

Influence of Television Commercials on the Social Behavior of Youngsters in Bangladesh: A Qualitative Approach

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Abstract

Media considered as an emergent pillar of society. Despite the growing strength of social networks, television advertising is still the most influential medium in people's social behavior and purchase decisions. A report from the Television Bureau of Advertising and Knowledge Networks Inc. reveals that 37 percent of television viewers make purchase decisions after watching advertisements on television. Impact and persuasion are two factors for a successful TV commercial that arouses viewer interest immediately and remains memorable. In our country for the globalization of culture, youngster's social behavior has changed a lot. Young people become more materialistic minded after watching TVC and Viral videos on internet. The preset study was conducted about the influence of TV commercials on the social behavior of youngsters. The core objective of the study of the study was to explore the influence of TV commercials on the social behavior of youngsters in Bangladesh. The AIDA model was suggested to assess the impact of TV commercials on youngsters.

Keywords: Advertisement, Television Commercial, Teenager Market, Social Behavior, Advertisement Social Impact, Social Awareness, Consumer Socialization, Focus Group Interview

Introduction:

In society, the role of technological development has long been an interesting area and a significant scholarly issue for both academics and researchers. Now-a-days, the control is changing rapidly for technological development. Ultimately, that changes the social and cultural belief system in all spheres of life. Technological improvement is the one which is playing more important role for this transform. The preface of satellite television is one of the magnitudes of this technological advancement which has an unambiguous effect on the social and cultural area of Bangladesh. For these changes, human behavior is also changing and therefore, the study of changes in the social behavior is becoming more important in the present business world.

The last two decades on account of globalization have seen a consummate change, which has articulated itself in the form of community values. The community values have a positive and

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negative effect on social behavior. Now a day social values are getting wrinkled, moral values have become split and the society is facing an unparalleled cultural elusion. The unethical practices of the business and corporate houses which sponsor the television commercials (TVCs) have a large part of the responsibility that our society today is taking on new values which are at loggerhead with the time tested and religiously accepted values of our society.

Today, the reach of television is extensive. Commercial television channels have penetrated even the furthest of areas and most adults are exposed to thousands of advertisements annually. It is thus natural for the ramifications of the violations of ethics by TVCs to be seen in our personal lives and also on the society as a whole.

Advertising, now a days is gigantic business and many industries like magazines, the cable TV industry, newspapers and many other media, non media and communication industries stay alive only on the inflow of money due to advertising. It is because of this that corporate houses use all possible plans to get our attention first and money ultimately. Sometimes these attempts involve unlawful, filthy or underhand tricks, making incorrect claims (Burns *et al.*, 2005) and confidence in fake information (Drumwright and Murphy, 2009). Later on a number of debates have been going on about the social issues in advertising and the disastrous consequences of unacceptable advertising have been brought to the vanguard. The social effects of indecent advertising usually marked themselves in the form of an adverse effect on child psychology (Haefner, 1991), human behavior (Lavine *et al.*, 1999), value system and perception (Roy, 2006), a boost to materialism (Richins, 1995), the rise of consumerism and corruption (Nuta, 2009), decreased reliability and self confidence of women (Chatterji, 2005; Schaffter, 2006) and dilapidation of relationships in families. This study is an attempt to examine the extent to which these claims are true.

Due to the introduction of cable TV and Internet the young generation of our country has become reckless. (Zahid, 2007) The study, thus, reveals that most of the respondents are more used to having Western 'Fast Food' compared traditional foods. The respondents prefer trendy clothes, Western movies and music. Watching TV is mostly the way in which the respondents pass their leisure time. A large number of respondents said that they are very close to their school and college friends, compared to their family members, and they discuss mostly about sex, fashion and show-biz world. (Zahid, 2007). Television advertising is designed to influence consumer behavior either by encouraging consumerism, principally to switch for more brand to another or to another or to remain loyal to the one they currently by to some extent advertising may also be concerned with creating a market for new brands. Television is emerging as the most important contributor to human social behavior; it is unquestionably an important source of social influence. Several research studies suggested that television can and does influence human feelings, attitudes and behavior and there is a strong relationship between television and human behavior, television has influenced a several changes in the life of human beings, where there is a change in the life style of the people. Because of television humans are able to gain knowledge in a broader sense and also get or collect the information of the world in the fraction of second. Television can give ideas; it can enthuse to do certain things and drive to begin. Television controls the social attitudes and changing human behavior, living style and ethical thoughts and consequences.

