



Pakistani TVCs: A Critical Study of their Impact on Young

Consumers

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Abstract

Advertisers attach the product to the emotions, bonding, and happiness of a family or an individual. Consumer buying behavior very much depends on the advertisement. This study aims to examine how various companies are reflecting the bully behavior (consciously or unconsciously) in the content to promote their products which is not a healthy practice for the young consumers. Through the content analysis of the jingles and dialogues of TV commercials targeting children of age 4 to 11 years, in the local channels in Pakistan. Findings show that showcasing bullying behavior and portraying negative messages are in the selected ads.

Keyword: *Family Communication, Smartphone, Smartphone addiction, Family Pattern Theory*

Introduction

Advertising is one effective and integrated marketing tool of communication that motivates the consumer emotionally to buy a product. It also has a resilient bond with entertainment, and it also has raised the media which has blurred the distinguished lines between entertainment and advertisements (Moore E. S., 2004). Advertising does play an important role in the development of the culture and economy of a country. On the other hand, the corporate sector of advertising has been changed over time and has been evolved around the new trend and methods of advertisings. Moreover, besides advertising, the

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market has also been changed according to the requirements, trends, and fashion. However, advertisers know how to play with the psychic of a consumer of all ages.

As a consumer, we live in a world or in an environment where we always wanted better and wished for more, which is the key point for advertisers to focus on. Being a consumer, we always wanted to have better gadgets, better cars, better air-conditioned, better furniture, better lifestyle, and even better toiletries. A simple desire of having more and better is ecstatic around the world only by advertising which projects only one way to accomplish happiness and success and route to growth. In other words, advertising is controlling our lives and our buying behaviors, and apparently, we seem satisfied with this. Advertising has persuasion and influential power on us. In research, neurologist and psychologist combined and put societies under the revolution in advertising and came to one point that is, we are merely 'born to buy' (Schor, 2004).

Nowadays, every product is advertising itself either it's a small business or a large business, different products from one category are showing different ads with different messages. According to Coco Chanel: "To be irreplaceable, one must always be different" (Wheeler, *Designing Brand Identity*, 2017). Every product or business is trying to mark its own identity in the market with a creative and different message by highlighting a unique selling point of the product. It is more important to see what messages they are delivering to promote one product which highlights a new unique selling point of a product from the same category. Advertising can be seen in different mediums like print,

electronic, or nowadays on social media as well. Television is the strongest medium of all advertising mediums to reach the masses. It can easily create an impact on the individual consumer's attitude, exposure, lifestyle, behavior, and on other facets, even on the country's culture as well. Advertising plays the same role in your media diet that vegetables play in your regular diet; most of us would prefer to skip that course and go straight to dessert. But, just like veggies, advertising plays an important role in sustaining a body; in this case, a diverse body of content (Thierer, 2012). Advertising plays an influential cultural role in society (Gannon & Lawson, 2013).

The Pakistani advertising industry is flourishing day by day and adopting new trends and techniques to attract consumers. The most promising audience or consumers are children and young buyers in the market. It is easy to manipulate their young immature minds in the account of long-term consumers. In Pakistan, 66% of houses have at least one or in some cases more than one teenager. 30% of houses in Pakistan have under ten years children who will be our next generation. 30 million population based on teenagers, ages 10 to 19 years old, out of 169 million population of Pakistan (Council, 2009). In 1999 Roedder presented a model which can help to characterize the children's reaction towards advertising, which is based on the Piagetian models of general development (Roedder, 1999). Through this model, he divided children into different stages according to their ages like 3 to 7 years old fall under the perceptual stage, 7 to 11 years old are at the analytical stage and 11 to 16 years old are in reflective stage. Before the analytical stage

children cannot identify the advertisement and their purpose, on the other hand in the analytical stage they have this understanding that ads are selling products, but they cannot realize that the ads are delivering biased messages (Moore & Lutz, 2000). Children can see only what they are seeing and will act accordingly. Children believe what they hear and see, in the same way they believe that product will deliver the pleasure, satisfaction and benefits that advertising is promising.

