

THE ROLE OF TELEVISION COMMERCIALS ON CHILDREN FAMILY PURCHASE DECISIONS

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to investigate children purchase request affected by television advertisements. The main objective of the study are to assess the children attitude towards television advertisements taking a sample of children who were studying either in public or private school, to measure the ability of television advertisements to influence family purchases with regard to various product categories and to analyses the parent's perception of influence of television advertisements on their children. The result indicated that children from both cohort has overall positive attitude towards television advertisements considering them as important source of product information and enjoyment, though to some extent they do consider television advertisement to be manipulative and irritated. A significant number of children indicated that their purchase request is majority of time influence by television advertisements. The result overall indicated that television advertisement are the main source for development of children consumer socialization and parents and children usually work together in family decision making. Marketers must address the needs of both partners and work to help any conflict that may arise.

Keywords: Consumer behavior Children, television, advertisements, Decision-making, Purchasing, Media usage, Attitude, Parents-child survey, Socialization.

1. INTRODUCTION

Children watch more television today than ever before. According to Cowell (2001), children are no longer shielded as much as they used to be from life realities. The television, on which they spend more time than anything else other than sleeping is responsible for making them experience life realities much earlier than the children in the past. Television has made a powerful entry in the field of influence; it has muscled in on family life and now plays an important role in children's lives (Cowell, 2001; McNeal, 1999).

Marketers are keen to know if children believe their commercial and whether they like television commercial in general. So efforts were made in the study to analyzed children's attitude towards television advertising and to judge their likeliness and truthfulness towards television commercial (Dens et al., 2007)

Children have come to constitute a very important consumer group that influences family purchases of various products in many ways. Marketers pay special to this group recognizing them as a primary

market, an influencing market, and a future market(Dotson and Hyalt, 2005). Due to dramatic changes taking place in the society regarding technology, information processing and changing media environment, children especially the 8-14 year olds are growing up much faster, are more connected and more informed than any other generation before them (Cook, 2007).

The rise of dual income of parents, increase in working women, reduction in family size, rise in number of televisions in household especially children's bedrooms, more commercial pressure, arrival of new products in the market above all due to presence of immense media environment, children are able to experience consumption and purchasing at a much faster rate than ever before (Martin and Oliva, 2001). Marketing targeted at children, including infants, often based on highly sophisticated and manipulative psychology, has its main focus through television commercials. The centrality of television in children's lives is indicated by the fact that 9 out of 10 children watch it almost every day (Shoham and Dalakas, 2005).

No, socializing agent has attracted more attention than mass media especially television, in children consumer behavior literature. Many advertisements broadcasted on television are creations of brilliant minds which aim to persuade people to buy. These advertising messages get across the children minds due to the beautiful audio and visual effects (McNeal, 2000). Advertising influences children purchase request and family dynamics. The earlier literature reported that television commercials affected children's attempts to influence parental purchase purchasing, calling advertising a vehicle for unhealthy persuasion (Palmer and Carpenter, 2006).

Based on these above mentioned facts the comparative study (private vs. public school) had been designed to investigate in Pakistan the role of television commercials on children family purchase decisions and the findings of the study can be used by the marketers, parents and advertisers for taking practical decision.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Tool

For the purpose of item generation the existing relevant literature was explored to get help in the formation of various relevant statements.

(a) The statements were made on the basis of existing state of media, family environment and existing highly sophisticated and manipulative market forces targeting children.

(b) A deep study of the literature on children, s socialization behavior and their television viewing habits was made. International and prominent journals were also screened for the formation of relevant statements.

(c) Informal interviews with a good number of marketing experts and parents were also held.

The scale was designed to fill in the picture by updating the gap provided by previous studies and providing a more complete and consistent gauge of the children attitude towards advertising and impact of children in family purchases.

The data has been collected through the scale (prepared by the researcher), which has been filled by direct communication with the respondents. As the study was multidimensional covering wide range of objectives, data was collected with the help of following scales.

Table 1
Various scales used in the study for assessment of responses
from parents' and children

Scales Used	Score
Interval scale used to assess media exposure among children	
• Frequency of doing different media activities	
Daily	5
At least once a week	4
At least once a month	3
More than once a month	2
Don't access	1
• Time spent on different media activities	
Less than one hour	1
1-2 hours	2
2-3 hours	3
>3 hours	4
• Interval scale used to assess attention paid to advertisement on different media's, effectiveness of promotional appeals, influence of likeability of ads of different product category on family interaction and how children evaluate about honesty of advertised products, etc.	
Always	3
Sometimes	2
Never	1
• Likert scale used to measure the children attitude towards TV advertisements	
Strongly agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1
• Likert scale used to evaluate the importance of different promotional appeals in Television advertisements	
Very Important	5
Important	4
Neutral	3
Not Important	2
Not at all important	1
• Influence of Television advertisements on purchases	
High	3
Moderate	2
Low	1