Advertising in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh the most important far reaching effect of cultural globalization is the commercialization of culture. Production and consumption of cultural goods and services have

become commodities, along with the essentials of social life, such as marriage and family life, religion, work and leisure etc. These are the crucibles of cultural creations. Culture whether it is music, food, clothes, art, sports, and images of age, masculinity or in Bangladesh the most important far reaching effect of cultural globalization is the commercialization of culture. Production and consumption of cultural goods and services have become commodities, along with the essentials of social life, such as marriage and family life, religion, work and leisure etc. These are the crucibles of cultural creations. Culture whether it is music, food, clothes, art, sports, and images of age, masculinity or femininity has become a product that is sold in the market place. Sociology says that, cultural change is a reality. Nevertheless, it should be kept under surveillance. There are several well known advertising firms in Bangladesh. Such as- Grey Advertising, Mediacom, Adcom, Carrot, Clockwork, Interspeed Advertising, Asiatic Marketing Communications Ltd.etc. These advertising firms make advertisements for well-known multinational corporations and franchises like Unilever, GrameenPhone, Banglalink, Airtel, Robi, Pepsi, Coca Cola etc. It can be observed that, multinational corporations are more concerned about advertising than local business organizations. Many local firms are not bothered about or less interested in advertising. These firms either make less investment in advertisements or make no investment in it. As a result, they can't compete with their foreign competitors. This is very much clear that Airtel can sell more SIMs than Teletalk can. One of the reasons for this is that Airtel invests much more in advertisements than Teletalk do. Why are these happening? Reasons for this can be attributed to either of the two groups- Ad firms: They do not attract or do not want to attract the local firms. Rather they are satisfied with their present clients. Local firms: They are not bothered about investment in advertisements. They don't think it as advertisements. Another thing is that, the quality of the advertisements created by these advertising firms for the local business firms is not up to the mark. For example, there are many people who buy products when they are influenced by ads. That means there are some people who are greatly influenced by ads. But if a person of this type sees the advertisement of 'Walton motor bike' which is made in Bangladesh will prefer an 'Apache' or a 'Hunk' to the 'Walton motor bike'. Even if the materials to produce a Walton bike is same as the Hunk or Apache, the person will not buy a Walton just because of two reason, Hunk or Apache is more popular than Walton. And the major reason is, Walton's Advertisement is not attractive and not informative.

Research question

Specifically, this paper will focus on the following research problem:

- Is there any influence or impact of Television Commercial on the social behavior of youngsters in Bangladesh?

Literature Review

Advertisement:

Advertising refers to any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor (Belch, 2004). Advertisers create ads with a diversity of objectives in mind from getting people to sample a product, to sway them to donate money for an environmental cause or vote for a political contender (Glowa, 2002). Advertisements work because they make an effective appeal to some need or desire in the people who view, read or listen to

them. The advertising appeal is an endeavor to draw a relationship between the product and the audience. At the broadest level, there are two main types of appeals: rational and emotional. Rational appeals aim for the buyer's head, while emotional appeals aim in the buyer's mind. Appeals can be either positive or negative (Glowa, 2002). The most familiar types of appeals are based on price or value; quality; star recognition; ego; fear and/or anger; the five senses; sex, love and social acceptance; and novelty (Jones 1992).

When people talk about the effects of advertising they often focus on the negatives, but it is important to note that advertising does have its positive side also. In reality, some of our society's most important messages have come through advertising, like "Friends don't let friends drive drunk." In accumulation to promoting important social messages, advertisements can also flash the economy by spark competition and innovation (Morley, 2016).

Traditional advertisements that market a product or service can offer social benefits. In fact, according to Megan Vande Kerckhove, a student at the University of Florida's Interactive Media Lab, advertising is free speech, and it can work to promote free speech. According to Vande Kerckhove, this is especially true in countries where free speech has been suppressed. Advertising there, especially when it comes from the Western world where free speech is embraced, can encourage the idea that free speech is important. Furthermore, freedom of choice and advertising-supported entertainment, which is often a promoter of social changes are two important components of society that are both promoted through advertising (Morley, 2016).

Television Commercial:

A television advertisement (variously called a television commercial, commercial or ad in American English, and known in British English as an advert) is a span of television programming produced and paid for by an organization, which conveys a message, typically to market a product or service. Advertisers and marketers may refer to television commercials as TVCs (Wikipedia,2016).

