

IMPACT OF TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS ON ADOLESCENTS***A Study of Silchar Town of Assam***

Prof. (Dr.) Gayan Prakash Pandey, Dean & Head, Department of Mass Communication, ANTSCACS, Assam University, Silchar-788011.

Abstract

Advertisements certainly inform the people and make them aware of different products and services and their usage in daily life. TV advertising plays a significant role in changing the consumer behavior. Advertisers target the vulnerable adolescents and make use of various appeals so as to persuade them to buy and acquire certain products. This exerts tremendous influence on the audience and this effect may vary from one person to another. Advertisements attract the young people and give a constant reminder about different products and thereby motivate them to buy those. Some of the advertised products are such that they are not actually needed but are only used for luxury. The ideas, as well as the visuals that advertisements spread, holds a great strength towards the social norms of a society. With the ever-increasing role of advertising in the society, it is essential to have an understanding of the positive as well as negative impact of advertisements among the adolescents. This research, therefore, tries to dig out the impact of Television advertisements on adolescents of Silchar town of Assam. A survey was conducted among 100 respondents to figure out how the advertisements influence the adolescents both positively and negatively. The research reveals that television advertisements persuade and motivate the adolescents to buy products that may not be of actual necessity. Alluring images, catchy taglines, and featured celebrities influence them to buy certain products in addition to provoking their purchase decisions. On a positive note, advertisements help them to adopt healthy habits and have brought changes in their thought process and life.

Keywords: Television, Advertisement, Adolescent.

Introduction

In today's mediated society, everyone is bombarded with media messages including advertisements directed to specific target audiences. Advertising has become an indispensable medium of communication with the users of varied products or services. The field of advertising is continuously evolving as brands rely on the mass media to achieve certain objectives like increasing sales, to build a connection with the audience, creating knowledge and awareness in the market and creating a competition with the rivals.

Millions of rupees are spent by the advertising industry to promote the products and brands through advertisements in different mass media. A creative and unique campaign is crucial to a company's success. Advertising boosts the marketing of the product and creates competition which directly aids in improving the quality of the product thereby leading to increasing markets and sales (Pandey & Joshi, 2015). Moreover, it provides new ways and patterns for buying and using different types of products and services. Advertising is argued

as a powerful educational tool which holds the capacity of reaching and motivating large audiences.

As per the statement of UNESCO, most of the children in different countries spend around 3 to 4 hours daily watching TV (Hassan & Daniyal, 2013). Television, according to Harold Laswell's magic bullet theory, penetrates its content in the society just like a bullet and is thus the most effective medium for advertisements.

Adolescence is said to be the most delicate stage of human life. During this stage, the youngsters try to follow and adopt new fashion, style, and culture as they visualize in different advertisements and programmes transmitted through mass media including television. They possess the urge and are inclined towards adopting something different from their surroundings (Hassan & Daniyal, 2013). TV is considered as such a medium which satisfies the psychological needs of the viewers. Be the children, adolescents or the adults, an advertisement video of only 30 seconds can heavily influence the audience. Advertisers try to produce commercials to which most people can relate to thereby making the difference between real and reel life blur. Thus the advertisements they view play a significant role in an adolescent's socio-economic development and well being.

According to the views of Kotler & Armstrong (1993), an ideal advertisement aims at providing positive information with the purpose of gaining commercial benefits through a stylish, attractive and refined way, persuading, motivating and compelling the users to buy the advertised product. This persuasive effect of advertisements is mainly impressionable on the young people.

How Television Advertisements Influence Adolescents

The advertising industry has a heavy influence on the adolescents. Adolescence is the period between childhood and adulthood which is often marked by tension and worries. They begin to experiment with adult roles and become increasingly oriented towards peer group relationships. These new roles are accompanied by uncertainty because media content is attractive and adolescents turn to the mass media for readily available information. The advertisers are very well aware how to appeal their senses (A.S., 2014). The adolescents may not always require a product in reality but the way in which it is presented in the audio-visual medium makes them feel that they have to buy and acquire that product. Advertisements create in them a necessity and they purchase that item to fulfill their desires to own the product (Misra & Pandey, 2017).

