaker mothers

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INTRODUCTION

Advertising is 'a communication activity through which social change is mediated' Leiss et al. (1986). They believed advertising to be the most important social, economic and cultural institution in the society.

Parents have a responsibility to teach their children about the realities of the commercial world. Parents determine what their children learn from TV ads as they supplement the information provided in them. Many researchers studied parents' attitude towards TV advertising to get a better understanding of impact of ads on children (Frideres, 1973; Burr and Burr, 1977; Grossbart and Crosby, 1984; Hite and Eck, 1987; Unnikrishnan and Bajpai, 1996; Wimalasiri, 2004; Kapoor and Verma, 2005). Parents play the role of sculptor in shaping a child's personality. Children are said to be reflection of their parents. Amongst parents, this study pertains to mothers only as they have an indelible influence on their children. "What mothers sings to the cradle goes all the way down the grave" goes a famous saying. Also, it is substantiated by the previous research that mothers' attitude towards TV ads has an impact on attitude of children towards TV ads (Ward and Wackman, 1972; Caron and Ward, 1975; Galst and White, 1976; Popper, 1979; Heslop and Ryans, 1980; Mukherji, 2005). Further, to avoid confusion and inconsistency in the results, fathers were not included. Mothers have been further categorized into the Working and Homemakers mothers. It is believed that they follow different daily routine and approach to life; and hence would have different opinion on various issues.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kapoor and Verma (2005) reported that parents admit the role that TV ads play in shaping their children's buying response. However, if parents do not want their child to be affected adversely by TV ads; early parents-child interactions are important. The final lesson that a child extracts from the viewing of TV ads is a joint product of what is shown on the screen and what is taught by parents.

Mukherji (2005) found that the urban middle class mothers in India have positive attitude towards advertising, unlike their western counterparts, whose attitude towards advertising have become increasingly negative and skeptical.

Yu (2012) analyzed the mothers' opinions having one child between the ages of 7-12 for investigating the impact of TV food advertising on their children. Sample comprised of 318 respondents. Findings revealed negative attitude of mothers towards TV food advertising for their own children. Further, they believe that the children of strangers are more negatively impacted by TV ads than their own children.

Guha (2013) found that working women were more involved with the purchasing activities than non working women. They were more price conscious, quality conscious and store loyal as compared to their counterparts.

Singh and Kaur (2014) investigated the attitude of mothers towards TV ads in general, children advertising and food advertising directed at children. The findings revealed negative attitude of Indian mothers towards advertising in general for ads directed at children and also for food ads. They strongly believe that promotions are directed at children in an unethical manner.

Waller and Lanasier (2015) revealed that advertising directed toward children is a controversial issue and the reasons for its negative effects include that such advertising could lead to materialism, parent-child conflict, and feelings of unhappiness. Advertising by food companies is a target for criticism due to concerns about unhealthy food and childhood obesity.

Khanna (2016) studied the perception of parents about the intended and unintended effects of television advertisements on their children (aged 8-14). Factor analysis was applied. Finding revealed five factors such as; Concern for Junk Food Ads; Family Conflict; Advertising is positive (information effects); Materialistic and Misleading/Falsity.

NEED OF STUDY

This study is useful for both ad-makers ad policy-makers. TV ads have indelible influence on children as they are the most impressionable segment of the population. So, ads should be such that they achieve higher sales but also leave a positive impact on young minds.

OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

To study the attitude of working and homemaker mothers towards TV advertising and its effect on their children.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample

Number of mothers was 400 and majority of them belong to urban, middle class and upper middle class families. Most of the mothers are homemakers (56.75%), followed by servicewomen (24.75%), businesswomen (10.25%), and professionals (5.75%). A small percentage (2.50%) is such who were earlier a working woman but are now a homemaker. So, 163 respondents are working mothers and 237 are homemaker mothers in the study. Largest number of mothers (55.50%) belongs to the middle age group of 35-45 years, followed by mothers from the age group of 25-35 years (26.50%). A small number of them (10.25%) are from the youngest age group of up to 25 years old and the oldest age group of above 45 years old (7.75%). There are 270 mothers whose education is graduation and above; and 130 mothers' below graduation. Children (age group 8-16) who were studying in reputed private schools were given questionnaires to get them filled from their mothers. A note regarding this was attached in their school diaries. The effective sample turned out to be 400 from the cities representing traditional, geographical and cultural categorization of Punjab (Majha region) Amritsar, (Doaba) Jalandhar and (Malwa) Patiala.