• Independence for taking purchase decisions	
Fully independent	4
Independent to large extent	3
Very little independent	2
Not at all independent	1
• Decision taken for family purchases – Children	
Fully decided by me	5
Much decided by me	4
Joint decision together	3
Much decided by parents	2
Fully decided by parents	1
• Decision taken for family purchases – Parents	
Fully decided by me	5
Much decided by me	4
Joint decision together	3
Much decided by parents	2
Fully decided by parents	1
• Frequency of strategies for getting product from parents and parents responses to these activities	
Never	1
Rarely	2
Occasionally	3
Often	4
Very often	5

Apart from above mentioned scales used in the study, for measuring promotional appeals used by the advertisers in the commercials, content analysis was made of 150 recorded TV commercials relating to different product categories. In order to assess the ability of TV commercials to retain children as consumers brand retention was tested among the children with the help of Thematic Association test (TAT) techniques.

2.2 Sampling Design

The sample of the study was initially based on multi stage cluster sampling. This technique of obtaining a final sample involves drawing several samples from the large population. An important issue in multistage sampling is how many clusters to be involved to sample at each stage. Once the clusters have been determined simple random sampling method was used to select the areas, schools and participants. Simple random sampling is most appropriate method when a good sampling frame exists. District wise selection of areas became the first stage of sampling unit, while schools from selected areas being the 2nd stage. The selection of children and their parents were at the ultimate and 3rd stage of sampling unit which was based on convenience method.

The respondents were taken with the convenience technique by getting the help of school teacher. The respondent age group was selected 8-14 years as the literature reveals (Ward and Wackman, 1972) those children cognitive abilities are not developed to evaluate the situation and answer the question

presented in the questionnaire before the age of 8 year. Responses from one parent were considered enough as the literature reveals that the responses of husbands and wives are very similar when compared on an aggregate basis.

The sample in the study was restricted to 960 respondents (480 children + 480 parents) keeping in mind the research objectives and constraints. The children were classified into three different age groups 8-10, 10-12 and 12-14 years. Then from each age group, 40 male and 40 female students from private schools and an equal number of male and female children from public sector schools were further selected. There in each group there were 160 students from the selected schools.

Thus, the ultimate sample of study consists of 240 students (120 male and 120 female) from private schools and equal number from public sector schools, making it a total of 480 students in all. Data was also collected from either of the parent of selected students with the help of survey method.

2.3 Characteristics of the Sample

One complicating factor in relation to defining regulations for advertising aimed at children is the definition of a child. This is an area where there is a lack of consistency across European states and regulatory bodies. In countries such as the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweeden, the upper age limit for a child is 12 years. In the United Kingdom, children are classed as individuals aged 15 and under. The International Chamber of Commerce Code of Advertising Practice (ICCCAP) considers children as persons less than 14 years of age of under whatever age is considered appropriate at the national level. The rules and regulations governing advertising to children were covered by the ITC's codes. Children were defined as individuals aged 15 years or under, and children's programs were defined as those designed primarily for that audience. The study has focused on children in the age group 8-14 years whose is demographic profile is given as per table 2.

Table 2

Age wise and gender wise description of respondents

Type of School	Age Group	Respondents		
		Male	Female	Total
Private School	8-10 yrs	40	40	80
	10-12 yrs	40	40	80
	12-14 yrs	40	40	80
	Total: From Private School	(120)	(120)	(240)
Public School	8-10 yrs	40	40	80
	10-12 yrs	40	40	80
	12-14 yrs	40	40	80
	Total: From Public School	(120)	(120)	(240)
Private + Public School	8-10 yrs	80	80	160
	10-12 yrs	80	80	160
	12-14 yrs	80	80	160
	Grand Total	(240)	(240)	(480)

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondent children are shown in the table 3.