Adolescents, who are the young people between the age group of 10-19 years is mostly affected by TV commercials. The language, style, fashion and behavior as seen on television heavily influence adolescents (Hassan & Daniyal, 2013). The advertisements make them believe that they can realize their dreams once they start using the products. Adolescents lack the ability to attribute persuasive intent to TV advertising. Critics argue that the young souls are vulnerable to advertising since they lack both the knowledge and experience of critically

evaluating the persuasive advertising appeals and their purpose (Barve, Sood, & Nithya, 2015).

Television viewing influences the lifestyle of adolescents in diverse manners. Catchy slogans, pleasing music, jingles, the presence of attracting models using various appeals such as rational, humor, fear, and repeated messages grab the attention of the audience. Studies have revealed that the main reasons for liking an advertisement are that it provides information regarding discounts, offers, special gifts, brands and quality of different products. Other non-informative factors which contribute towards liking an advertisement include celebrities, catchy slogans, visual effects, good music and action among others (Kotwal, Gupta, & Devi, 2008). Being an audio-visual communicator, TV is the best and most popular tool for selling products and services. The proverb 'Seeing is believing' stands true for children and adolescents as they believe whatever they see and take everything at face value. Therefore the advertisers target them not only in homes but also in schools and classrooms since the young ones can hugely influence purchase decisions in a family (Barcus, 1980).

The advertisers target the popular television programmes and shows in order to reach the young minds. Advertisers employ various concepts, techniques and ideas to persuade and influence the young people who are the soft targets to sell products and services. They instill in the minds of the adolescents unnecessary and increasing demands for products. By creating a peer pressure, they confuse the audience with the difference between "need" and "want" (A.S., 2014). As a result, adolescents get carried away viewing the high lifestyle products.

Effects of Television Advertisements on Adolescents

Advertisements are a means of distributing consciousness to consumers about the available products and choices in the market. While advertisements inform the people and raise awareness, they can also influence people negatively.

Television advertisements are the most influential. Researchers Pandey & Joshi (2015) have found in their study that advertisements possess the potential to bring a change in the lifestyle, likings, expressions and behavioral patterns of the audience. Children and adolescents, being the most intended target audiences are exposed to such media messages every day which affect their purchases, food intake, thinking, values, attitude, and actions (Abideen & Salaria, 2010).

Television advertisements heavily influence children's eating habits. Exposed to various types of foods and beverages through television commercials, children tend to desire those products whose consumption may compromise their health (Abideen & Salaria, 2010). Researchers Borzekowski and Robinson (2001) found a positive relationship between advertisements of eatables memorized by children and different fancy food that the children eat. They also found that advertisements have such influential power that fast food is consumed more than home cooked food resulting in a change in the eating habits (Barve, Sood, & Nithya, 2015). TV advertisements promote taking in unhealthy and low nutritional food, resulting in obesity (Abideen & Salaria, 2010). Over the last two decades, there has

been a rise in the obesity rate among young people. The adolescents are exposed to non-stop commercials of fast food, heavy consumption of which may also lead to other health issues. Apart from obesity, lack of concentration and sluggishness are some of the other physiological effects of the media (Barve, Sood, & Nithya, 2015).

Studies reveal that advertisements negatively affect the behavior of adolescents and their psychological growth. Researcher Edwin, Tarnongo, & Alakali (2013) found that TV advertisements exert tremendous influence on children attitude and behavior. Adolescents view television through which the advertisements render a mental and physical impact on them. Researchers Barve, Sood, & Nithya (2015) found that advertisement creates gender stereotypes and incite aggression. Lack of patience, social apathy, depression, a low social image is some of the psychological effects faced by most of the youth (Barve, Sood, & Nithya, 2015). Adolescents are influenced by their peers to buy and acquire new gadgets and products. They try to compete with each other to get the latest gadgets and be updated with the latest fashion and trends which benefits the advertising company. This also has a negative result on the teenagers' behavior and psychological growth (Friedkin, 1998). Moreover, prolonged exposure to brutal advertisements and programmes enhance the chances of the disposition of aggressive behavior among children (Abideen & Salaria, 2010).