Data collection Technique

Convenience sampling technique using self structured questionnaire on five point Likert Scale for data collection is used. The questionnaires were distributed amongst the children studying in private schools catering to the upper economic strata of the society. They were given written circulars through school that they have to get the questionnaires filled from their mothers within a stipulated time.

Questionnaire

A total of 32 statements reflect attitude and beliefs of Working and Homemaker mothers'. These were short listed on the basis of review of previous studies (Unnikrishnan and Bajpai, 1996; Kapoor and Verma, 2005; Vij, 2007 etc.) intuition and discussion with experts. Factor analysis method is used to extract factors.

DATA ANALYSIS

Attitude of Working Mothers towards TV Ads

Factor analysis is applied in the study, where correlation matrix came out to be considerably significant. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (0.709) is found to be sufficiently high for all variables. Bartlett's Sphericity Test (113.78) indicates that there are significant numbers of correlations among the variables.

Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation is done. The cut-off point for significant factor loadings is taken to be 0.45. The Eigen values greater than one is considered for the final selection of factors. In case of working woman mothers, 8 factors are identified. These factors explained 63.11 per cent of the variance. The communalities ranged between 0.62 (M7, M10, M12, M22 and M28) and 0.79 (M31). Below is the naming of factors. (take in Table I)

Table I: Naming of Factors (Working Mothers)

Factor number	Name of Dimension (% of Variance)	Label	Statement (Factor Loadings)
Factor 1	Inappropriate and Inciting ads (11.54%)	M13	Children are negatively affected by adult ads which are for products not related to children. (0.621)
		M12	TV ads dictate carefree / careless attitude (as they reveal much of this world on a perpetual holiday, eating out, shopping endlessly, just having fun and doing nothing else). (0.554)
		M17	TV ads dictate that doing mature things at young age is allowable (showing children as miniature adults doing shopping, coking, dispensing medicines and going out with friends on their own). (0.531)
		M16	TV advertising leads to unsafe behavior; children are impressed by the dangerous activities shown in them. (0.517)
		M25	
		M14	I often feel hesitant / embarrassed in watching some ads with my children. (0.476)
Factor 2	Ads as a Window to the World (10.38%)	M5	TV ads make kids smarter than my generation. (0.604)
		M4	TV ads shape child's beliefs about the world around by the messages that cast deep impressions. (0.519)
		M2	TV is an educator for children, it complements formal school learning. (0.518)
		M3	TV ads have a progressive and educative influence on my children. (0.467)

Factor number	Name of Dimension (% of Variance)	Label	Statement (Factor Loadings)
Factor 3	Integral to Lifestyle (8.57%)	M1	I am generally interested in watching TV ads. (0.537)
		M22	I have an overall good image of TV ads. (0.527)
		M26	There is no problem if children memorize catchy jingles/one liners of ads and use them in their conversation. (0.504)
		M23	If my children want to follow the clothes/foot wear trends of TV ads, I see no harm in it. (0.489)
Factor 4	Pester Power (7.62%)	M18	TV ads lead children to pressurize parents to purchase those products which they would otherwise have ignored. (0.536)
		M19	There is increase in conflict between parents and children because of children's ever increasing demands; due to TV ads. (0.518)
		M24	TV ads lead to unnecessary desires amongst children, thus the rising dissatisfaction amongst them. (0.511)
		M20	I feel my children interfere in the products that I buy for myself/family because of TV ads. (0.498)
		M21	The free gifts, offered with products shown on TV ads, affect my child's purchase requests. (0.486)
		M10	Children are developing unhealthy eating habits because of TV ads. (0.476)
Factor 5	Materialistic Tendencies (7.13%)	M11	TV ads are responsible for making children materialistic. (0.529)
		M8	Through TV ads, children are being urged, just as we are, to live by the standards of the rich. (0.516)
		M9	TV ads are too persuasive for children. (0.496)
Factor 6	Undesired Exposure to Children (6.54%)	M15	There are too many ads on TV nowadays which lead to waste of time and longer sedentary viewing. (0.604)
		M29	TV ads have potential to incite violence, aggression or tension amongst children. (0.519)

Factor 1: Inappropriate and Inciting Ads

The first factor explains 11.54 per cent of variance with 6 statements. The highest magnitude of coefficient is 0.621 in case of M13, "Children are negatively affected by adult ads which are for products not related to children", followed by M12, "TV ads dictate carefree / careless attitude (as they reveal much of this world on a perpetual holiday, eating out, shopping endlessly, just having fun and doing nothing else)" (0.554).

