

Dwindling Influences of Television Advertisements on the Consumption of Branded Snacks and Beverages

Jahirul Islam Shabuz, Manual Selvaraj Bexci

Abstract: *Consuming fast food is a global concern. Young people are more vulnerable, easily deceivable to understand the persuasive strategies used in television commercials given the enormous exposure in television programmes meant for children and general audience. Television provides one of the first information on commercial food promotion. Brands are positioned and sustained by constant advertising as commercials directly into the living homes of people. Therefore, unsurprisingly, the effects of television advertising on user's brand preferences are well established. Yet, in growing economies, the effect of actual intake and the appeal created by innovative visual advertisements has only recently been characterised. Children in the Bangladesh are exposed to considerable numbers of fast food advertisements television. These are predominantly for foods high in carbohydrates, fat, salt and sugar, which are marketed to children using promotional icons, and themes of enactments and fun. Such advertisements have been proved to cause significant increases in consumption, particularly in very young and adolescent children. Therefore, given the huge concentration of television advertisements exposure in Bangladesh television networks, this study throws an insight into how the millennial urban senior school children who consume branded foods are influenced by such advertisements using quantitative method. The findings reveal that television fast food advertisements did not amply influence their daily consumption of branded snacks and beverages, yet the advertisements have 'laid the basis' for eating habits among the students and actively been essential to introduce the branded fast foods.*

Keywords: *Television Advertisements, Influences, Branded Snacks and Beverages, Television advertisements exposure, cues*

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, globalization has led to a phenomenal increase in promoting consumption of branded snacks and beverages. Specifically, fast food consumption is high among millennial youth who have already become an easy target for many food advertisers. Television is one of the biggest advertising mass media channels. Advertising is part of a company's communication and marketing mix.

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For Boyland and Whalen the main objective of advertising is to persuade consumers to buy a product, enabling the brand to build a positive by creating a unique image and positioning [1]. Consumption of fast food is marketed in various ways throughout the globe. Sports personalities are often involved in television advertisements for fast food brands. Animation and cartoons are used substantially for luring young minds. Television food advertisements communicates powerful consumption cues, like using images of attractive models eating, snacking for fun during after or before meal times, and positive emotions linked to branded snacks and beverages. Similarly, the messages have the power to stimulate as real-life primes that directly lead to consumption behaviours [2], concentrating more towards the youth because of their spending power and purchasing influence. In Bangladesh, young and adolescent children are viewed as major target market by multinational corporate food giants [3]. Children in the Bangladesh are exposed to considerable numbers of fast food advertisements television. These are predominantly for foods high in carbohydrates, fat, salt and sugar, which are marketed to children using promotional icons, and themes of enactments and fun. Such advertisements have been proved to cause significant increases in consumption. Globally, chips alone collectively account for more than 70% of the food commercials [4]. It is important to think of television which has sustained to be one of the longest used media for mass communication. Television provides one of the first information on commercial food promotion. Brands are positioned and sustained by constant advertising as commercials directly into the living homes of people. Therefore, unsurprisingly, the effects of television advertising on user's brand preferences are well established. Yet, in growing economies like Bangladesh, the effect of actual intake and the appeal created by innovative visual advertisements has only recently been characterised. In the knowledge and information era we live in, there is an increasing health conscious society that advertisers are forced to make invalid claims which cannot stand the test of factual truth [5-6]. The World Health Organization (WHO) in association with partnering national and regional health bodies have developed many guidelines and regulations to strictly monitor promotional and marketing actions of food and beverage manufacturers and distributors yet there has been no improvement in advertising adverse content since the last 25 years [7]. Therefore, this paper throws an insight into how the millennial school children are influenced by these

Dwindling Influences of Television Advertisements on the Consumption of Branded Snacks and Beverages

television advertisements in consumption of branded snacks and beverages.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Reactivity to embedded food cues, an advertising model that explains children have many physiologic and psychological responses to food when it is prompted within advertisements to consume the same food or similar highly satiable one which are equally rewarding. According to Folklyord et.al, older children have more exposure to food advertising than

younger children and thus likely have a more developed conditioned response than younger children [8]. In their empirical framework on television advertising influences and eating behaviour, the authors theorized that food advertising targets specifically on unhealthy and palatable foods and considered as a significant contributor to weight gain. Messages factors, its level of integration in the food cues directly reacts impulsively for purchase and consumption.