Adolescents are a viable market segment in the society for the advertisers. Therefore, they target the young minds, who are also the potential influencers in a family. They can easily influence their families to spend on household purchases that appeal to them (Mehairi, 2013). Several studies have revealed that television advertisements heavily influence consumers buying decisions. The commercials are designed in such a way so as to provide them an illusion and portray a certain image of the product or service (Mehairi, 2013). The innocent and trusting nature of the adolescents easily believes what is projected to be totally true.

Sometimes, marketers even resort to using unrealistic advertisements similar to claiming the sun and the moon. These types of advertisements include unhealthy junk food, aerated water, harsh cosmetics and many others. The young minds, fascinated by such unrealistic advertisements of such products purchase them under wrong influence. They end up buying things which they actually do not need. Impulsive shopping induced by attractive advertisements most of the times turns out to be a waste.

The use of celebrities in advertisements is an added effort to influence the young audience (2015). These advertisements improve the trustworthiness, believability, and likeability of the products. In relation to Associative Learning Theory, every time the mind recalls the memory of a celebrity it will link and bring up the memory of the particular brand or product with which the celebrity is associated (2015).

Advertising affects not only the purchasing pattern of adolescents but also their total lifestyle. Researcher (Shah, 2016) found that there is a relationship between TV advertisements and the lifestyle choice of the youngsters and also between TV advertisements and materialism. Most of the TV commercials have negative effects on youth and made them materialistic. By

creating a sense of dissatisfaction among the youth, they use different tactics and symbol to attract their attention (Shah, 2016).

Advertisers take advantage of adolescents' vulnerabilities and try to inject in them the desire to fit in, to be perceived as attractive and so on (What is the impact of advertising on teens?, 2018). Advertisements guide them towards what is cool and acceptable. The advertisers very well know that adolescents are really conscious regarding their body image and thus highly susceptible to advertising messages related to body image (2018). This develops insecurities among the adolescents who think themselves to be not in accordance with the visualized standards. The peer pressure may also develop a sense of inferiority when an adolescent sees that her/his fellow mates can afford the products while s/he cannot. This can give rise to a sense of low self-esteem among them.

However, advertising is essential for companies and business to build an identity for itself and it has many positive impacts too. Advertisements raise the standard of living of the people by drawing attention to new and innovative products and ideas.

The positive effects also include creating awareness about different gender roles and norms of the society (Barve, Sood, &Nithya, 2015). For instance, adolescents are now more aware of the need to vote, not drink and drive and wear seatbelts, negative effects of smoking and drinking, etc. These types of advertisements can build positive values and thoughts in the adolescents. Advertisements such as improve health and hygiene, reduce traffic jam, access to education, etc. serve the basic socio-economic needs and bring positive changes in the society. TV advertisements with the tagline like "Why should boys have all the fun?" create a sense of equality among the audience (Barve, Sood, &Nithya, 2015).

Advertisements which promote healthy food and healthy living are essential to educate and spread awareness. It helps the consumers to buy a good product with all the features that they look for. Advertisements have the capacity to shift the consumers' thinking. Some commercials even provide facts and statistics, which can convince the consumers to switch brands.

In a very short period of time, television advertisements can make a product popular and create an impact in the minds of the audience. Many times customers ask for those products which may not yet have reached the market. This shows how promptly the potential consumers catch the words of the people, especially celebrities who endorse the products.

The aim of advertisements is to promote various products and their features but if someone perceives differently, it may have larger sociological influences (Barron, Mok, Land, & Kang, 1989). The impact television advertisements render on adolescents depends on varied factors like how much they watch the medium, their age and personality, if they view the medium alone or with adults and if their parents discuss with them what they view on TV.

Objectives of the Study

The present paper takes into concern the following objectives:

- To ascertain the level of exposure to TV advertisements among the adolescents of Silchar.
- To assess the impact of TV advertisements on adolescents of Silchar.

