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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

OBJECTIVES

HYPOTHESES

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

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CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF TV ADVERTISING: A STUDY OF THE CHILDREN IN DELHI AND NCR**ZUHAIB MUSTAFA****RESEARCH SCHOLAR****DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES****CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR****KASHMIR****DR. RESHMA NASREEN****ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR****DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES****JAMIA HAMDARD UNIVERSITY****NEW DELHI****DR. FAROOQ AHMAD SHAH****ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR****DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES****CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR****KASHMIR****ABSTRACT**

We examine children's understanding and remembrance of TV advertising that is their ability to differentiate between TV programmes and commercials and their understanding of advertising intention using questionnaires. The sample consisted of 100 children in the age group of 7-13 years taken from different areas of Delhi and NCR. The sample consisted of equal number of boys and girls. For the purpose of analysis of data, different tests like one way ANOVA, Kruskal Wallis test, Correlation, Chi-square test, Regression Analysis are used. The age of a child and amount of media exposure turns out to have a positive effect. It can be inferred that as the age increases the tendency to remember an ad increases. Thus the children in their much developed stages will remember the advertisement much longer time than the children in early stages of development (analytical stage). Similarly the remembrance of an ad increases with the exposure to media, thus the children who have got more exposure to TV advertisements remember the advertisements much longer. The understanding of advertisements is directly correlated with age and amount of exposure. Thus the children in their much developed stages will understand the advertisements much better than the children in early stages of development (analytical stage). Similarly the understanding of an ad increases with the exposure to media, thus the children who have got more exposure to TV advertisements understand the advertisements much better. The effects of gender are rather very small, that is gender does not have much impact on the understanding and remembrance of TV advertisements.

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KEYWORDS

Advertising, Age, Children, Television, Understanding.

INTRODUCTION

Television is one of the strongest medium of advertisements, because of its mass reach; it not only influences an individual's attitude, behavior, lifestyle, experience and other aspects but even the culture. The most terrible victims of TV influence are children. Its effects on children are universal in nature but the magnitude varies from child to child depending upon factors like age, gender, viewing pattern. During the last three decades, the impact of advertising on children recollection and behavior has been the major topic of debate all over the world. Children constantly assume larger roles in their homes and are becoming further ingrained and involved in the shopping and buying habits of their households. The children today are considered as consumers and advertisements have to be made keeping in view their emotions, needs and wants. Hite and Eck (1987) in their study reveal that nearly 61% of parents say "Yes" to the demands of their children based on what they have seen in a TV advertisement. Due to this, responsibility towards this vitally important sector is becoming necessary. The rationale of TV advertising has to be investigated from a child's point of view. The literature (Robertson and Rossiter, 1974; Donohue, Henke, and Donohue, 1980; Butter et al., 1981; Stephens and Stutts, 1982; Macklin, 1983 and 1987) has shown several times that some children are able to differentiate between programs and advertisements and are aware of the purpose of TV advertising, whereas others are not.

The understanding of TV advertising is a significant issue to investigate both from the parent's viewpoint as understanding may prevent harmful influences on the well-being of their children and from the advertiser's point of view as it will vary the effectiveness of their TV advertisements. The lucrative and influential children's market cannot be permitted to sit inoperative by the advertisers. Acceptable advertising is "advertising that does not fall foul of either the legal or the advertising self-regulatory system in place in that society" (Harker, 1998). Acceptable advertising to children may be explained as advertising that is not detrimental to their physical, mental or moral health and social life. Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) is a self regulatory voluntary organization of the advertising industry in India. India as such does not have rules and regulations for advertising to children like other countries such as Sweden and Norway.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The responses of children to TV advertisements during a research trail revealed that children's food choices especially in snacks depend on their understanding to TV commercials (Gorn and Goldberg, 1982). According to Peggy Charren, president and founder of ACT: "The ultimate goal of the thirty second worth of information contained in the message must be to manipulate the child to desire, want and need for the product. No industry will invest forty million to convince these two- to eleven- year olds that they do not need a lot of these products to be happy, healthy, wealthy and wise." (Cited in Liebert and Sprafkin, 1988). Atkin (1981) found that the chances of recalling the brands are very high in children with intense exposure to TV advertisements while shopping in the markets and with their parents. Wartella and Ettermen (1974) observed that children as young as 3 or 4 years old were found to make an attentional shift upward at the commencement of a commercial. On the contrary, the studies by the National Science Foundation (1977) and Zuckerman et al. (1978) found that the children of the age of 5 years continue to concentrate to commercials at around the same level as during the programme. Levin et al. (1982) found that the children react more to the variation in information loads in the opening 10 seconds of a 30 or 60 second commercial than in the same time period extracted from a longer

programme segment. However, Mizerski (1995) found that repeated exposure to the product through commercials with a separator could prompt positive or negative influence towards the product instead of blurring the difference between the programmes and commercials.