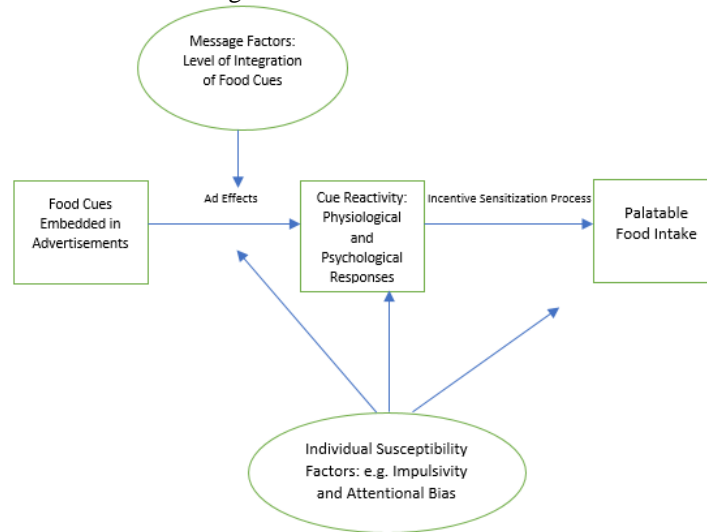


Fig. 1 Conceptual framework on the Influence of Television Advertisements (Folklyord et. al., 2016).

Based on the conceptual framework, the following research questions were generated.

1. Is there a positive correlation between respondents' consumption of branded snacks/ beverages and exposure towards television advertisements?
2. Is there a positive correlation between respondents' consumption of branded snacks/ beverages and cues shown in the television advertisements?
3. Is there a positive correlation between respondents' consumption of branded snacks/ beverages and message cues shown in the television advertisements?

III. RESEARCH METHOD

Descriptive research design was employed in this study. A survey method using a structured questionnaire was collected from 210 urban senior school students of Gazipur City of Bangladesh using a Stratified Random Sampling method. Four school students in 10th, 11th and 12th grades aged between 15 and 18 were selected as sample. Percentage Analysis and Pearson's Correlation Test were employed to analyse the data.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Male and female students of both age groups indicated their differences in consumption of branded snacks and beverages. Mostly female senior students aged between 17 and 18 had major liking for branded chips and consumed at least once a week. They had more exposure to television advertisements that was perceived to be 'moderately

attractive' more than their male counterparts. Female students had more positive perception towards the theme used in the advertisements and were appealed by the message relating to taste of the products. On the other hand, male students preferred beverages and consumed more than thrice a week and were more brands conscious and had a positive preference for those advertisements where celebrities endorsed the products. Male students had less exposure to television and advertisements than female students. Yet all the students had more preference for high-salt content chips and beverages that were fully aware of the artificial flavours used in the branded chips and beverages and had no parental restriction.

1. Correlation between consumption of branded snacks and beverages and exposure towards television advertisements

Table 1: Daily exposure to Television by Respondents

TV exposure	% male & female		% Age	
	Male	Female	15-16	17-18
	N=115	N=95	N=126	N=84
Less than 1 hr	37.39	22.1	31.75	28.57
1-3 hrs	41.73	47.37	50	35.71
3-5 hrs	14.78	29.47	15.08	30.91

More than 5 hrs 6.08 1.05 3.17 4.76

Table 2: Weekly Consumption of Branded snacks and beverage by respondents

Weekly Consumption	% male & female		% Age	
	Male N=115	Female N=95	15-16 N=126	17-18 N=84
Daily	8.69	13.68	4.76	15.47
More than Thrice a Week	32.2	23.15	23.08	41.66
Twice a week	25.21	20	19.04	28.57
Once a Week	28.69	33.68	30.15	14.28
Less than once a week	8.69	9.47	22.2	0

Table 3: Correlation between respondent's consumption of branded snacks and beverages and exposure towards television advertisements.