In this paper, we will discuss specifically the television commercials and narrowed down the research to the advertising which has been shown for young consumers and the messages they have been delivering to our young buyers. "Selling to children is as easy as nailing a nail in soap" (Consumo, 2009). Advertisings are portraying the bully and abusive content through messages and offering their product as the solution to all problems. In the results every child wants to buy that product either they need it or not. It is cliché that the basic function of advertising is to give information about a product and sell it. However, it is more theoretical and basic question is, how is advertising doing this task? This research paper aims to highlight that how young, immature buyers of the Pakistan market decode the message which they have seen or listen to in local advertising on local channels and media. Moreover, what impact these messages leaves on their mind and behavior for their lives. The aims and objectives of this research paper are to highlight, what culture and messages they are promoting through their jingles and dialogues to our young generation. The following study is the core of this research paper: Analyze and decode the messages of

Pakistani local advertising for the young generation, which they are coding via jingles and dialogues. For this study, three different advertisements of local products from the fast-moving consumer goods category will be discussed.

Literature Review

Advertising can be defined as a tool, which will help to grab the attention of a viewer, and through advertising, it is possible to induce the viewer to make an action towards a certain product or business. An ad of a certain product can change the brand image and persona of a product in consumer's mind, as a social psychologist, George Herbert Mead has demonstrated that how consumers of any brand are persuaded in the favors or opposite to a product just because of the brand image is conceived (Gardner & Levy, 1955).

Advertising has an ancient protagonist, which helps in delivering information and most importantly gaining attention. Researchers have established that 'hidden power' can be seen in advertising (Heath, 2001). Advertising can be used as a strong tool to communicate cultural value to our young generation. Advertising has a strong grip on the young consumer because children are a good and easy target for advertisers to sell their products. A three-year child can recognize McDonald's logo while they are not able to recognize their name. However, what value and cultural representation advertisers are promoting to the young minds is very questionable and dangerous for the future generation. According to the R.G. Heath report, this is harmful to the not fully developed brains of the children to pull such emotions.

Television advertising is one of the strong media to reach every type of consumer or potential consumer more effectively. On television, children experienced a dreadful number of advertisings as there is a very weak government controlling system for advertising. Moreover, television is a more impactful medium to reach out and influence more consumer's minds. As for the children as a young viewer of a lot of advertisings, researchers from development have revealed that, while young children participate in single-dimensional thinking, by the age of seven they tend to vary on multiple dimensions for a single given task (RS, 1996). Children tend to use diverse types of media in daily routine like television, social media more specifically YouTube, and other social media applications. A child most probably consumes 13.9 hours in a week to 15.5 hours (depending on their social, geographic, and economic situation) watching television or any other form of media (OfCom, 2006). However, this rate is being increased in the pandemic of COVID-19 because of the quarantine. Every country is facing lockdown due to the COVID-19, and they are stuck in their homes off and on for more than one and half years. In this situation, children of all ages are doing homeschooling and spend more time in indoor activities rather than outdoor games and activities, which increased their screen time, and now they are exposing to advertising more.

Researchers in previous research highlighted the children's behavior of different ages towards the advertising. Children from different age groups have a different reaction towards the advertisement. However, not all children can identify the main purpose of advertisings. The line between entertainment

and advertisement is very thin and children in the first two stages i.e., perceptual stage (3 to 7 years old) and analytical stage (7 to 11 years old). According to Oates et al., only 25% of viewers from the age of eight years and 36% of viewers from the age of ten years can distinguish the advertising and have the understanding that advertising purpose is to sell the product (C, M, & B, 2002). In another research, the researcher found that a six-year-old child can combine the dimensions and adding directions in the variability of the perceptual domain (Anderson, 1980). Kunkel D, originate that the use of incentives and response formats of children from the age of five to seven years are compatible in encoding, and their recovery abilities divulge and increased the learning capacity, which increased their exposures, however, it is not clear, whether young children are willing or able to mix different media (which is an advertising and their direct experience) (D & W, 1992). Although the buying decision is in parents' hands, these advertising pursue them to influence their parents in making the purchasing decision (LA & WP, 1968). Children learn a lot of things from their parents, their pattern of personality behavior and attitude reflects in their children's behavior and attitude (LJ, 1994).