Table 3

Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondent

Characteristics	Public School		Private School		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No. of Siblings						
1	61	25.42	84	35.00	145	30.21
2	96	40.00	49	20.42	145	30.21
>2	83	34.58	107	44.58	190	39.58
Family Type						
Nuclear	176	73.33	215	89.58	391	81.46
Joint	67	26.67	25	10.42	89	18.54
Family Size						
Upto 4	38	15.83	77	32.08	115	23.96
5-8	171	71.25	154	64.17	325	67.71
>8	31	12.92	9	3.75	40	8.33
Father's Education						
Illiterate	11	4.58	34	14.17	45	9.38
Matriculation	38	15.83	62	25.83	100	20.83
Secondary	87	36.25	81	33.75	168	35.00
Graduate	65	27.08	46	19.17	111	23.13
Postgraduate	19	7.92	11	4.58	30	6.25
Professional	20	8.33	6	2.50	26	5.42
Mother's Education						
Illiterate	99	41.25	64	26.67	163	33.96
Matriculation	114	47.50	104	43.33	218	45.42
Secondary	19	7.92	54	22.50	73	15.21
Graduate	8	3.33	16	6.67	24	5.00
Postgraduate	0	0.00	2	0.83	2	0.42
Professional	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Father's Occupation						
Business	68	28.33	126	52.50	194	40.42
Service	123	51.25	9	3.75	132	27.50
Professional	38	15.83	71	29.58	109	22.71
Other	11	4.58	34	14.17	45	9.38
Mother's Occupation						
Working	56	23.33	117	48.75	173	36.04
Non-Working	184	76.67	123	51.25	307	63.96
Family Income (Rs./Annum)						
Upto150000	49	20.42	31	12.92	80	16.67
150000-300000	157	65.41	158	65.83	315	65.63
>300000	34	14.17	51	21.25	85	17.71

The table 3 revealed that highest proportion i.e. 39.58 percent of the total respondents was having more than 2 siblings. Majority i.e. 81.46 percent of total children belonged to the nuclear type of families. The majority i.e. 67.71 percent of total children belonged to the families having 5 to 8 members. In case of the highest proportion i.e. 35.00 of the total children, the educational level of father was secondary school followed by 23.13 percent with graduation and 20.83 percent matriculates. The mothers of as much as 33.96 percent of the total children were illiterate. In case of highest proportion i.e. 45.42 percent of the total children, the mother was matriculate. The major occupation of father was business (40.42%). The second major occupation was service (27.50%). Majority i.e. 63.96 percent of the mothers were non-working. The family income of most i.e. 65.63 percent of the total children ranged between Rs. 150000 to Rs. 300000.

2.4 Analysis of Data

The data were analyzed by applying appropriate statistical techniques. Multiple comparisons were made between rural vs. urban, male vs. female and children with different age groups. The statistical tools include chi-square, Z-test, ANOVA, Factor Analysis, student's-test etc. for analyzing data to meet the objectives. Results and conclusions were drawn on the basis of analysis of data.

2.5 Limitations of the Study

The study possesses some limitations, which are given hereunder:

- The study is limited to Karachi city and only twelve areas have been randomly selected. So, the findings of the study may not be generalized for all other states of Pakistan, because of socio-cultural variations.
- Apart from private and public sector schools, the study has been confined to two variables only, i.e. age and sex of children.
- The study is limited to parent's perception about TV advertisement influence on family purchase decisions as a whole, instead of separately considering the mother's and father's perception of influence.
- The opinion of either of the parents has been taken for the study. It does not represent mothers as a whole or father as a whole. That is why the study could not make a meaningful comparison between mothers and fathers' perceptions about TV ads.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Household ownership of media items, frequency of usage of media items and time spent on various media and other activities were analyzed by applying Chi-square tests, t-test and ANOVA (F-value). These statistical tools were applied to see whether any significant difference stands between the children in different age-groups and to test the gender differences. The chi-square test was applied to estimate that some factors account for the apparent relationship or not. The test is widely used only to discrete data, rather than measured values. Because the null hypothesis states that there is no relationship (the variables are independent), the test merely evaluates the probability that the observed relationship results from chance. The computed chi-square value must be equal or exceed the appropriate table's critical value to justify rejection of the null hypothesis or the assumption of independence at the .05 or the .01 level of significance.

Table 4

Household ownership of broadcast and print media among children

Type of Media Ownership	Public School (n=240)	Private School (n=240)	Total (N=480)	x ²	p-value
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)		
Broadcast Media:					
Television	234 (97.5)	235(97.92)	469 (97.7)	1.634	0.201 ^{NS}
TV with cable	168 (70.0)	233 (97.1)	401 (83.54)	16.185	0.000**
FM Radio	86 (35.8)	118 (49.2)	204 (42.5)	8.730	0.003*
Computer	118 (49.2)	193 (80.4)	311 (64.8)	51.371	0.000**
PC with internet	72 (30.0)	152 (63.3)	224 (46.7)	53.571	0.000**
Mobile phone	39 (16.3)	42 (17.5)	81 (16.9)	0.134	0.715 ^{NS}
Printed Media:					
Newspaper(s)	169 (70.4)	220 (91.7)	389 (81.0)	35.269	0.000**
Magazine(s)	111 (46.3)	162 (67.5)	273 (56.9)	22.093	0.000**

Computed from primary data, # Figure in parentheses is percentage, TV: Television, PC: Personal Computer; f: frequency; NS= Non-Significant; *Significant (p< 0.05); **Significant (p<0.01).