Ward et al (1972) found age as a major factor in perception and learning from the advertisement and the behavioral transformation is more likely to crop up in older children than younger ones. The results of several studies appear to indicate that huge majority of children below the age of 6, cannot articulate the selling intention of advertising (Robertson and Rossiter, 1974; Ward et al., 1977; Donohue et al., 1978). Age is a significant factor in a child's understanding and studies involving non verbal measures of understanding have revealed that children can have a rough sense of commercial's selling intent as young as age 4 (Gains and Esserman, 1981). Despite these findings, it is essential to apprehend that a child who says or indicates that advertisements want us to buy things, may still not be able to fully understand the persuasive nature of advertising (Signorielli, 1991). Ward et al (1977) in a survey of kindergarten- aged children estimated that between one tenth and one half of children understand that advertising is trying to sell them products. During this survey, they found that 22% reported that commercials strive to get them to purchase the products. When the kindergartners were shown commercials and then interviewed, the percentage rose up to roughly one- half. Similar findings were reported by Gains and Esserman (1981). They reported that children as little as age 4 can exhibit understanding of commercial intention, but under particular presentation circumstances. The understanding of persuasive intent and selling intent apparently develops as children grow older. Ward et al. (1977) set the age of attainment of understanding as young as kindergarten age, others set it as 8 years or older (Robertson and Rossiter, 1974; Atkin 1979). Therefore, children at least under the age of 8 years cannot be wary of advertising messages (Palmer and Dorr, 1980).

Robertson and Rossiter (1974) advanced the research in this area by differentiating two types of attribution of intent: assistive and persuasive. Assistive means that advertisements are viewed as providing information, while persuasive refers to situations in which the advertisements are viewed as trying to sell something. With the growth of child, the view usually shifts from assistive to persuasive. The study further divulges that by age 10 or 11, almost all children are able to attribute persuasive intent to advertisements. Martin (1997) pointed that non verbal judgment is most significant among younger children. In addition, the understanding of advertising intention is more constant across different age levels among children. The difference between assistive/ informational and persuasive/ selling intention is imperative. For children informational intent is easy to grasp while selling intent may create confusion. A child may find it more difficult to grasp the selling intent of an advertisement in isolation than if he/she watches it in intermingle of children programmes and advertisements with separator plans. The research carried out so far seems to disclose that there are certainly age related differences in children's understating of the selling intent of advertisements. In general, children below the age of 6 are unable to know a commercial's selling intent (Robertson and Rossiter, 1974; Ward et al., 1977; Donohue et al., 1978; Macklin, 1983). The children up to this age believed that commercials existed to provide information to people. At the age of 6 or 7, a child begins to understand that commercials are trying to sell products. When a child reaches the pre- adolescent age of 11 or 12, he/she is aware of, and can recognize and fully grasp the selling intention behind the existence of commercials.

The researchers from time to time have proved that children are able to distinguish between television commercials and programmes. The social science research of the 1970s claimed that young children have trouble in separating programming from commercials (Seiter, 1993). On the other hand, Liebert and Sprafkin (1988) refer to a study in which preschoolers were asked to recognize programmes and commercials in a sequence of short television segments. It was found that 5 year- olds were significantly more accurate than 4 or 3 year- olds, but the percentage of correct identifications was relatively high for all the three groups. In addition, it was found that the average correct figure is even higher: 80%, when children's accuracy in grouping child- oriented commercials only was examined. In a similar study conducted by Gains and Esserman (1981) found that 90% of 4- to -5 year- olds and 100% of 6- to 8- year- olds were correctly able to recognize commercial as separate from the programme in which it was embedded. Ward et al. (1977) also reported a study which shows that children as young as 5 or 6 are able to make a distinction between television programmes and commercials, but as predicted from developmental theory, these children are likely to base the distinction largely on perceptual cues. Young (1990) found that children aged between 5 and 7 could not make a distinction between commercials and programmes, and were able to identify commercials only 53% of the time.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To know whether children are able to understand the selling intent of advertisements.
- 2) To study the effect of age, gender and amount of media exposure on the remembrance of advertisements.

HYPOTHESIS

H1: Age has an effect on the remembrance and understanding of advertisements.

H2: Gender has an effect on the remembrance and understanding of advertisements.

