

Digital Media Marketing Advertisement: Interactive Food and Beverage an Impact on Indian Consumers

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Abstract - Advertising means the making of a representation in any form in connection with a trade, business, craft or profession in order to promote the supply of goods or services, including immovable property, rights and obligations. General principles concerning advertising aimed at children and now been acknowledged as a major business function in India. In recent years, the food and beverage industry in the India has viewed children as a major market force. As a result, children are now the target of intense and specialized food marketing and advertising efforts. Food marketers are interested in youth as consumers because of their spending power, their purchasing influence, and as future adult consumers. Multiple techniques and channels are used to reach youth, beginning when they are toddlers, to foster brand-building and influence food product purchase behavior. These food marketing channels include television advertising, the Internet, newspapers with brand logos. The purpose of this article is to examine the food advertising and marketing channels used to target children and youth in India.

I. INTRODUCTION

The advertiser, the agency, the media and the consumers view advertising according to their desires, expectation and opportunities. Hence advertising is no longer viewed as a secondary business activity, but has come to be accepted as a supportive service and a contributory input for diversified growth. This article makes an attempt to study about impact of visual media advertisements on young consumers buying. In India, growth of advertising industry is phenomenal. In 1974, the amount spent in India for advertising was as low as Rs. 75 crore. In 1990, it jumped to Rs. 1,504 crore and in 2011, it reached the height of Rs. 55,000 crore, which indicates the increased relevance of advertising in Indian economy. Visual media advertising is defined as “paid non – personal communication, from an identified sponsor, using visual media like television, cinema trailer, internet etc., about organization, product, service or idea, intended to persuade the audiences or spectators to purchase or take some action upon products, ideas or services”. Television, as we know it, is broadcast to a large section of the public. As such, it is generally described and thought of a one-way, passive medium. Another point worth noting is that the role of television as an information medium has not declined significantly after the acceleration of Internet use.

The Internet provides the means for “interaction” between buyers and sellers. This Interaction can be “human-machine,” “machine-machine,” and “human message,” among others. “Interactive Communication” refers to, for example, “human-message” interaction where the user relates to and, in some cases, modifies the message with which he/she is interacting. India is the world's second largest producer of food next to China, and has the potential of being the biggest with the food and agricultural sector. The total food production in India is likely to double in the next ten years and there is an opportunity for large investments in food and food processing technologies, skills and equipment, especially in areas of Canning, Dairy and Food Processing, Specialty Processing, Packaging, Frozen Food/Refrigeration and Thermo Processing. Fruits & Vegetables, Fisheries, Milk & Milk Products, Meat & Poultry, Packaged/Convenience Foods, Alcoholic Beverages & Soft Drinks and Grains are important sub-sectors of the food processing industry. Health food and health food supplements is another rapidly rising segment of this industry which is gaining vast popularity amongst the health conscious. The Indian food industry is projected to grow by US\$ 100 billion to US\$ 300 billion by 2015. The food industry in India widely comprises of food production and food processing industry. Through our Food & Beverages products directory, we get comprehensive and updated information on Indian manufacturers, exporters, wholesalers and suppliers of food products, health food, beverages, food ingredients, confectionery products, health foods, snacks and more. The emphasis of this article is on food advertising and marketing practices in India.

II. FOOD AND BEVERAGE ADVERTISING

Advertising is central to the marketing is defined as an activity an organization engages in to facilitate an exchange between itself and its customers/clients. Advertising is one type of marketing activity. The reasons that the food advertising market is so large include the following:

1. Food captures 12.5% of Indian consumer spending and so there is vigorous competition.
2. Food is a repeat-purchase item and consumers' views can change quickly, and
3. Food is one of the most highly branded items, which lends itself to major advertising.

Advertising budgets for specific brands of foods, beverages, and fast food restaurants are also revealing. It is estimated that

over \$1 billion is spent on media advertising to children, mostly on television. Multiple channels are used to reach youth to foster brand-building and influence food product purchase behavior. The channels used to market food and beverages to youth are described below.