Analysis of the data related to household media ownership and location of children is illustrated in table 4. Comparative analysis revealed that in case of public sector schools' respondents among broadcast media, TV dominates the media ownership as 97.5 percent children showed household possession of this media followed by Cable connections (70 percent), computers (49.2 percent), FM Radio (35.80 percent), Internet at home (30.0 percent) and least possession was found for mobile phones (16.3 percent). In case of private sector schools' respondents broadcast media household ownership was found highest for TV (97.92 percent), followed by cable connections (97.1 percent), computers (80.4 percent), Internet facility at home (63.3 percent), FM radio (49.2percent) and least possession was reported for personal mobile phones (17.5 percent). Overall, in case of Broadcast media the possession of TV, cable connections and computers was found highest and personal mobile phones were reported to be the lowest among children from both the locations. Private schools' subjects showed higher possession of all broadcast media items. The largest gap for media exposure was reported for cable connections, FM radios, internet and computer. These difference were found statistically significant for cable connection (p=.000), radio (p=.003), computer (p=.000) and internet (p=.000).

In case of print media, again private schools' subjects showed more household possession of these media items. As many as 91.7 percent of these children revealed newspaper possession as against 70.4 percent of rural children. Similarly, in case of magazines urban respondents showed higher ownership. Statistically the difference was found significant for Newspaper (p=.000) and magazines (p=.000). Chan and Mc Neal (2006) reported in their study in China the same results.

Table 5

**Gender wise association of household ownership of broadcast and
print media among children**

Type of Media Ownership	Male (n=240)	Female (n=240)	Total (N=480)	x ²	p-value
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)		
Broadcast Media:					
Television	236 (98.33)	233 (97.0)	469 (97.7)	0.258	0.611 ^{NS}
TV with cable	187 (78.0)	214 (85.0)	401 (83.5)	10.482	0.007**
FM Radio	104 (43.6)	100 (41.8)	204 (42.5)	0.156	0.693 ^{NS}
Computer	172 (71.7)	139 (57.9)	311 (64.7)	63.14	0.000***
PC with internet	126 (52.5)	98 (40.1)	224 (46.7)	35.82	0.000***
Mobile phone	62 (25.8)	19(7.91)	81 (16.9)	45.105	0.000***
Printed Media:					
Newspaper(s)	193 (80.7)	195 (81.3)	389 (81.0)	0.027	0.869 ^{NS}
Magazine(s)	118(49.17)	155(64.58)	273(56.9)	76.3	0.000**

Computed from primary data, # Figure in parentheses are percentage, TV: Television, PC: Personal Computer, f: frequency; NS= Non-Significant; *Significant (p< 0.05); **Significant (p<0.01); ***Highly significant (p<.001).

A perusal of table 5 showed that male subject reported slightly higher possession of TV i.e. 98.33 percent as against 97 percent in case of female subjects. Statistically, the difference was found not found significant between both the genders (p=.611). Another study by Johnsson-Smaradi et al, 1994 reported that boys are more likely to have a television in their bedroom than the girls, but our study interestingly revealed that the gender gap has been greatly reduced. The ownership of cable connection was reported higher among female subjects as compared to male subjects (85percent vs.78 percent). The difference was found statistically significant (p=.007) indicating that cable connections are associated with gender. Household ownership of FM radio was found more among male subjects as compared to female counterparts (43.6percent vs. 41.8percent). No, statistically significant gender difference in ownership was found in this media item. In case of computers male children reported significant higher possession as 71.7 percent reported to possess this media item as compared to female subject, where it was found to be only 57.9 percent. The difference was found statistically significant (p=.000). This indicated that computer possession is significantly related to gender. In case of Internet, boys reported higher possession as compared to girl respondents (52.5percent vs. 40.1percent). The difference was found statistically significant(p=.000). Similarly, in case of mobile phones boys reported significantly higher possession as compared to girls by 16.9 percent. Statistically, the difference was found significant (p=.000). The result of the study with regard to electronic media items was in similar lines with earlier study conducted by Chan and McNeal (2006) where boys reported higher possession of electronic media like electronic games, radios, and computers at homes as compared to female subjects.

In case of print media, no statistically significant gender difference found with regard to household ownership of newspapers (p=.869). Results were contradicting to one of the previous study done by Chan and McNeal (2006) where girls were more likely to have newspapers at home as compared to

boys. Household ownership of magazines was reported more among girls as compared to boys (64.58percent vs.49.17 percent).