In spite of the increasing strength of social networks, television advertising is still the most influential medium in people's purchase decisions. A report from the Television Bureau of Advertising and Knowledge Networks Inc. reveals that 37 percent of television viewers make purchase decisions after watching advertisements on television compared to 7 percent for social networks (Gary White, 2016). Impact and persuasion are two factors for a successful TV commercial that arouses viewer interest immediately and remains memorable. Television advertisements reveal their influence in a variety of ways.

Television advertisements persuade gender differences between male and females. For example, the frequent use of male voices in voice-overs conveys the notion that males are more credible and authoritative than females. Television advertising influences the sensitive role-appropriate behaviors for both genders, touching the popular opinion of what makes a successful male or female. For example, commercials about cosmetics further the notion that women's responsibility is to remain attractive forever (White, 2016).

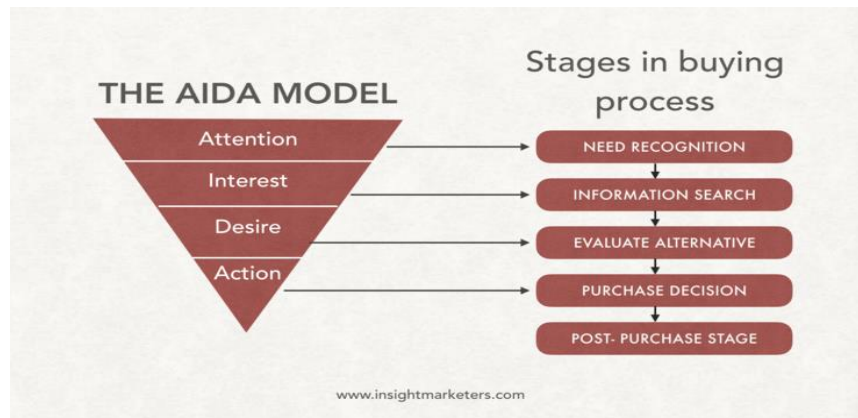
Television nurtures in children an aspiration to have freedom of choice, which is important in making purchase decisions independent of their parents. Advertisers find them easy to control into

spending money on the advertised product. Some children become so possessed with the products they see on TV ads that they bother their parents to get the products for them. TV commercials further expose the young ones to a dollar's power, and teach them that they can purchase anything with the right price (Rosario (2007).

Television advertising promotes the idea that buying products equals happiness. It nurtures a consumer culture that encourages people to acquire new products as a way to match to the society's goals, values and pleasures. Advertisements also create public awareness about important issues such as diseases, charitable causes or environmental degradation. For example, health agencies can use TV for health advertisements focusing on Alzheimer's disease. NGOs or social organizations use commercials to attract volunteers for a charitable activity to better the welfare of others in the society (White 2016).

Social Impact of Advertising:

Advertising is done to create likeness, attraction and influence buying behavior in positive way. Attitude-towards-the ads is an exciting theory of advertising often used to understand the buying behavior. Effective advertisement powers the attitude towards brand and finally leads to purchase intention (Goldsmith & Lafferty, 2002). Ideally, consumer's buying behavior is the product purchase decision (Adelaar et al., 2003). Advertisers are using different techniques to effectively convey commercial messages to create purchase decision. Hierarchy of effects model often used to assess the effectiveness of advertisement and is a series of steps such as, attention, interest, desire and purchase decision (Cavill & Bauman, 2004; Grover & Vriens, 2006). The steps of hierarchy of effects model are as follows:



Awareness:

It is the first step of the hierarchy of effects model, where people get awareness about products. At this stage, advertisers introduce their products, services and information about the usage of products. Initially, advertisers create awareness about products in their target market and its benefits to use (Baca et al., 2005). According to Ashcroft and Hoey (2001) awareness is the cognitive stage to attract customers and is the first step of communication process.

Interest:

Advertisement of a product or service is run with the aim to create interest among target viewers because creating interest is the priority of advertisers (Rowley, 1998). Continuous buying of a particular product shows consumers' interest (Ghirvu, 2013). Pharmaceutical companies, for example, often invest to create products interest in target market with aggressive sales force which attempts to motivate customers for further query (Baca et al., 2005).

Desire:

It is the third step of hierarchy of effects model that deals with the aspiration of target customers to buy a product or service. From advertising view point, desire is said to be the intense level of wanting a product. Creating desire is the priority of advertisers, where they explain the features and benefits of their products, that how much value you have here (Richardson, 2013). At this level, advertisers try to give greater exposure of a product to the customers (Rowley, 1998).