In the past decades, many studies have been conducted and discussed to understand the literature of marketing and advertising, each study has the objective which focused only on how to proceed with a campaign and how to process the consumer to take action when they are exposed to advertising and how to evaluate the brand or product on the bases of advertising (DD & M, 1993). Very few researches have been conducted to

evaluate the impact of advertising (especially the messages they are coding) on our society, consumer, or our culture. Although it has been conceded that today's market practice targets children or young buyers, they put their energy into developing a strategy to enhance the attention on entertainment and emotions (R, 2009). Advertising also plays an important role in developing a good society. Since we are social beings, and we are attached to our loved ones emotionally and have strong sentimental values towards our relation. Moreover, interaction with this social and emotional relation affects our moods and makes us who we are and what we will become. Advertising certainly knows this phenomenon about humans' beings' as social beings, that's why they use emotional and sentimental lines or caption to grab our attention towards certain products or services. For example, in a Pakistani advertisement, Dalda, a cooking oil company, has 'jahan mamta wahan dalda' like taglines, Tapal Tea conveys that 'tum, mein or ek cup chai', Ufone, a telecommunication company, 'it's all about you, (tum hi tu ho)', and Molty Foam, mattress and furniture company, 'yeh reshty zindagi bhr ke lye'. Through advertising advertisers and companies tries to communicate with us that they value our emotions, and the importance we have for others in our lives, and most importantly they are delivering the message that their products are bringing us closer to each other as this is the basic family system culture in Pakistan that we do have values, emotions and give importance to each relation.

Most of the advertisers use jingles and songs to communicate the emotions, values, important messages, and cultural aspects to the young consumers (Saunders, 2003). Most of

the children's advertising uses jingles and animated characters to attract young consumers. Like Cocomo, Biscuits by Biscotti company, introduced two characters boy and girl who are playing around in the fantasy world and a jingle is playing in the background in which they are encouraged to share with these lines 'cocomo mujhy bhi do', and Dettol, a company which has a range of antiseptic products, encourages the youngsters to wash hands through their jingle. The main protagonists from the TVCs have a very strong visual impact on the youngsters especially the children. The young generation covers the maximum ratio of being a consumer in the corporate world. Most of the brands target the youth with the help of advertisements, as the youth is directly connected to the brands through advertisement (Ali & Yusaf, 2017).

The main purpose of this study is to highlight the values and messages advertising has been delivering through their jingles and dialogues and how a young consumer with an immature mind and have less understanding of advertising strategy receiving the message.

Methodology

To evaluate, simple thematic analysis approach, Lifebuoy (shampoo and soap), and Horlicks, flavored milk substitute, are chosen. The analysis attempts to dive into the depths of concept, dialogues, and jingles been used in advertisings.

Results

Advertisers try to sell their products. But the messages they are delivering and the content they are showing is with the negative approach for these age children especially for school-going

children. Directly or indirectly these kinds of ads are showing the bully environment in which the victim is facing the inferiority complex. The survey conducted for this research highlighted this complex within the certain children which affected their progress in school. Parents and teachers observed this change. Bullying is one of the factors which a student or child faced in school and leaves a remorseful impact on the casualty's mind which cannot be neglected. Bullying behavior is one of the significant problems along with the school-going children and adolescents. Bullying experience has short- and long-term impacts on the individual. Bullying can be indirect and direct and both types have a major impact on the individual who is bullied (Rivara & Menestrel, 2016). Consequences can damage the mental, neurobiological, and behavioral health of the victim (Rivara & Menestrel, 2016). The young child who experienced bully once became incredibly insecure and on guard person around the same people and same location because he is aware that it could start anytime. This situation has an extremely emotional and mental impact on the young child's mind. Children will feel isolated, angry, unaccepted, and withdrawn (Hafeez, 2017). The targeted child will always be thinking 'how he can do better and how he can escape a bully's notice' (Rivara & Menestrel, 2016). The young child will be stunned and in extreme tension all the time on the campus and around the children. These young children will miss out on the possible chances of good performance in academics and extracurricular activities. And always be thinking to do the thing to prevent the bully.