Table 6

Age wise association of household ownership of broadcast and print media among children

Type of Media Ownership	8.1-10 (n=160)	10.1-12 (n=160)	12.1-14 (n=160)	Total (N=480)	x ²	p-value
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)		
Broadcast Media:						
Television	158 (98.7)	156(97.5)	155 (96.8)	469(97.7)	1.430	0.489 ^{NS}
TV with cable	136 (85.0)	132 (82.5)	133 (83.1)	401(83.54)	2.581	0.275 ^{NS}
FM Radio	55 (34.4)	64 (40.0)	85 (53.1)	204 (42.5)	12.123	0.002**
Computer	93 (58.1)	99 (61.9)	119 (74.3)	311 (64.8)	10.155	0.006**
PC with internet	53 (33.1)	62 (38.7)	109 (68.1)	224 (46.7)	14.336	0.002**
Mobile phone	13 (8.1)	26(16.2)	42 (26.2)	81 (16.9)	9.105	0.036*
Printed Media:						
Newspaper(s)	115(71.9)	128 (80.0)	146(91.25)	389 (81.0)	19.716	0.000**
Magazine(s)	74(46.3)	81 (62.5)	118(73.5)	273 (56.9)	11.059	0.004**

Computed from primary data, # Figure in parentheses are percentage, TV: Television, PC: Personal Computer, f: frequency; NS= Non-Significant; *Significant (p< 0.05); **Significant (p<0.01).

Age-wise analysis of the data related to household ownership is revealed as per table 6. Comparative data revealed that TV dominates the media ownership of children in all the three age groups. TV ownership is independent of age. Cable connections were found more among children in the age group of 8-10 years as compared to children of two other age groups. However, there was no statistically significant relationship found between age and cable connection. Cable ownership was also found independent of age. The household ownership of FM radio increases with age and it was reported highest among children in age group 12-14 i.e., 53.1 percent. Statistically difference was found significant indicating that radio household ownership is associated with age (p=. 002). Household ownership of computers also showed the same trend, 58.1 percent of children in age- group 8-10 reported to possess this media as compared to 74.3 percent of children in the oldest age group. The ownership of computer showed significant increase with the age.

In case of internet and mobile phones, same results were reported, that is with increase in age the ownership showed significant increase. For both internet (p=.002) and mobile phones (p=.036).

In case of print media newspaper ownership showed significant increase in the ownership with increase in children's age. Maximum ownership was reported by children in the oldest age group i.e. 91.25 percent as compared to children in the youngest age group (71.9 percent). Statistically, difference was found significant (p=.000). In case of magazines the possession showed significant increase with the increase in age. 73.5 percent of children of age group 12-14 reported to possess the magazines as compared to 46.3 percent in age group 8-10. The difference was found statistically significant (p=.004).

In all the gender and age gap was more profound in case of electronic and new media. Van der Voort et al, 1998 also reported the same results in their study.

The respondents were asked to record their frequency of usage of different broadcast and print media in terms of 'daily', 'at least once a week', 'more than once a month', 'at least once a month', and 'never'. These frequencies were given score in the respective order of 5,4,3,2 and 1. The mean frequency and calculated t-values have been presented in table 7.

Table 7**Frequency of usage of broadcast and print media among children by school system**

Media Items	Private (n =240)	Public (n = 240)	Total (n=480)	t- value	p-value
	Mean \pm SD	Mean \pm SD	Mean \pm SD		
Watching TV	4.71 \pm 0.97	4.93 \pm 0.32	4.82 \pm 0.58	3.34	0.008**
Using Computer	2.03 \pm 1.61	2.33 \pm 1.71	2.18 \pm 1.64	1.98	0.049*
Using Internet	2.56 \pm 1.63	3.59 \pm 1.69	3.08 \pm 1.67	6.80	0.001***
Radio/FM	1.76 \pm 0.59	1.73 \pm 0.65	1.75 \pm 0.62	0.53	0.311 ^{NS}
Mobile Phones	1.65 \pm 0.58	1.69 \pm 0.61	1.67 \pm 0.59	0.74	0.223 ^{NS}
Reading Newspaper/ Magazine	3.38 \pm 1.74	3.72 \pm 1.26	3.55 \pm 1.43	2.45	0.040*

Computed from primary data, Measured on five-point scale (1= „never“ to 5= „daily“)(NS= Non-Significant; *Significant<.05; **Significant p<.01; ***Significant p<.001).

The table 7 showed that average frequency of watching TV came to be 4.71 and 4.93 in case of private and public sectors' school going children respectively. The mean value indicated TV usage as daily by subjects of both the cohorts. However, the usage frequency was found statistically significantly higher among children who were studying in private school as compared to public sector schools' children (p=0.008). Similarly, the frequency of using internet was statistically significantly higher among private school children as compared to public sector school going children (3.59 vs.2.56; p=0.001). It was also true in case of reading newspapers and magazines (3.72 vs. 3.38; p=0.040).