Action:

At the fourth level of hierarchy of effects model action is taken by a customer i.e. actually purchasing a product or service. At this stage, customers are ready to pay for the products to fulfill their intense desire for a particular product or services. A number of incentives offered may persuade a customer to take action (purchase). For example discounted prices often entice customers to take action i.e. buy something (Rawal, 2013). As mentioned by Ashcroft and Hoey (2001) action is the behavior stage involving actual purchasing. According to Hoyer and Macinnis (2009) effective advertising creates positive feelings that lead to actual purchase of advertised products. Therefore, on the basis of above arguments we can hypothesize.

Recently, the word 'Advertising' has become an intensely mooted topic. Advertising has positive as well as negative, social and economic impacts on our society. Considering advertising as a public welfare is a positive social impact, whereas exposing women as a sex tool comes at the negative side. As far as economic factors are concerned, funding for the media and inspiring an active and competitive economy, are the major examples (Iqbal, 2007).

There are various blames that advertising is causing a negative social impact on the lives. The principal bad judgment for advertising is that it hailes the public to purchase things that they are not their real desire. It is arrogated that advertising plays with emotions and encourages people to think that buying and depleting are the activities of life (Bagga, 2015).

According to advertisers, people are capable enough to set their mind and no one can force them to buy anything which they dislike or which they think as unimportant or unnecessary (Bagga, 2015). Advertisers also think that there are positive impacts of advertising on our society and culture. For example, it can be used to create awareness among the public that which product is OK or to which they should say NO. In other words, advertising also acts as an educator in the sense that it educates people what is good and what is bad for them and puts an utmost on the harmful products like smoking and drinking etc. (Iqbal, 2007).

There are not only social benefits of advertising, but it also has some economic advantages. With no advertising, the media together with newspapers, television and radio would never be much stronger. Advertising provides revenue for commercial mediums which would otherwise need to be funded by the real consumer of these mediums. So, we can see a most important economic infrastructure based around advertising, in which the big companies fund, subsidize and encourage the commercial media by advertisements (Iqbal, 2007).

Critics argue that advertising can also have a vast influence on society. It tells the customers that only purchasing products make you happy and therefore people compare each other on their possessions. Women also compare themselves with the beautiful and very skinny models they see on commercials and ads. This sometimes results in eating disorders and a low self-esteem of women who don't look like these models. Another bad effect is, that minority groups, especially in the United States are portrayed in a subordinate position, which settles in the minds of people. Commercials are also an important part of the income of a TV station which leads to the suspicion that a news channel might not report on an incident about a company they depend on. A lot of TV shows are also based on these commercials, and if the ratings aren't good enough the show will be stopped. Only those shows which attract a lot of viewers will be shown, which is not very differentiated and put minorities like older people at a disadvantage (Virginia, 2011). Thus, the impact of advertising on our society is in a mixed form, depending on the functions and implementations of many campaigns. Our society and the marketing of products depend upon advertiser. The companies have become much dependent on advertising that even its negative impacts can never be more important than the many positive social and economic effects (Iqbal, 2007).

Television advertisements have significant impact on youth including product choices and overall perceptions of gender roles. The tendency for pre-adolescent and adolescent females to compare their bodies to women represented in the media increases with age. Increased exposure to television, magazines and movies put youth at a higher risk of adopting unhealthy lifestyle habits (Aruna et al, 2008).

Moschis and Mitchell (1986) conducted a study designed to test the effects of television advertising and interpersonal communications on the teenager's consumer behavior. According to them, the effects of such communication processes on teens are evaluated in the context of household decision making. Thus, the influence of these images may be of enormous significance in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of young people.

According to Chan et al.(2007) social relations, both personal and celebrity-mediated, play an important role in the establishment of consumption values. Peer communication and peer influence were positively related to social comparison. Motivation for viewing advertisements was positively related to imitation of celebrity models. Both are positive predictors of materialism. TV commercials have significant impact on the taste, behavior habits and life style of youth. (Daud, 2011).

The term materialism has been explained differently while showing the same effect i.e. giving value to material things. Another general source of materialistic models is advertising messages. Advertisements encourage consumption by using images of gorgeous and famous product users, demonstrating social reward through using products and associating products with wealthy lifestyles (Kasser et al, 1993).

Peer communication influences social comparison while advertising communication influences imitation of celebrity models. And both social comparison and imitation of celebrity models, in turn, influence materialistic values. This is consistent with argument that individuals learn to adopt materialistic values through social learning from family members, peers and the materialistic messages that are frequently found in television programs and their commercial messages (Kasser et al., 1993).