Methodology

The nature of this study necessitated the use of both primary and secondary data. To collect the primary data, the survey method is utilized. It is followed by graphical representation and interpretation of data. The survey was based on purposive sampling method with age as a parameter since this study concentrates on adolescents. A sample of 100 adolescents was selected from Silchar town as the respondents for this study. The respondents are all students of various schools of this town aged between 13-16 years of age. Through the method of a questionnaire, an attempt was made to gather facts about their opinion regarding how far the TV advertisements influenced them. The researcher developed the questionnaire and it was directly distributed to the respondents. The secondary data were collected from various books, research papers, websites, etc. This paper explains the level of exposure to TV advertisements among the respondents and the impact of those advertisements on adolescents in Silchar town.

Data Analysis

Profile of the respondents: The total number of respondents was 100, of which 56 are female and 44 are male.

Age of the respondents: 13 to 16 years old adolescents were surveyed for this study.

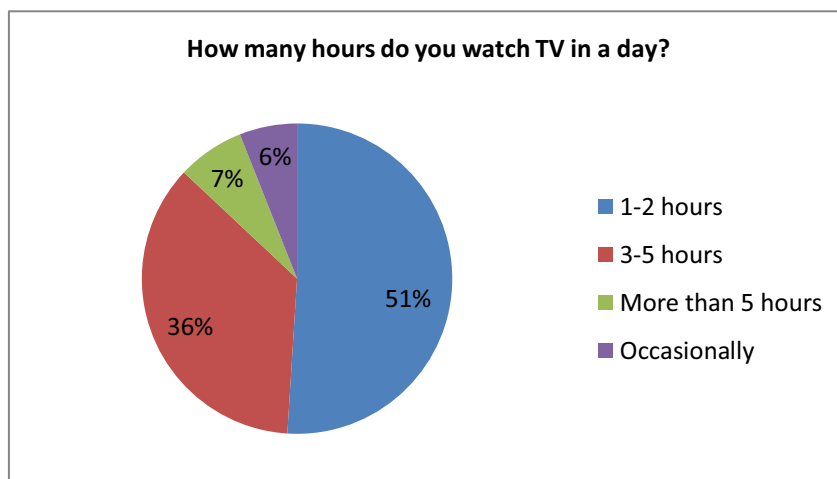


Fig. 1 Percentage of time respondents watch TV in a day

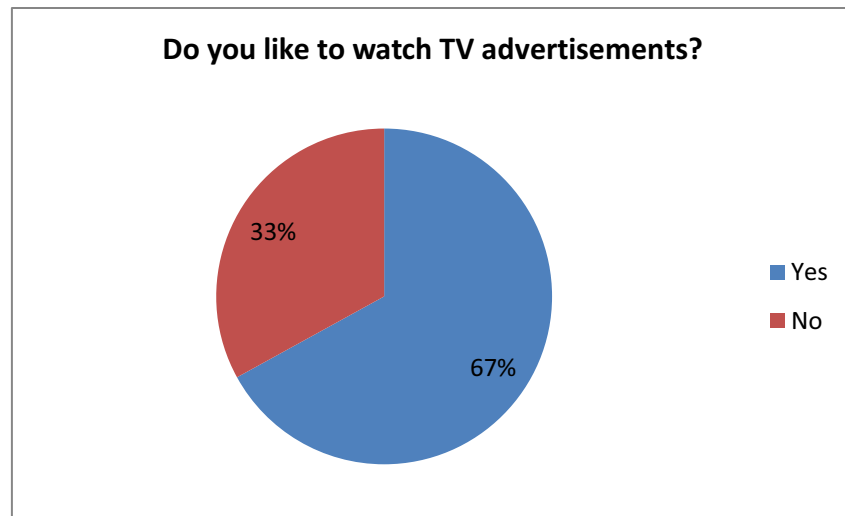


Fig. 2 Percentage of respondents who like to watch TV advertisements

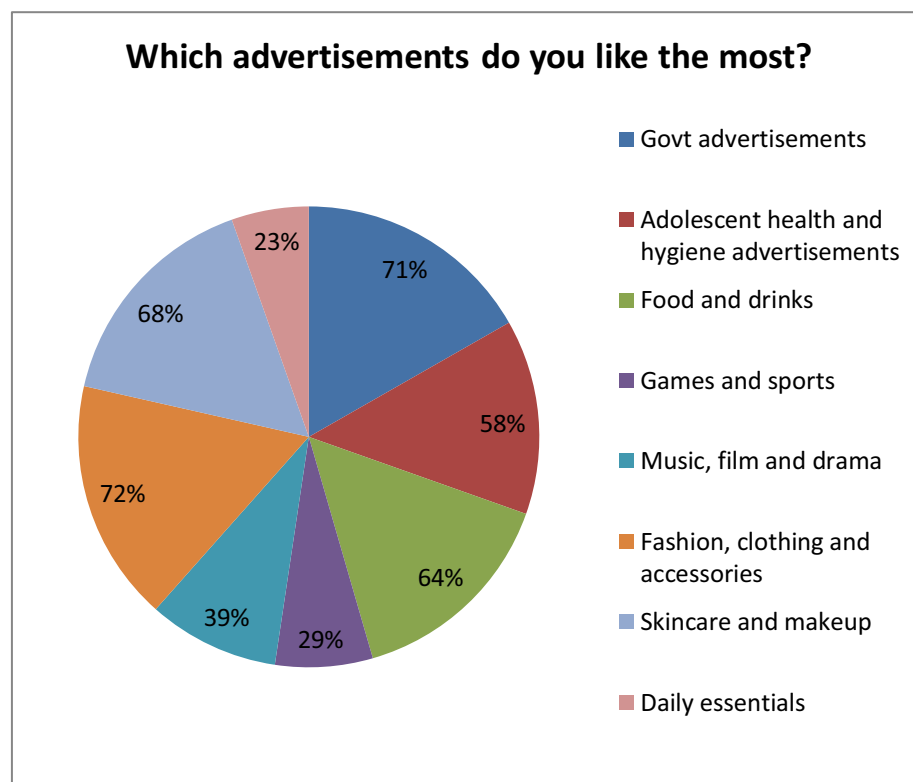


Fig. 3 Percentage showing the advertisements that respondents like most

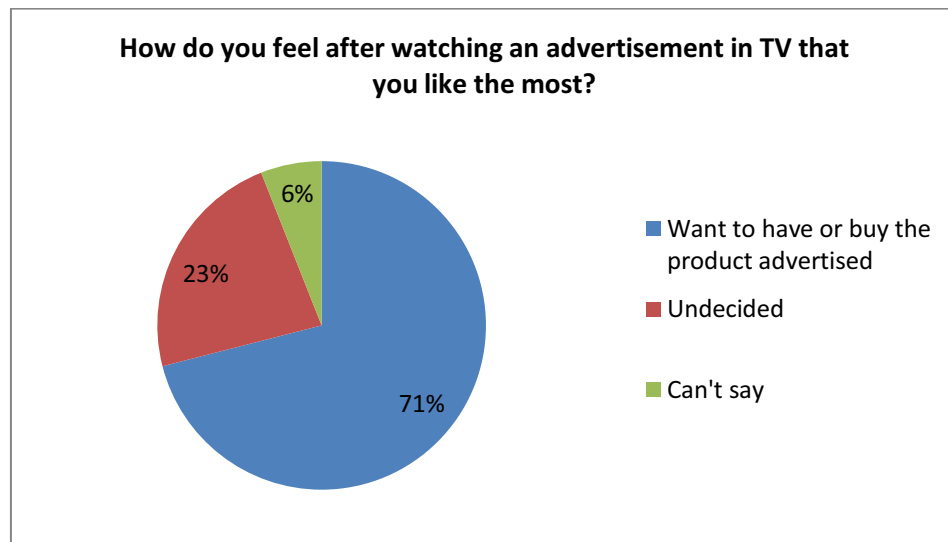


Fig. 4 Percentage of respondents showing how they feel after watching an advertisement in TV that that like most