The analysis given in table 8 showed gender wise comparison of usage of various media items. The mean frequency of watching TV came to be 4.78 and 4.86 in case of male and female children respectively. This indicated that both both gender's showed nearly equal usage of television daily (p=0.168). Similarly, the trend in frequency of radio/FM usage was found among male and female subjects (1.79 vs.1.70; p=0.250).

Table 8**Gender wise frequency of usage of broadcast and print media among children**

Media Items	Male (n =240)	Female (n = 240)	Total (n=480)	t- value	p-value
	Mean \pm SD	Mean \pm SD	Mean \pm SD		
Watching TV	4.78 \pm 0.96	4.86 \pm 0.82	4.82 \pm 0.87	0.98	0.168 ^{NS}
Using Computer	2.38 \pm 1.72	1.98 \pm 1.75	2.18 \pm 1.73	2.53	0.039*
Using Internet	3.63 \pm 1.75	2.52 \pm 1.72	3.08 \pm 1.71	7.01	0.000**
Radio/FM	1.79 \pm 1.48	1.70 \pm 1.52	1.75 \pm 1.50	0.66	0.250 ^{NS}
Mobile Phones	1.92 \pm 0.78	1.42 \pm 0.75	1.67 \pm 0.76	7.16	0.000**
Reading Newspaper/ Magazine	3.18 \pm 1.70	3.90 \pm 1.39	3.55 \pm 1.52	5.08	0.001**

Computed from primary data, Measured on five-point scale (1="Never" to 5 „daily“) NS= Non-Significant; *Significant ($p < 0.05$); **Highly Significant ($p < 0.01$)

The usage of computer was significantly higher among male children than that among female children (2.38 vs.1.98; $p=0.039$). Similarly the usage of internet was significantly higher among male children than that among female children (3.63 vs.2.52; $p=0.000$). Greenfield (1994); Funk et al; (1997); Huston et al; (1999) also reported in their studies that boys use computers more than girls do, particularly to play video games and computers games. The usage of mobile phones was also significantly higher among male children (1.92) as compared to that among female children (1.92 vs1.42 $p=0.000$). On the other hand, the frequency of reading newspapers and magazines was significantly higher among female children as compared to their male counterparts (3.90 vs.3.18; $p=.001$).

The analysis revealed that usage of different broadcast media was higher among male children; while the usage of print media was higher among female children as compared to their counterpart.

Table 9

Age wise frequency of usage of broadcast and print media among children

Media Items	8-10 years (n =160)	10-12 years (n = 160)	12-14 years (n=160)	<i>f</i> -ratio	p-value
	Mean \pm SD	Mean \pm SD	Mean \pm SD		
Watching TV	4.88 \pm 0.63	4.83 \pm 0.91	4.76 \pm 0.60	1.17	0.197NS
Using Computer	1.54 \pm 1.36	2.03 \pm 1.71	2.97 \pm 1.68	4.15	0.022*
Using Internet	2.16 \pm 1.72	3.08 \pm 1.75	3.97 \pm 1.64	8.84	0.000***
Radio/FM	1.37 \pm 0.59	1.57 \pm 0.67	1.91 \pm 0.57	2.12	0.108NS
Mobile Phones	1.00 \pm 0.57	1.48 \pm 0.63	2.53 \pm 0.75	5.94	0.008**
Reading Newspaper/ Magazine	2.98 \pm 1.51	3.93 \pm 1.51	4.27 \pm 1.65	4.37	0.011*

Computed from primary data, Measured on five-point scale (1="Never" to 5 „daily“), NS= Non-Significant; *Significant ($p < 0.05$); **Highly Significant ($p < 0.01$); ***Significant ($p < .001$).

The analysis given in table 9 showed that average frequency of broadcast and print media usage among children in Punjab, which was measured on five point scale (1=never to 5=daily). Mean score of usage revealed that frequency of watching T.V was not significantly different among the children in the three age groups i.e. 8-10 years (4.88), 10-12 years (4.83), and 12-14 years (4.76) ;($p=0.197$). Similarly, the frequency of usage of radio/FM usage was not statistically different in three selected age groups, 8-10(1.37) years, 10-12 years (1.57), 12-14(1.91) years of age ($p=0.108$).