Factor 2: Ads as a Window to the World

This factor explains 10.38 per cent of variance with 4 statements. The statement M5, "TV ads make kids smarter than my generation" gets the highest coefficient (0.604), followed by M4, "TV ads shape child's beliefs about the world around by the messages that cast deep impressions" (0.519).

The remaining 2 statements talk about TV ads' educative impact on children and ads complementing formal learning.

Factor 3: Integral to Lifestyle

The third factor explains 8.57 per cent of total variance with 5 statements. The statement M1, "I am generally interested in watching TV ads" scores the highest coefficient (0.537), followed by M22, "I have an overall good image of TV ads" (0.527).

Factor 4: Pester Power

This factor explains 7.62 per cent of the variance with 6 statements. These statements highlight that TV ads may make children pester parents for advertised products and refusal on the part of parents resulting in to dissatisfaction and conflict. The highest coefficient is 0.536 in case of M18, "TV ads lead children to pressurize parents to purchase those products which they would otherwise have ignored", followed by M19, "There is increase in conflict between parents and children because of children's ever increasing demands; due to TV ads" (0.518).

Factor 5: Materialistic Tendencies

This factor explains 7.13 per cent of variance and 3 statements. The statement M11, "TV ads are responsible for making children materialistic" scores the highest coefficient (0.529). It broadly covers that the materialistic tendencies are being instilled into children through ads.

Factor 6: Undesired Exposure to Children

The sixth factor explains 6.54 per cent of variance with 5 statements. The statement M15, "There are too many ads on TV nowadays which lead to waste of time and longer sedentary viewing" gets the highest coefficient (0.604), followed by M29, "TV ads have potential to incite violence, aggression or tension amongst children" (0.519). The remaining 3 statements are about ads showing objectionable content that leads to undesired exposure of children at an inappropriate age and the difficulty that parents face in keeping a check on ad viewing.

Factor 7: Socially Desirable Behavior

This factor explains 5.87 per cent of variance with 2 statements. It highlights the impact of ads in making children learn socially desirable mannerisms. The statement M7, "TV ads can explain to children how to handle a fearful situation (For example, first day at school, a visit to dentist is not as terrible as expected)" scores the higher coefficient (0.526) than the statement M6, "TV ads have a civilizing influence and lead to socially desirable behavior amongst children (For example, they show cooperative & caring behavior with friends, siblings, parents, society etc.)" (0.511).

Factor 8: Censorship over Ads

This factor explains 5.46 per cent of variance with 2 statements and indicates the importance of some regulatory measures over TV ads. The statement M28, "TV ads aimed specifically for children or portraying children should be banned" gets the higher coefficient (0.586) than the statement M27, "There should be a strict government control on TV ads" (0.586).

Attitude of Homemaker Mothers towards TV Ads

In order to test the suitability of data for factor analysis, the correlation matrix is computed, which showed enough correlations to carry out factor analysis. Kaiser-Meyer-Okin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is found to be 0.649 which indicated that the sample is good enough for sampling. Bartlett's

Test of Sphericity (69.87) showed statistically significant number of correlations. The communalities range between 0.54 (M9) to 0.74 (M27).

Total 7 factors are extracted by employing Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation. Total variance explained by the factors is 63.63 per cent. Below is the naming of factors. (take in Table II)

Table II: Naming of Factors (Homemaker Mothers)

Factor number	Name of Dimension (% of Variance)	Label	Statement (Factor Loadings)
Factor 1	Inappropriate and Inciting ads (12.58%)	M13	Children are negatively affected by adult ads which are for products not related to children. (0.601)
		M14	I often feel hesitant / embarrassed in watching some ads with my children. (0.554)
		M32	TV ads many times show such things which contradict my family values. (0.531)
		M16	TV advertising leads to unsafe behavior; children are impressed by the dangerous activities shown in them. (0.524)
		M31	It is possible for parents to exercise restrictions regarding TV programs but not regarding TV ads. (0.511)
		M17	TV ads dictate that doing mature things at young age is allowable (showing children as miniature adults doing shopping, coking, dispensing medicines and going out with friends on their own.). (0.487)
Factor 2	Pester Power (11.04%)	M18	TV ads lead children to pressurize parents to purchase those products which they would otherwise have ignored. (0.621)
		M24	TV ads lead to unnecessary desires amongst children, thus the rising dissatisfaction amongst them. (0.537)
		M10	Children are developing unhealthy eating habits because of TV ads. (0.524)
		M19	There is increase in conflict between parents and children because of children's ever increasing demands; due to TV ads. (0.514)
		M20	I feel my children interfere in the products that I buy for myself/family because of TV ads. (0.477)
Factor 3	Ads as a Window to the World (9.02%)	M3	TV ads have a progressive and educative influence on my children. (0.623)
		M4	TV ads shape child's beliefs about the world around by the messages that cast deep impressions. (0.554)
		M7	TV ads can explain to children how to handle a fearful situation (For example, first day at school, a visit to dentist is not as terrible as expected). (0.513)