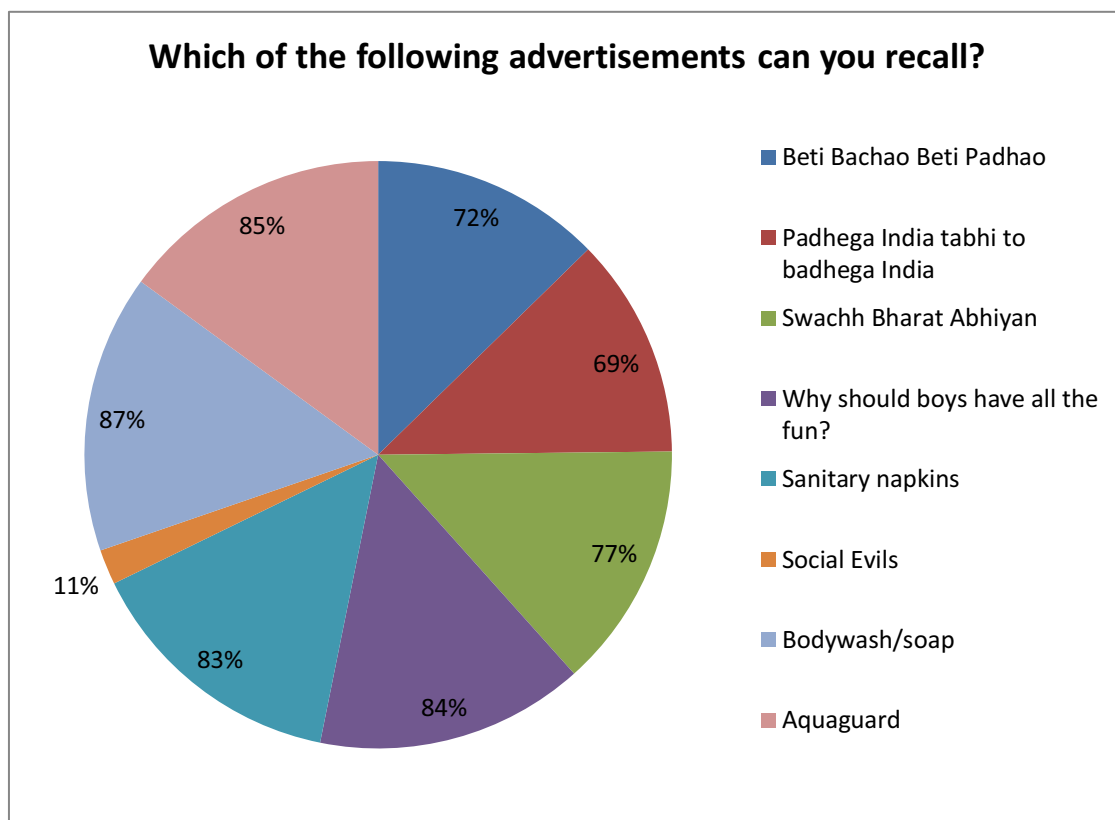


Fig. 5 Percentage of respondents who can recall the named advertisements

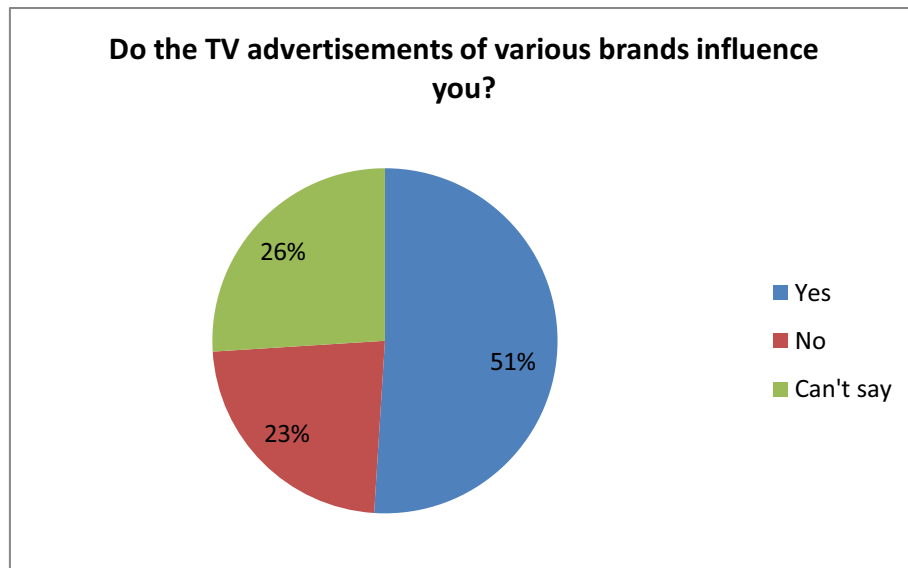


Fig. 6 Percentage of respondents who say TV advertisements of various brands influence them