A. Television advertising

The largest single source of media messages about food to children, especially younger children, is television. Over 65% of India's food manufacturers' advertising budgets and 95% of India fast-food restaurant budgets are allocated to television. Television viewing starts early, Indian children between the ages of 3 and 5 years view 2 hours of television daily; this increases to over 3.5 hours near the end of grade school, then drops off to about 2.75 hours in later youth. Indian children in low-income families and minority youth tend to watch more television. Thus they have greater exposure to food ads.

B. Internet Advertising

Online media play an increasingly significant role in the lives of Indian children and teenagers. India Census data indicate that between 1998 and 2009 the proportion of India young people (ages 14–17 years) using the Internet increased from 51% to 75% and the proportion of India's children (ages 10–13 years) online increased from 39% to 65%. Families with children represent one of the fastest growing segments of the population using the Internet. Advertisers and marketers have begun to target the rapidly growing number of Indian children online with a variety of new interactive advertising and marketing techniques. The forms of advertising and marketing on the Web differ significantly from television commercials. Utilizing the unique features of the Internet, companies can seamlessly integrate advertising and Web site content. Almost all of the major companies that advertise and market to children have created their own websites, designed as "branded environments" for children. This electronic advertising "environment" and on-line infomercials is evident with food companies, which offer multiple entertaining, animated and interactive areas developed specifically for preschoolers and children around their food products. These sites include games, word-find puzzles, contests, quizzes, riddles, music, e-mail cards, clips of commercials, sweepstakes, downloadable recipes, desktop wallpaper and screensavers that feature their products, and on-line stores that sell licensed merchandise. Children can also sign up to receive electronic newsletters with news about products and promotions. The integration of products into games is commonplace. The company's website is frequently featured on ads or product packaging.

In addition to food company sites, there are also several other commercial sites that advertise food products to children. Internet sites aimed at preschoolers have proliferated in recent years. Popular sites include Disney.com, NickJr.com from

cable television network and Nickelodeon, and FoxKids.com from the Fox Kids cable channel. All of these websites are supported by advertising. It is reported that more than two-thirds of all Internet sites designed for children and youth use advertising as their primary revenue stream. Content analyses studies to document television food advertising have not yet been conducted with the Internet sites oriented to children.

III. THE INFLUENCE OF FOOD ADVERTISING ON CHILDREN'S FOOD PREFERENCES AND EATING BEHAVIOR

Of critical importance is whether youth-targeted marketing and advertising of food products has any impact on children's food behaviors or body weight. Almost all of the studies on the impact of food advertising on children's food preferences and behaviors were conducted in the mid 1970s and the 1980s. These studies focused on the relationship between children's exposure to television advertising and their food preferences, food choices, food intake or purchase requests. A recent review on the effects of television food advertising on preschool and school-age children's food behavior concluded that:

1. Studies of food preferences using experimental designs have consistently shown that children exposed to advertising will choose advertised food products at significantly higher rates than children who were not exposed;
2. Findings from food purchase request studies based on surveys, diaries, experimental trials, and direct observation of mother-child pairs shopping have consistently shown that children's exposure to food television advertising increases the number of attempts children make to influence food purchases their parents buy;
3. Purchase requests for specific brands or categories of food products also reflect product advertising frequencies; and
4. Fewer studies have been conducted on food advertising effects on actual food intake, in part due to difficulty in controlling children's exposure to advertising or to foods outside experimental settings.

A variety of study designs have been used to study the effects of food advertising on children's food behavior and food preferences but most are field experiments or survey research/cross-sectional co relational studies. Strength of co relational studies is that external validity can be high given the broad range of potential influences that can be studied. A major weakness is that causality cannot be established. Longitudinal studies that prospectively link exposure to food advertising to children's food intake or behavior have not been done. There also have not been any meta-analyses review studies conducted in which effect-size estimates from multiple studies

are combined. Further, the studies to date have focused almost exclusively on television food advertising. However, considering all the evidence to date, the weight of the scientific studies suggests that television food advertising is associated with more favorable attitudes, preferences and behaviors towards the advertised product. The research evidence is strong showing that preschoolers and grade school children's food preferences and food purchase requests for high sugar and high fat foods are influenced by television exposure to food advertising. Only a few studies have been done on food advertising and the effects on children's actual food intake.

