CHILDREN’S RESPONSIVENESS TO FOOD ADVERTISEMENTS IN TELEVISION AND ALLIED HEALTH PROBLEMS – A REVIEW OF EVIDENCE FROM SELECTED DISTRICTS OF SOUTH TAMILNADU

A thesis submitted by
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Under the Supervision of
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DECLARATION

I Ms. J. Amaleena hereby declare that the thesis entitled “CHILDREN’S RESPONSIVENESS TO FOOD ADVERTISEMENTS IN TELEVISION AND ALLIED HEALTH PROBLEMS – A REVIEW OF EVIDENCE FROM SELECTED DISTRICTS OF SOUTH TAMILNADU” submitted to the Karunya University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management is a record of original and independent research work done by me during 2008-2013 under the supervision and guidance of Dr. R. Amudha, Associate Professor, Karunya School of Business, Leadership and Management, Karunya University. The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet the requirements for a degree or diploma at this or any other higher education institution.

J. AMALEENA

Signature of the candidate
BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE

Certify that the thesis entitled “CHILDREN’S RESPONSIVENESS TO FOOD ADVERTISEMENTS IN TELEVISION AND ALLIED HEALTH PROBLEMS – A REVIEW OF EVIDENCE FROM SELECTED DISTRICTS OF SOUTH TAMILNADU” is the bonafide work of J.AMALEENA who carried out the research under my supervision. Certified further, that to the best of my knowledge the work reported herein does not form part of any other thesis or dissertation on the basis of which a degree or award was conferred on earlier occasion on this or any other scholar.

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

Children are becoming an important segment which no marketer can ignore today. Children are easier to persuade. They are more exposed to the media due to several reasons like; both the Parents are working and remaining at home all alone without any one to be attended. In such situations, of surplus or comfortable earnings of parents, the children have a higher buying power and discretionary expenditure at their will, as they are more pampered or lack control of their Parents

RESEARCH PROBLEM

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), "Children are influenced by media—they learn by observing, imitating, and making behaviors of their own" (2001). The exposure to food advertisements has been shown to influence children’s preferences, choices, and requests for advertised products. It has been found that there is a strong influence of television advertisement among the children’s behaviour, attitude and health problems.

Child psychologists are questioning the ethics of targeting children, the reason being that, till the age of eight or nine, children are unable to understand the intention behind advertising, thus it is unethical to target them, unconsciously laying a trap and susceptible to health problems. Thus need arises to study the various problems caused by television advertisements in the health issues both
physiological and psychological in children and to suggest measures to overcome the health problems in children due to their exposure to TV commercials.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is designed as a Descriptive one. This study is intended to find out the variables of Television Food Commercials that influence the dietary habits, buying behavior, food choices and health problems of children aged 7 to 12 years. The respondents were children selected randomly from selected districts - Madurai, Tirunelveli and Tuticorin of South TamilNadu. Supportive or auxiliary information has been collected from their Parents and from Pediatricians. Primary data were collected during 2010-2011 with the help of a questionnaire designed for the interview schedule. 1050 questionnaires were found to be complete in every manner and usable for analysis with all required information. To analyze and interpret the collected data, relevant statistical tools were used to test and measure the variables and attributes under the study such as percentage analysis, chi-square, ANOVA, factor analysis, Regression analysis and SEM (Structural Equational Model) using the SPSS and AMOS softwares.

The secondary data were collected from research articles, journals, reports, newspapers and websites.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The time spent for the daily schedule of activities on a normal school day and how much time they spend on each activity every day, has been analysed.
All children were found to spend 2 to 3 hours in studying and doing their homework and they spend only less than 30 minutes in playing. It is found that 15% of the children spend 2 to 4 hours and remaining 85% spend 3 to 6 hours viewing television. All children spend 2 to 3 hours in their studies, 1 to 2 hours playing, and more than 6 hours viewing television during holidays.

From the study, it clearly shows that the study time and play time has drastically reduced now-a-days and majority of the time is spent for viewing television and computer games. This in turn changes the dietary habits due to hedonic hunger, preferring most of the food products advertised in the television, either due to curiosity, anxiousness or attracted by the advertisements. The study finally construes, consolidating the responses from the children, views of parent’s, and the paediatricians, that many children were found to be obese / afflicted to sickness very often, has lesser resistance to infectious diseases, resulting from frequent intake of junk food.

Thus the study concludes that “Television Food Advertisements” strongly influence on the ‘Health Issues’ of Children.
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The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me - psalm 138.8.

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