H3: Amount of media exposure has an effect on the remembrance and understanding of advertisements.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study targeted the children between 7 and 13 years of age as respondents. A total of 100 respondents, all from the different areas of Delhi and NCR were studied. The sample was drawn from different schools using the stratified sampling technique. The sample consisted of fifty boys and fifty girls of age group 7-13, which was further divided into 25 boys and 25 girls from rural and urban areas. The data collected has been analyzed by using different tests of analysis in SPSS 16, such as ANOVA, Kruskal Wallis test, Correlation, Chi- square, Regression analysis.

ANALYSIS

CORRELATION BETWEEN REMEMBRANCE OF AN ADVERTISEMENT, AGE, GENDER AND AMOUNT OF EXPOSURE

TABLE 1

Correlations					
		Remembrance	Amount of Media Exposure	Age	Gender
Remembrance	Pearson Correlation	1	.598**	.714**	.099
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.325
	N	100	100	100	100
Amount of Media Exposure	Pearson Correlation	.598**	1	.503**	.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.339
	N	100	100	100	100
Age	Pearson Correlation	.714**	.503**	1	.027
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.790
	N	100	100	100	100
Gender	Pearson Correlation	.099	.097	.027	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.325	.339	.790	
	N	100	100	100	100
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed).					

From the table 1, the remembrance of an ad is directly correlated with age ($r=0.714, p<0.01$) and amount of exposure ($r=0.598, p<0.01$). Thus it can be inferred that as the age increases the tendency to remember an ad increases. Thus the children in their much developed stages will remember the ad much longer time than the children in early stages of development (analytical stage). Similarly the remembrance of an ad increases with the exposure to media, thus the children who have got more exposure to TV advertisements remember the advertisements much longer. Kruskal Wallis test (table 2 & 3) was further applied to validate the results of correlation ship matrix. It is seen that mean rank increases with the age of children ($\chi^2=51.277$).

KRUSKAL- WALLIS TEST**TABLE 2****Ranks**

	Age	N	Mean Rank
Remembrance	Less than 7 years	7	12.00
	7-10 years	14	17.36
	10-12 years	39	40.74
	Greater than 12 years	46	69.70
	Total	100	

TABLE 3**Test Statistics^{a,b}**

	Remembrance
Chi-Square	51.277
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test**b. Grouping Variable: Age**

From the table 1, it is seen that the amount of exposure is directly correlated with age ($r=0.503, p<0.01$). Thus it can be inferred that children devote more amount of time to watching TV with increase of age. Further Kruskal Wallis test (table 4 & 5) was applied to validate the results of correlation ship matrix. It is seen that mean rank increases with the amount of exposure ($\chi^2=29.551$).

TABLE 4**Ranks**

	Amount of Media Exposure	N	Mean Rank
Remembrance	2 hours	7	18.71
	2-3 hours	30	35.10
	more than 3 hours	63	61.37
	Total	100	

TABLE 5**Test Statistics^{a,b}**

	Remembrance
Chi-Square	29.551
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test**b. Grouping Variable: Amount of Media Exposure**

From the table 1, it is seen that gender of child is not correlated with remembrance of an ad ($r=0.099, p>0.05$), amount of media exposure ($r=0.097, p>0.05$), age ($r=0.27, p>0.05$). Thus boys and girls do not vary in their approach to TV advertisements. Further Kruskal Wallis (table 6 & 7) also validated the results ($\chi^2=0.563$).

TABLE 6**Ranks**

	Gender	N	Mean Rank
Remembrance	Boy	50	48.47
	Girl	50	52.53
	Total	100	

TABLE 7**Test Statistics^{a,b}**

	Remembrance
Chi-Square	.563
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.453

a. Kruskal Wallis Test**b. Grouping Variable: Gender****CORRELATION BETWEEN UNDERSTANDING OF ADVERTISEMENTS, AGE, GENDER AND AMOUNT OF EXPOSURE****TABLE 8**

Correlations					
		Understanding	Age	Amount of Media Exposure	Gender
Understanding	Pearson Correlation	1	.573**	.393**	.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.822
	N	100	100	100	100
Age	Pearson Correlation	.573**	1	.503**	.027
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.790
	N	100	100	100	100
Amount of Media Exposure	Pearson Correlation	.393**	.503**	1	.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.339
	N	100	100	100	100
Gender	Pearson Correlation	.023	.027	.097	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.822	.790	.339	
	N	100	100	100	100
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