		Respondent's Daily TV Exposure	Regular Consumption
Respondents Daily TV Exposure	Pearson Correlation	1.00	-0.13
	Sig. (2-tailed)	210	.069
Regular Consumption	Pearson Correlation	-0.13	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	210	.069

It can be observed from (Table 3) that there is a negative correlation (-0.13) between respondents' consumption of branded snacks and beverages and their exposure towards television advertisements. Respondents' television advertisement exposure was on an average one to three hours per day (Table 1) which is high in terms of 'entertainment space' on any given day and it will exceed especially during the weekends. But on average consumption, male and female respondents either indicate the consumption of branded snacks and beverages is once a week, or more than thrice a week. Respondents are divided into two separate categories, male and female consuming branded snacks and beverages once in a week, and another section of male and female

respondents who consume more than thrice a week and there no closer frequency in other categories like daily consumption or twice a week or no consumption at all (Table 2). Therefore, this clearly states that given the high exposure to television advertisements, there is no proof of daily consumption of branded snacks and beverages. Hence, there is a negative correlation between respondents' consumption of branded snacks and beverages and their exposure towards television advertisements.

2. Consumption of branded snacks and beverages and advertisement cues shown in the television advertisements

Table 4: Appeal for TV Ads Cues for Branded Snacks and Beverages by Respondents'

Appeal Elements	% male & female		% Age	
	Male N=115	Female N=95	15-16 N=126	17-18 N=84
Celebrities	26.96	11.58	25.40	11.90
Visuals of the food	25.09	28.0	28.41	28.33
Colour of the package	6.96	11.68	11.11	5.95
Song and Music	4.35	5.26	7.94	0
Graphics and Animations	16.35	11.58	7.14	23.81
Theme of the advertisements	25.09	32.0	28.10	35.11

Table 5: Correlation between respondent's consumption of branded snacks and beverages and advertisement cues shown in the television advertisements

		Television Advertisement Cue	Regular Consumption
Television Advertisement Cue	Pearson Correlation	1.00	-0.19
	Sig. (2-tailed)	210	.006
Regular Consumption	Pearson Correlation	-0.19	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	210	.006

A majority of the female respondents indicated that

the cue 'theme of the advertisements' as a most appealing element in the advertisement (Table 4). A majority of the male respondents have a greater appeal for the celebrities used in the branded snacks and beverages advertisements. A moderate share of the respondent's state that the 'visuals of the food' shown in the television advertisements are more attractive and appealing to them than other elements of the commercial. None of the respondents felt that information of the product or the free gifts that come with the product is attractive to them. Though the products advertised in this category are primarily for young people, certain advertisements carry strong themes such as climbing tall mountains, heroic stunts, crossing dangerous and risky activities that make it more attractive. Yet at the same time, this data indicates that there is a cross-section of respondents who stated different appeals which very diverse in their taste for what they expect in a television advertisement. Again, the data indicates that there is a negative correlation (-0.19) between respondents' consumption of branded snacks and beverages and overall cues shown in the television advertisements (Table 5). As evident from the 'moderate' appeal of the television cues by the respondents that only 'theme of the advertisements' and 'visuals of the food'. Celebrities, songs and music, packaging, graphics and animation were narrowly chosen as the appeal factor. It is also important to clarify that there was no evidence of respondents who chose to consume the product on a daily basis. Nevertheless, the cues were able to help them know the product (sig.0.06) a slight increase from p value 0.05 of significant. There was not one cue which was perceived to be attractive from a majority of respondents. This data conveys that television advertisement cues were not so important in respondents regular of branded snacks and beverages. There could be several reasons behind this expose. It may be because of lack of creativity as respondents have been exposed to more creative content in social media, which may or may not be a direct cue for consumption if tested alone without other cues. Second, there are many advertisements apart from food that uses celebrities, graphics and animation or jingles. Hence, food advertising cannot be singled out to claim that only such advertisements have high cue value. Priming of the advertisements does not come in one single cue. It is highly dependent on team of cues for claiming an advertisement to be more appealing. Based on the plurality of unappealing cues, there is a negative correlation between respondents' consumption of branded snacks/ beverages and overall cues shown in the television advertisements.