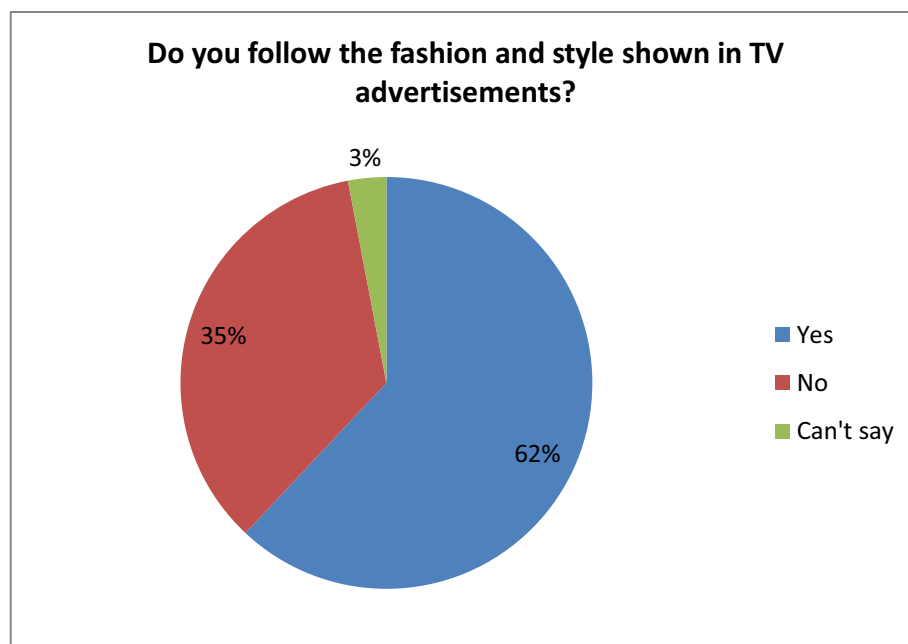


Fig. 7 Percentage of respondents who follow the fashion and style shown in TV advertisements

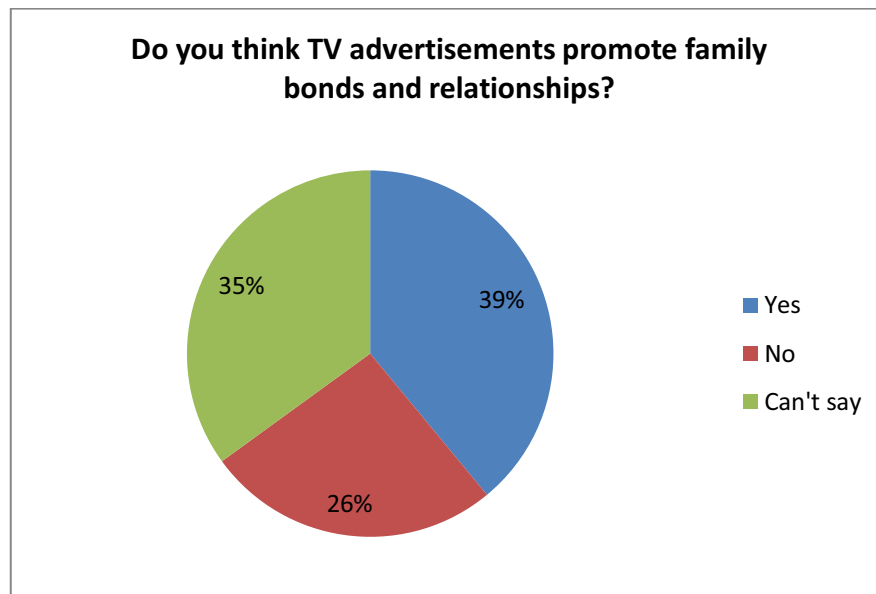


Fig. 8 Percentage of respondents who think TV advertisements promote family bonds and relationships