Advertisings are intended to raise brand awareness, brand attitudes in children's minds to increase purchase intentions. But the children have the lack of cognitive skills to keep themselves protected from the messages they are receiving in advertising in the form of audio (jingles and dialogues) or video. Local TV channels are showing many ads based on the young target audience, many of these ads are provoking bullying behaviors. we selected the following ads to prove the point. For example, 'Lifebuoy', 'a world's leading hygiene soap brand' (Lifebuoy, 2021), advertise themselves on the Pakistani local television channels. In the TV commercial they are targeting young consumers by depicting children in their advertisements and showing some school children are on-trip scenes. This ad appears on a national TV channel in 2014 (Anonymous, Lifebuoy Hand Wash, 2021), where a young school-going child is washing his hands to prevent the germs from a soap bar, and he sounded proud of his soap how it removes the germs when he keeps washing his hands for one minute and then some of his class fellows let him down by making him realize how his soap is slow than the liquid hand-wash, which rest of the class fellows are using. In the ad they showed the bully behavior in which a group of children is bullying a boy who is not using the same product which makes him less informed, slow, and less reliable. In another advertisement for 'lifebuoy shampoo' (Anonymous, Lifebuoy Ad, 2021), a very young girl appeared, she seems disappointed, sad, and crying. She is wearing a school uniform with messy hairs, which portrays the post fighting scene, and she is the victim of violence which she confirmed by answering her mother about

how girls teased her in school (reason did not mention). In the next scene same girl shown more confident and sharper through her looks and style, which shows how she won against a group of girls by only using a shampoo. In both advertisements, they showed children around 8 to 11 years old who are facing bullying and physical violence. In another advertisement of flavored milk 'Horlicks' a group of young children is playing in a playground around a treehouse and the young one, who seems the youngest among other children in age and height as well, tries to grab the hanging leader to climb up the tree to reach the treehouse but he cannot reach due to his height difference. He feels sad and became upset and stops playing. In the next scene, after drinking the few glasses of mentioned product he can reach the leader though he seems the same in height and age.

These types of advertisements are providing two different contents to two different groups one who bullies and one who bullied. These kinds of messages and acts encouraged the group and person to bully someone who is not using or act as the protagonist or themselves. And on the other hand, it gives hope to the entities who being bullied that by using the mentioned product they can face the bully and escape the bully with confidence and style. However, these young minds from the reflective stage (11 to 16 years old) can be identified that these advertisements are biased, and they are selling the product although the young buyers from the analytical stage (6 to 11 years old) might be lost the meaning and pure purpose of advertisement and forced their parents to get the product to avoid the bully or any situation in school or any gathering. According

to research conducted in Pakistan, 4th and 5th-grade students faced maximum bully in school from their class fellows (Khawar & Malik, 2016).

Discussion

Advertising is a technique to address the maximum audience with effective reach and frequency. The main purpose of advertising is to sell the product or deliver a message to the audience or consumer to react. It has been in practice to bring services, products, opinions, or any other public awareness notice or campaign to the audience notice in the account of persuading a reaction in a certain manner towards the message. Young consumers cannot conceive the original idea of advertising, but they perceive the idea that a certain product can fulfill its promise and the usage of that product can make them popular and can give them confidence among other children. Whenever, a product failed to fulfill the promise, this led to depression and leave the negative impact on young mind. Moreover, child look for more solutions and other products which might help to prevent the problem. Normally advertising involves promoting a unique selling point of a product for selling although similar methods are used to encourage people to 'wash hands for twenty seconds to prevent the corona virus' or 'don't use a mobile phone while driving' like the message to support or to promote a cause because advertising has an impact on consumers and audience. Besides delivering the message, advertising is one of the sources of financial benefits for a country. The economic situation of a country always faces ups and downs, in this scenario advertising gives a boost to the economy. Big corporation sectors and the

advertising industry they attend not only to get us on the wheel and tell us to consume more and more and influence us to buy more and more by using new techniques, science, technology, and some advertising ploys to influence consumers. In advertisements, advertise shows us a better picture of a balanced life in which we take up more control over happiness and satisfaction. Advertising and buying behavior of consumer has a strong relation (Raju & Devi, 2012).

As a consumer, we all wanted something better and enormous advertising is converting our wants into our needs. However, advertising plays an important role in it, for example, "Effects of advertisement of hair products on student's purchasing habits" found out that some people think advertising is highly deceptive and influences the individual to buy inferior products" (Yelbert, 2010). Advertising's main purpose is to reshape the dreams of consumers and help them to decide brand or product choice.