The computer usages increased significantly with the age. It worked at 1.54, 1.71 and 2.97 in 8-10, 10-12 and 12-14 years of age group respectively; ($p=0.022$). Similarly ,internet usage increased significantly with age , in the age group of 8-10 years (2.16) ,10-12 years (3.08) ,12-14 years (3.97); $p=0.022$. The usage of mobile phones also depicted the similar trend. It increased significantly with age, in the age group of 8-10 years (1.00), in the age group of 10-12 years (1.48) and in the age group of 12-14 years(2.53); $p=0.008$. Similarly, the frequency of reading newspapers and magazines showed the same trends, in the age group of 8-10 years (2.98), in the age group of 10-12 years (3.93) and 4.27 in the age

group of 12-14 years (4.27). The increase in the reading frequency with the age was found to be significant ($p=0.011$).

Hence, it is revealed by data that frequency of media usage increased with advancement in the age of children; however same was not found true in case of T.V. watching and radio/FM listening which remained nearly constant in younger and older children.

Multiple regression analysis was used to find out the effect of children likeability of advertisements of different product categories on family interaction and purchase behavior. In the study the likeability of advertisement of different product category was taken as independent variable and its impact on family interaction and purchase behavior as dependent variable. The table 10 shows the results of children likeability of advertisements of different product categories on family interaction and purchase behavior.

The value of R-square came to be 0.5477 indicating that 54.77 percent of the variation in family purchase decisions could be explained by the explanatory variables included in the analysis. These variables were derived from scores given to them out of 10 by the children.

The significantly positive regression coefficient of beauty and grooming (0.7857), personal hygiene (1.0137), food and beverages (1.0387), family electronics (0.5213), automobiles & related goods (0.8134), IT & telecom (0.7422) and books & stationery (0.9857) indicated that likeability of advertisements of these product categories has significant impact on inducing the children influence on family interactions and family purchases. The more interest children have in the advertisements of these product categories, more they communicate with their parents about these products and exert more influence in the families in purchase of these items. On the other hand, the significantly negative regression coefficient of service and corporate ads (-0.2312), agrochemicals (-0.5627) and pharmaceuticals ads (-0.9634), indicated that these advertisements have a significantly negative impact on children influence in family purchase decisions or there would be inverse effect on influence of children on family purchase decisions if the likeability of advertisements related to these ads increases. Children gave very low ranking to these ads, which has shown their disliking towards these ads. In simple words, the likeability of advertisements related to household products, services & corporate, pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals could not exert any impact on the influence of children on family purchase interactions and purchases.

Table 10
Impact of children likeability of advertisements of different product categories on family interaction and purchase decisions

Variable	β	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.2721		
Beauty and Grooming Ads.	0.7857	2.34	0.042*
Personal hygiene Product Ads	1.0137	2.09	0.047*
Household Product Ads	-0.6897	1.13	0.146NS
Foods and beverages Ads	1.0387	2.27	0.043*
Family electronics Ads	0.5213	1.64	0.101NS

Services and corporate Ads	-0.2312	1.16	0.142NS
Agrochemicals Ads	-0.5627	1.26	0.131NS
Automobiles Ads	0.8134	2.37	0.041*
IT and Telecom Ads	0.7422	2.52	0.039*
Pharmaceuticals Ads	-0.9634	1.99	0.049*
Book and Stationery Ads	0.9857	2.11	0.046*
R-square	0.5477		
F-ratio	51.52**		0.000

Thus, the likeability of advertisements related to beauty & grooming, personal hygiene, automobiles, IT and telecom, food and beverages and books & stationery emerged as the positive contributor towards the influence of children on family interactions and or induces the children to request for advertised products to their parents.

The literature survey suggests that children from age of six years onwards start viewing advertisements with a little skepticism. An effort was made further to examine the basis on which children from both groups evaluate about the truthfulness of the advertised products. It will help the marketers to understand the mind of the children and plan the marketing strategies accordingly. Table 11 gives the responses of children to the statements asked for valuation of advertised products.

Table 11
Mean score of agreement on various statements to evaluate truthfulness of advertising claims regarding advertised product

Statements	Private (n =240)	Public (n = 240)	t-value	p-value
	Mean±SD	Mean±SD		
Products with good advertisement are good products	2.17±0.80	2.59±0.53	6.78.	0.003**
Famous personalities will always advocate good product	2.89 ±0.86	2.78 ±0.95	1.33	0.124 ^{NS}
Famous companies advertised good products	2.29±0.73	2.63±0.56	5.73	0.004**
Advertisements which are seen the most are of good products	1.45±0.73	2.43±0.67	15.32	0.000**
You trust the advertised product because that is already used in your house	2.61±0.56	2.16±0.82	7.02	0.000**
Your parents are the best judge of a good or a bad product	2.57±0.56	2.11±0.83	7.11	0.000 ^{NS}
An advertisements where the doctor, scientist or a successful sportsman are present are of good product	2.47±0.70	1.80±1.02	8.39	0.000**
Good looking models generally advocate good product	2.56 ±0.62	2.22±0.77	5.33	0.005*

Computed from primary data, Max score 3, Minimum score 1. The responses were measured on three point scale (1= Not Sure) (3=agree); NS= Non-Significant; *Significant (p< 0.05); **Significant (p<0.01).