Factor number	Name of Dimension (% of Variance)	Label	Statement (Factor Loadings)
Factor 3	Ads as a Window to the World (9.02%)	M2	TV is an educator for children, it complements formal school learning. (0.501)
		M1	I am generally interested in watching TV ads. (0.487)
		M5	TV ads make kids smarter than my generation. (0.471)
Factor 4	Undesired Exposure to children (8.77%)	M28	TV ads aimed specifically for children or portraying children should be banned. (0.621)
		M15	There are too many ads on TV nowadays which lead to waste of time and longer sedentary viewing. (0.547)
		M25	TV ads have shortened children's attention span because of rapid fire editing style of ads. (0.534)
		M27	There should be a strict government control on TV ads. (0.482)
		M29	TV ads have potential to incite violence, aggression or tension amongst children. (0.432)
		M30	There is a lot of objectionable content in TV ads which leads to sexual awareness or an undesired curiosity at a young age. (0.417)

Factor 1: Inappropriate and Inciting Ads

This factor explains 12.58 per cent of the variance with 6 statements. The highest coefficient is 0.601 in case of the statement M13, “children are negatively affected by adult ads which are for products not related to children”, followed by M14, “I often feel hesitant / embarrassed in watching some ads with my children” (0.554).

Factor 2: Pester Power

The second factor highlights bad eating habits, pressurizing parents for goods, interfering in parental purchase decisions, rising dissatisfaction and familial conflicts due to TV ads and explains 11.04 per cent of the variance with 5 statements. The statement M18, “TV ads lead children to pressurize parents to purchase those products which they would otherwise have ignored” scores the highest coefficient of 0.621, followed by M24, “TV ads lead to unnecessary desires amongst children, thus the rising dissatisfaction amongst them” (0.537).

Factor 3: Ads as a Window to the World

Factor 3 notes that TV ads have many educative effects on children. This factor explained 9.02 per cent of the variance with 7 statements. The highest coefficient of 0.623 is secured by the statement M3, “TV ads have a progressive and educative influence on the children”, followed by M4, “TV ads shape child's beliefs about the world around by the messages that cast deep impressions” (0.554).

Factor 4: Undesired Exposure to Children

The fourth factor conveys TV advertising's negative effects on children and need for keeping a stringent check on them. This factor explains 8.77 per cent of the variance with 6 statements. The highest magnitude of coefficient is 0.621 in case of the statement M28, “TV ads aimed specifically for

children or portraying children should be banned”, followed by M15, “There are too many ads on TV nowadays which lead to waste of time and longer sedentary viewing.” (0.547).

Factor 5: Materialistic Tendencies

TV ads develop materialistic tendencies in children is the fifth factor regarding perception of mothers about TV ads. This factor explains 8.26 per cent of the variance with 4 statements. These statements highlight that the TV ads are persuasive, develop materialism, urge children to follow the affluent, propagate carefree attitude of just having fun with no responsibilities. The highest coefficient is 0.531 in case of M9, “TV ads are too persuasive for children”, followed by M8, “Through TV ads, children are being urged, just as we are, to live by the standards of the rich” (0.518).

Factor 6: Integral to Lifestyle

Factor 6 identifies the adoption of good things from ads by the children which explains 7.57 per cent of the variance with 3 statements. The statement M23, “If my children want to follow the clothes/foot wear trends of TV ads, I see no harm in it” scores the highest coefficient of 0.602.

Factor 7: Premium offers as baits

This factor explains 6.39 per cent of the variance with only one statement. The statement M21, “The free gifts, offered with products shown on TV ads, affect my child’s purchase requests.” scores the coefficient of 0.521.