From the table 8, the understanding of advertisements is directly correlated with age ($r=0.573$, $p<0.01$) and amount of exposure ($r=0.393$, $p<0.01$). Thus it can be inferred that as the age increases the tendency to understand the advertisements increases. Thus the children in their much developed stages will understand the advertisements much better than the children in early stages of development (analytical stage). Similarly the understanding of an ad increases with the exposure to media, thus the children who have got more exposure to TV advertisements understand the advertisements much better. Kruskal Wallis test (table 9 & 10) was further applied to validate the results of correlation ship matrix. It is seen that mean rank increases with the age of children ($\chi^2=32.183$)

TABLE 9

Ranks

Age	N	Mean Rank
Understanding Less than 7 years	1	4.50
7-10 years	14	20.14
10-12 years	39	46.85
Greater than 12 years	46	63.84
Total	100	

TABLE 10

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	Understanding
Chi-Square	32.183
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Age

From the table 8, it is seen that the amount of exposure is directly correlated with age ($r=0.503$, $p<0.01$). Thus it can be inferred that children devote more amount of time to watching TV with increase of age. Further Kruskal Wallis test (table 11 & 12) was applied to validate the results of correlation ship matrix. It is seen that mean rank increases with the amount of exposure ($\chi^2=25.210$).

TABLE 11

Ranks

Age	N	Mean Rank
Understanding Less than 7 years	1	22.50
7-10 years	14	25.86
10-12 years	39	47.06
Greater than 12 years	46	61.52
Total	100	

TABLE 12

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	Understanding
Chi-Square	25.210
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Age

From the table 8, it is seen that gender of child is not correlated with understanding of an advertisements ($r=0.023$, $p>0.05$), age ($r=0.27$, $p>0.05$), amount of media exposure ($r=0.097$, $p>0.05$). Thus boys and girls do not vary in their approach to TV advertisements.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

TABLE 13

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.767 ^a	.589	.572	.52941

a. Predictors: (Constant), Area of living, Gender, Amount of Media Exposure, Age

b. Dependent Variable: Remembrance

TABLE 14

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	38.134	4	9.534	34.016	.000 ^a
	Residual	26.626	95	.280		
	Total	64.760	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Area of living, Gender, Amount of Media Exposure, Age

b. Dependent Variable: Remembrance

TABLE 15

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.611	.362		1.687	.095
Amount of Media Exposure	.406	.099	.314	4.092	.000
Age	.601	.084	.554	7.179	.000
Gender	.087	.106	.054	.820	.414
Area of Living	.007	.109	.004	.060	.952

a. Dependent Variable: Remembrance

Multiple Regression with SPSS was applied to determine whether the variation in independent variables (age, gender, amount of exposure, area of living) contribute significantly to the change in remembrance of an advertisement.

In Model Summary^b table (table 13), the value 0.767 given under the column R is multiple correlation ship coefficient which talks that all the variables i.e. dependent and independent are correlated significantly.

ANOVA table (table 14) reveals that p value given under the significance column is <0.01. This tells that the variance in four independent variables (age, gender, amount of exposure and residential area) contribute significantly to the change in remembrance of advertisements.

The values in the coefficient table (table 15) formulate the regression equation. The values under the column B against constant is the "a" value in the regression equation and values against amount of exposure (0.406), age (0.601), gender (0.087), residential area (0.007) define the slope of the regression line and are the values of b_1, b_2, b_3 and b_4 in the multiple regression equation

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 \text{ (Equation 1)}$$

Hence the multiple regression equation is formulated as under

$$Y = 0.611 + 0.406 X_1 + 0.601 X_2 + 0.087 X_3 + 0.007 X_4 \text{ (Equation 2)}$$

CONCLUSION

The understanding and remembrance of an advertisement is directly correlated with age and amount of exposure. It can be inferred that as the age increases the tendency to remember and understand an advertisement increases. Similarly the remembrance and understanding of an advertisement increases with the exposure to media. Thus the children who have got more exposure to TV advertisements remember the TV advertisements much longer and understand the advertisement much better. The variation in age, gender and amount of media exposure, area of living contribute significantly to the change in remembrance of an advertisement which has been proved by the regression equation (equation 1). The advertisers should effectively use the advertisements to gain a considerable amount of reach and response. The advertisements should be shown on the channels which they like and watch. The advertisers should use the judicious mix of celebrities and fictitious characters to catch the attention of the children.

LIMITATIONS

- 1) **Time constraint:** The research had only two months to conduct the research due to which a sample size of only 100 was taken.
- 2) **Sampling coverage:** The sample came only from the children of Delhi and NCR. The sample might not be generalized and not have fully displayed the general characteristics of the children.

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