From the above discussion it can be summarized that TV commercials have impact on the life style of youngsters in many ways. It also highlights the involvement of youth in different product selection pattern and materialistic approaches.

Objective of the Study

The main purpose of the study is:

- To understand the effects of television commercial on the social behavior of youngsters in Bangladesh.

Research Methodology:

The study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected through Focus group discussion (FGD).

The focus group discussions (FGD) are effective when to assess perceptions concerning a specific topic. It also provides rich understanding of the phenomenon of interest. The focus group is a panel of people (typically made up of 6 to 10 participants), led by a trained moderator, who meet for 90 minutes to 2 hours. A FGD helps to test few issues but it has to be conducted in a controlled environment and the people involved have to be experts or at least knowledgeable about the issues concerned.

To conduct this study, the author showed different Television commercials to the students of five different private universities and then conducted focus group interviewing. Students who are youngsters their age were 16-22 years. There were 10 groups and each group consist 10 respondents. We were conducting interview in the class-room environment, where the author showed them different television commercials with projector. The author showed them Mobile Banking, Telecommunication consumer-product items, technological and Social Awareness related advertisement. The study was conducted in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The author interviewed 100 students of different private universities from October 2016 to December 2016. The main reasons for choosing this method is outlined below:

- Existing knowledge of a subject is inadequate and elaboration of relevant issues was necessary.
- The subject under investigation is complex and comprises a number of variables. This method enabled us to concentrate time and resources on the study's most pertinent variables.
- To generation of new hypotheses was necessary before a relevant and valid questionnaire can be constructed or an existing one enhanced.

Limitations:

- Focus groups, together with other qualitative methods, provide researchers with additional means of acquiring rich, experiential feedback from service users.
- FGD method is inappropriate when we have quite some knowledge about the topic but need more in-depth information and details.
- Group dynamics may be challenged or people may be divided or angry. Time-consuming and required experienced analysis.
- This study only had done in Dhaka City and only from five private universities' students.

Scope:

- The research was limited in finding youngsters perception on selective TV commercials.
- The research was done on the Dhaka city since it is not feasible to conduct survey outside Dhaka because of time and money constrain.

Findings & Discussion:

Focus group participants emphasized that there is relationship between the pattern of watching TV commercials and the choice of product of youngsters. The results revealed that advertisements played a vital role in introducing a new product. Majority of the respondents after watching an advertisement wanted to buy the new brand. T.V advertisements helped them to make better choice during shopping. This was also indicated during the focus group discussion where participants indicated that as much as TV adverts influenced them to use different products which may also lead to exaggeration.

Almost all the participants agreed that there is relationship between the pattern of watching TV commercials and life style choices of youngsters. TV commercials have significant impact on the life style of youth. The participants agreed that TV commercials have higher risk of adopting unhealthy lifestyle habits. The negative consequence of television advertising is the consumption of food products such as candy, crisps and fruit juice. It creates gender stereotypes and incites aggression. Effects of media also include the lack of patience and social apathy. All these factors are directly responsible for the depression and low social image which is a grave issue and is being faced by most teenagers. It was also pointed out that TV commercials have huge influence on youth as to what they wear and what they use to adorn themselves.

There is relationship between pattern of watching TV commercials and materialistic values among Youngsters. Media and commercials general a lack of moral ground creating a wide expanse of grey which helps teenagers justify wrong actions. Teenagers could become materialistic minded by watching TVC.It was also revealed that ccultural polarization could happen by watching TVC if there low own cultural cautiousness exists in teenagers' mind.

Conclusion:

The Author through the course of this study established that media in particular advertising has an extremely lasting impact on youngsters psychosocial development. These advertisements directly or indirectly compel youth to think on an agenda in the manner in which it is portrayed through the advertisements which may further lead to positive or a negative consequence.However, TVCs (Television Commercial) are still a very vital and powerful medium of communication. There is an increasing need for the parents, markets and governments to be more aware of the content of advertising that the youngsters are being exposed to. The researcher also believes that effective communication within families regarding the media is extremely essential and will go a long way in reducing the negative impact of advertising. According to the researcher it is also the duty of the media houses and advertising agencies to create advertisements which are informative and rich in quality content. Advertising ethics and laws should be honored and advertisements should uphold the morals of the society instead of distorting them for the purpose of commercialization. The researcher also feels that the youngsters bear the maximum brunt of negative advertising and thus it has never been more essential to create awareness as well as limit the negative exposure of media in youth between the ages of 16-22 years.

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