3. Consumption of branded snacks and beverages and message cues shown in the television advertisements

Table 6: Appeal of Message Cues in TV Ads by Respondents'

TV Ad Messages	% male & female		% Age	
	Male	Female	15-16	17-18
	N=115	N=95	N=126	N=84
Nutrition, Healthy and Energetic	26.09	6.32	14.29	21.43

Natural	14.78	9.47	10.32	15.48
Snacking for fun and excitement	8.70	6.32	6.35	9.52
Good Taste	41.74	65.26	38.10	61.90
Cheap price	8.70	12.63	7.14	15.48

Table 7: Correlation between respondent's consumption of branded snacks and beverages and message cues shown in the television advertisements

		Regular Consumption	Message Cues
Regular Consumption	Pearson Correlation	1.00	-.06
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.404
	N	210	210
Message Cues	Pearson Correlation	-.06	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.404	
	N	210	210

A majority of respondents both male and female have a greater appeal for the taste of the branded snacks and beverages (Table 6) than any other message delivered in the advertisements. Further, there is a negative correlation (-0.06) between respondents' consumption of branded snacks and beverages and message cues shown in the television advertisements (Table 7). 'Taste' of the branded snacks and beverages is a clear reason for majority of the respondents to consume and buy the brand more than the other non-favourite brands. Artificial flavour enriched snacks and beverages is a winning factor that has attracted young people to go consume which has been taken as the message cue in the television advertisement as well. There is no appeal for message cues as in nutritional value, natural ingredients, fun element and cost of the product as perceived by the respondents, all of these have less than 20% appeal. Since, taste is the dominant factor, surpassing other message elements, it is difficult to state whether the message indicating taste of the product in the advertisement is higher or whether the taste of the product is applied in cognition to the advertisement whenever the children views them in television. This corroborates the finding of other researches [9-10] that despite over exposure to television advertisements by children, many of them find 'taste' of the food to be the primary reason for repeated consumption. Taste is a major influence on any kind of people. The variety of flavours available in different brands gave them a reason to try a flavour each time they bought a packet of chips. There are a large number of snacks and beverage



television advertisements that presents the taste element to attract the attention of the viewers. This can be viewed as detailing of the product performance that appeals the young minds to immediately consume the product. Eating habits and taste preferences with repeated exposure of the messages can remain a life-long influence among users. Message like zero calories, zero trans-fat, high energy is also appealing for those consumers for which reasons they buy the product. Therefore, it is a clear indictment to state that there is a negative correlation between respondents' consumption of branded snacks and beverages and message cues except the 'message of taste' shown in the television advertisements.

V. CONCLUSION

The researchers undertook the study to explore the influence of television advertisements in consumption of branded snacks and beverages by senior urban students in Bangladesh. Students' exposure towards television advertisements, general cues and message cues shown in the television advertisements did not have any influence in their consumption of branded snacks and beverages which indicates that taste beats ads. Hence, from this study it can be concluded that the television fast food advertisements did not lead a major role in their daily consumption of branded snacks and beverages, yet the advertisements have 'laid the basis' for eating habits among the students and actively been essential to introduce the branded fast foods. The researchers strongly recommend communication authorities to have a regulatory body that can control the frequency of television advertisements of fast foods which have high salt and sugar contents. Even though television advertisements did not have a positive influence in the consumption such foods, yet it served introduce their knowledge in terms of availability, taste and pricing. Such advertisements should have warning cues like regular consumption may lead to obesity, so that children may be aware of its harmful effects.

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