Daily for two weeks, children watched 30 minutes of a television cartoon with about 5 minutes of advertising embedded. The four experimental conditions differed in the type of food advertising included with the cartoon: ads for candy and Kool-Aid; ads for fruit and fruit juice; control (no ads); and public service ad announcements for healthy foods. Each day after the television exposure, the children were given a selection of fruits, juices, candy, or Kool-Aid to choose to eat. Children in the candy/Kool-Aid commercials condition selected the most candy/Kool-Aid and the least fruit and juice. For example, those in the candy commercial condition selected significantly less fruit (25%) than those in the fruit commercial condition (45%).

A new WHO/FAO consultation report on diet and prevention of chronic diseases examined the strength of evidence linking dietary and lifestyle factors to the risk of developing obesity. Diet and lifestyle factors were categorized based on the strength of scientific evidence according to four levels of evidence: convincing, probable, possible and insufficient. The report concluded that while the evidence that the heavy marketing of fast food outlets and energy-dense, micronutrient-poor food and beverages to children causes obesity is equivocal, sufficient indirect evidence exists to place this practice in the "probable" category for increasing risk of obesity. For comparative purposes, other factors placed in the "probable" category were: high intake of sugar-sweetened soft drinks and fruit juices; and adverse socioeconomic conditions (in developed countries, especially for women). Clearly, additional research is needed to examine possible links between exposure to food ads, food consumption patterns and obesity.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In recent years, the food and beverage industry has viewed children and young people as a major market force. As a result, children and young people are targeted aggressively by food advertisers, and are exposed to a growing and unprecedented amount of advertising, marketing, and commercialism through a wide range of channels. The principal goal of food advertising and marketing aimed at children is to influence brand awareness, brand preference,

brand loyalty, and food purchases among youth. A wide range of food advertising techniques and channels are used to reach children and youth to foster brand awareness to encourage product sales. Marketing channels include television advertising, product placements, kids clubs, the Internet, products with brand logos, and youth-targeted promotions. The strong similarities between the marketing and promotional activities used by food companies to advertise unhealthy foods to children and those used by the tobacco industry to market cigarettes to children are striking. At one time tobacco companies were providing schools with free sports programs, scoreboards, and book covers featuring school logos on the front and cigarette ads on the back. Young children were targeted with the sale of candy and bubble gum in packages that resembled those of actual cigarette brands. Ads for cigarette brands popular with youth were selectively placed in magazines with large youth readerships. Promotional materials (caps, sports bags, lighters with cigarette brand logos), sweepstakes, and premiums were commonly used. Collectively, the advertising techniques and promotional campaigns targeting youth were highly successful in encouraging underage smoking. A time-series study concluded that youth are three times as responsive to cigarette brand advertising as adults. Similar studies need to be conducted with food advertising and relationships to consumption of high fat, high sugar foods, and obesity. Experimental studies have consistently shown that children exposed to food advertising prefer and choose advertised food products more frequently than those not exposed to such ads. Purchase request studies with children under age 11 have also found strong associations between number of hours of television watched by children and number of children's requests to parents for those foods, as well as availability of those food items in the home. Because marketing to children and youth has become so pervasive, many child advocates and media experts believe that such marketing constitutes an escalating public health problem. Children, especially young children, are more susceptible to the effects of marketing than adults. Older children and teens can be manipulated by the strong emotive messages in advertisements. It can be argued that children, especially young children, are a vulnerable group that should be protected from commercial influences that may adversely impact their health, and that as a society that values children, there should be greater social responsibility for their present and future health. There is a need for national discussion and dialogue on these issues.

V. REFERENCES

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