Advertisers use different media to reach a maximum audience like radio, TV, print media (newspaper, magazines), and the internet (social media). Every media has its characteristics and its long-term and immediate effects on consumers (Doyle & Saunders, 1990). Television provides high-quality visual and audio content which is more appropriate and appealing and impactful for viewers (Petersen, 2019).

TV commercials have more effective reach and frequency rather than any print or electronic media in Pakistan. All families either from the upper A class or middle class have at least one TV set in their homes. Moreover, TV commercials can influence not

only the behavior, lifestyle, attitude, exposure level, and other characteristics of an individual, even they can influence the culture of a whole country. And the young generation plays an important role in it because children are more vulnerable victims of TV commercial's influences. The impact of TVCs on children is universal. For children, television commercials could be accredited as misleading. For example, food commercials are promoting food that is not even healthy for children. Multiple hobbies and physical activities are the sources of energy however, TVCs are viewing a source of useless energy (Bartsch & London, 2000). As compared to other groups, young children are more inclined towards TVCs. And they also believe in the message of advertising which they deliver about a product. If the message of advertising is simple and not complexed, and it delivers or communicates something new, then there is maximum possibility of attracting children's attention and it will increase the children's interest level (Rice & Woodsmall, 1988). TVCs tend to be repeated during the one program and children up to five years old are fonder of hearing similar things again and again and this TVCs enhance the chances of their attention towards the TVCs. As children are an easy target for advertisers so they target them to sell most of the product by showing them a relatable scenario and situation from their daily life routine for example showing the school scene, friends' scene, or competition seen among some children. The main objective of an ad is to sell the product or to promote its feature, however, if a child perceived the message differently then it may have a wider sociological influence on them (Baran, Mok, Land, & Kang, 1989).

These kind of messages and behaviors develop the inferiority and superiority complex among the children which lead towards the bullying behavior.

Conclusion

We are born without any identity and values. The identity we received from our culture and society; values we learn from the messages obtain from our surroundings, family, and social environment. Advertisings around us delivering the message that purchasing more and more will satisfy us. The impact advertising has on the consumers is substantial. Advertisings have a very strong appealing approach, and it has emphasized extrinsic values on consumers. Moreover, by purchasing more we (being consumers) are giving satisfaction to ourselves and we bound our happiness to the materials around us just to feel better. To fulfill the wants we are chasing and running after or for materials. And we associated our happiness to satisfaction which we feel after purchasing or having the things.

Despite the product category, every advertising is celebrating beauty, wealth, status, and power which depiction is altering our values. The advertisements around us generating the desire for more, especially in the immature minds of young consumers. Not only in Pakistan, but globally advertisings are also projecting the fact that there is the only way to achieve success and happiness and buying more is the core of progress towards a happy and satisfying life. In Pakistan, as we discussed before those advertisers are promoting the family culture and values but again, they are presenting the fact that all these happiness and strong communities can be purchased. Children

and the young buyers of advertisers need to be saved; they cannot handle the increasing blitz of advertising. Young minds cannot purely understand the main purpose of advertising and they are at risk of manipulation and exploitation.

“One factor that may be leading to rising mental health problems is the increasing degree to which children and young people are preoccupied with possessions; the latest in fashionable clothes and electronic equipment... Evidence both from the United States and from the UK suggests that those most influenced by commercial pressures also show higher rates of mental health problems” (Gannon & Lawson, *The Advertising Effect: How do we get the balance of advertising right*, 2013).

A study in Quebec provides real evidence that how TV commercials make children change their habits, for example, an extensive showcase of cereal advertising changed the habit of breakfast for children, and this product will be found in the household (Goldberg, 1990). A major part of developing a sense of children about our culture revolves around the advertisings and TV commercials which he or she sees. Brand awareness adds security to the children’s lives. Grounds of schools are becoming showrooms or display center of brands and other who are not using or adopting the brands faces the bully or uncomfortable situations in school. These display and bully behavior can have the prominence effect of social and economic divisions among the children which may give the direction of teasing, theft, discrimination, social segregation, and even destruction (Sleaford, 2000). However, these numerous advertisings are making us chase the happiness in the material. Children have young minds,

which can easily be manipulated, and these young buyers are also be considered potential buyers in the long term. Advertisers have this strategy to worm a brand's way into the young buyer's mind as early as possible in their life. This is the point where we need to think about that how do we want to shape the future of our children.

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