Analysis of table 11 reveals mean score of children on various statements to evaluate the truthfulness of advertisements. Microscopic view revealed that private schools' children showed highest level of agreement to the statement that 'famous personalities will always advocate good products' (2.89), followed by the statement that 'they believe in honesty of those advertised products that are used in their house' (2.61), 'parents are the best to judge of the product advertised' (2.57) and 'advertisements where socially responsible persons are present are of good products' (2.47), indicating that presence of socially responsible persons, presence of product in the house and acceptance of the parents of the product are the basis of creating a product believe in rural children.

The mean score of all these statements was reported higher by private schools' children as compared to their urban counterparts. Statistically significant difference was found in case of 'presence of socially responsible persons in the ads' ($t=8.93$, $p=.000$), 'parents are the best judge for the products' ($t=11.296$, $p=.000$), 'advertised products are good if they are used in the house' ($t=11.098$, $p=.000$).

4. SUMMARY

The results of media usage and children influence in family purchases it was found that with regard to mass media private schools' subjects showed higher level of exposure with regard to electronic and print media as compared to their public sector schools' counterparts. These subjects showed higher possession of all broadcast media items. The largest gap for media exposure was reported for cable connections, FM radios, internet and computers. Boys showed higher exposure than girls with regard to computers, internet and mobile phones whereas girls reported higher exposure to print media. The exposure of all media items showed an increase with increase in age except in case of television where age showed no significant difference.

There was no significant difference in the frequency of usage of radio/FM and mobile phones among private and public sectors' school children. Time spent on media items was higher on weekends as compared to weekdays. As per usage of media items for different activities is concerned, children preferred television the most for entertainment, internet for doing homework, radio, newspaper and magazines were least preferred print media by children for majority of activities. Respondents from both the samples showed highest preference for television for majority of activities especially for entertainment.

With regard to children reliance upon information sources of various product categories public sector schools' subject reported to rely heavily on T.V, stores and parents for new product information. Private schools' children too relied on T.V followed by stores, internet and parents for product information. The results indicated that private school children relied more upon commercial sources and less reliance on interpersonal sources to obtain new product information. Parents' from both groups too accepted that T.V advertisements were main source of product information for their children.

As far as children likeability of advertisements of different product categories was concerned, respondents from both the groups showed high level of likeability towards food and beverages ads, IT and telecom ads, ads concerning books and stationery, automobile ads, beauty and grooming ads and personal hygiene products ads. They showed least preference towards agrochemicals ads, household

products ads, and ads relating to services and corporate sectors. The likeability score indicated that children like ads of those products which are consumed by them. The result indicated that likeability of advertisements related to beauty & grooming, personal hygiene, automobiles, IT and telecom, food and beverages and books and stationery emerged as the positive contributor towards the influence of children on family interactions and or induces the children to request for advertised products to their parents.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The research focused that despite what many marketers may think children do watch TV. They may be involved with five other things while doing so- talking or texting to friends, searching the internet, playing a video game, and doing homework- but they do still tune into television programs and expect companies to market to them while doing so. TV is still a viable way of marketers to reach children. However, it's important to recognize that while children do still watch a substantial amount of TV (about two hours per day and even more on the weekends), how they watch is what has changed. Children now do almost everything from their computers, including watching TV. Future research is necessary to refine measures of screen media use especially television and internet.

The study has provided useful insight into children buying behavior and focused on children perceived influence in family decisions with regard to wide variety of product categories. It also investigated that whether parents are in agreement with their children perceived level of influence in family purchase decisions. The research provides insight that of all environmental socialization agents, television advertisement and parental influence is the most pervasive and important. The response of parents to children's attempts at influencing family purchases, acts as reinforcements to children's future behavior as consumers. The research can be updated in future to examine the importance of family structure, as measured by sex-role orientation, type of family i.e. nuclear vs. joint family households; both parents working; wife occupational status; number of children per family; family communication patterns; age of child; stage of decision making and traditional and liberal outlooks of parents in the family, in the family decision-making process.

The study used survey method for data collection to investigate the children influence patterns in family decision making. However, in future the researchers can use observation approach to measure the amount of influence displayed by all members of the family in the purchase decisions. Observational data can be derived from videotaped recordings of family interactions during a simulated decision-making situation. This method of data collection techniques can provide better insight into decision-making process in the family and give results which may be contradictory to survey methods used normally in the family decision making researches. This exploratory research can be extended with a larger and more representative sample to produce generalizable findings.

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