COMPARISON OF RESULTS OF FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR WORKING AND HOMEMAKER MOTHERS

Application of Factor Analysis on the responses of working mothers reveals 8 dimensions while homemaker mothers reveals 7 dimensions. The factor analysis shows that almost similar extent of variance (63 % approx.) is explained by both the group of mothers. There are some similarities and some differences among both the groups.

The 1st factor is 'Inappropriate and Inciting ads' both for working and homemaker mothers. Although there are 4 similar statements (M13, M14, M16 and M17) loaded on the 1st factor of both the groups, but the essence of the 1st factor for homemaker mothers is specifically the adult content shown in ads whereas for working mothers it is the ill effects of ads in general. 'Socially Desirable Behavior' is the 3rd factor in case of homemaker mothers explaining 9.02 per cent of the variance with 7 statements loaded on it (M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6 and M7). On the other hand, similar statements load on to two factors in case of working women, together explaining 16.25 per cent of the variance. They are 'Ads as a Window to the World' and 'Socially Desirable Behavior' which came up as the 2nd (M2, M3, M4 and M5; variance explained 10.38%) and the 7th (M6 and M7; variance explained 5.87%) factor respectively. 'Socially Desirable Behavior' constitutes a separate dimension for working mothers. Hence, TV ads feature as an educational tool for working woman mothers more strongly in comparison to homemaker mothers. The content of 'Pester Power' is the 2nd important factor for homemaker mothers while it is at the fourth level of importance in case of working mothers. Similarly, 'Integral to Lifestyle' is at the 3rd stage of importance for working mothers and the same is at the 6th stage of importance for homemaker mothers. The content of this factor being TV ads showing lifestyle trends in vogue. Also, 'Premium offers as Baits' features as a separate factor with a single statement loaded on to it; explaining 6.39 per cent variance, which defines its importance for homemaker mothers. 'Censorship over ads' detailing regulation of objectionable content of ads; featured out to be more important for homemaker mothers as compared to working woman mothers.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Although there is a possibility of applicability of the conclusions about attitude towards TV ads to other parts of the country, no such general applicability beyond the respondents of Punjab is claimed. The sample selected comprises of urban and economically stronger population. So, the results cannot be generalized for the other segments of society.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

As quoted in the studies of Mukherji (2005) and Khanna (2016), Indian urban mothers do not find the influence of TV ads on their children altogether negative. They are pragmatic in their approach towards ads. On one hand, they find ads as informative (Window to World), but on the other hand they notice the ill-effects of TV ads for their children. Also, it may be concluded that the importance of different factors expressed through statements regarding TV ads vary with the working status of mothers. Mothers are logical enough to see TV ads from both positive and negative angles. Most of the homemaker mothers are conservative and negative in their attitude towards ads; while, working mothers reflect a more liberal and favorable attitude towards TV ads. Homemaker mothers are worried with the TV ads featuring adult content, rising pester power of children and unhealthy eating habits; whereas, working mothers are bothered about ads being persuasive and materialistic. It is observed that TV ads feature as a 'Window to the World', a learning tool and trends guide which is 'Integral to lifestyle' more strongly for working mothers in comparison to homemaker mothers. It is also observed working mothers find TV ads also contribute towards "Socially desirable behaviors" amongst children. The negative attitude of homemaker mothers is more pronounced towards TV ads. Working mothers have greater acceptability of TV ads.

Most parents discuss TV ads and programs with children only when they are asked by their children to do so otherwise they seldom discuss. Parents should encourage discussion regarding TV more often and out of their own initiative. Also, parents discuss TV ads and programs more often with female and older children. It is even more essential for younger and male children as older and female children indicate better cognitive development regarding understanding of TV ads in the current study.

Nowadays, TV broadcasts are such that they require adult supervision and guidance. It is also seen that children who watch TV under adult supervision develop better understanding regarding TV ads; hence female and older children demonstrated better understanding of ads. Although, a large number but not all the children even of the oldest age category could enlist 'selling intent' as the purpose behind ads.

So, the manufacturers and marketers should take note that working-status-wise differences of mothers are important. Overall, where mothers find that ads are inciting and inappropriate for children; they also find them educational and as the window to the world. TV ads have indelible influence on children as they are the most impressionable segment of the TV viewing population. So, ads should be such that they achieve higher sales but also leave a positive impact on young minds.

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