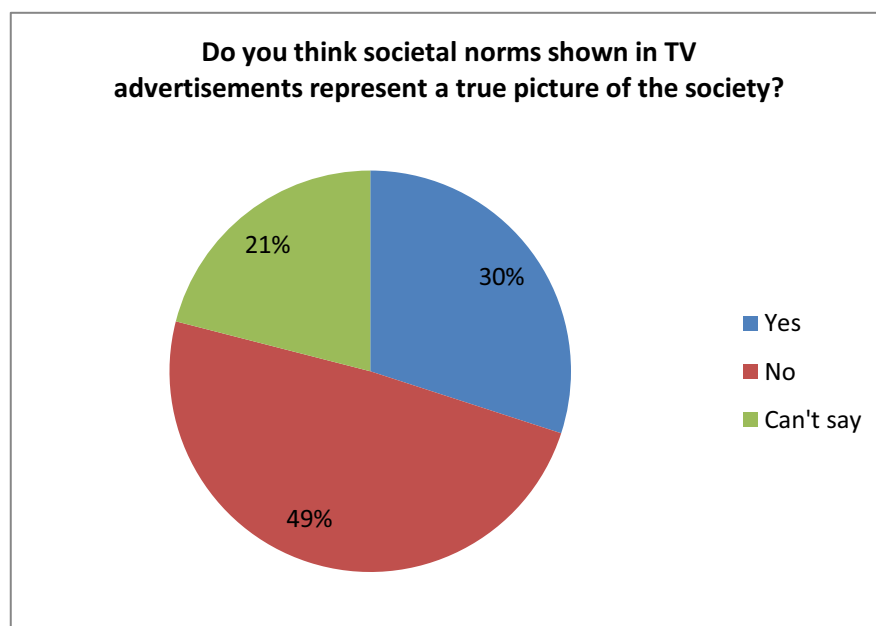


Fig. 9 Percentage of respondents who think societal norms shown in TV advertisements represent a true picture of the society

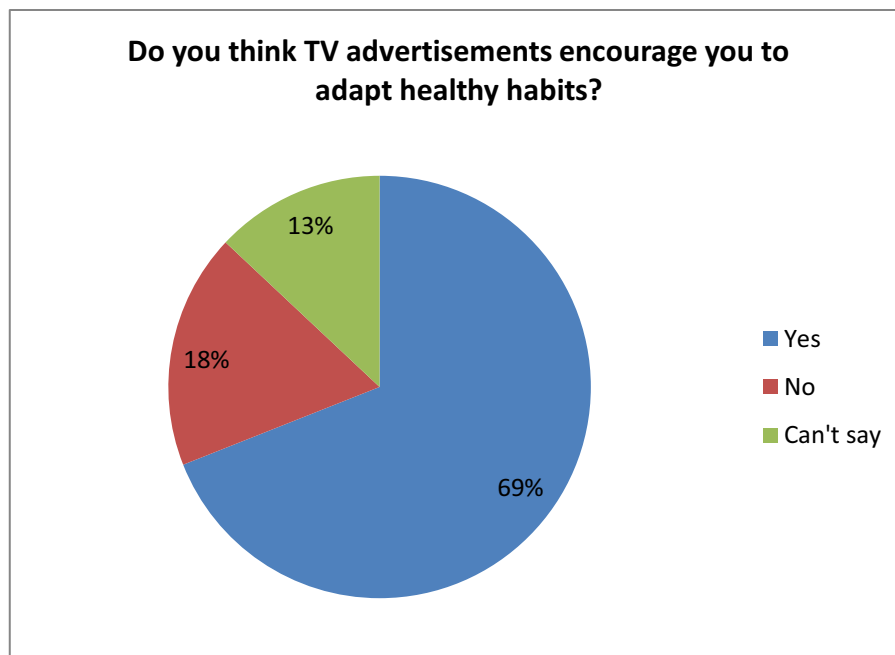


Fig. 10 Percentage of respondents who think TV advertisements encourage them to adapt healthy habits like washing hands, wearing seatbelts, keeping surroundings clean, etc.

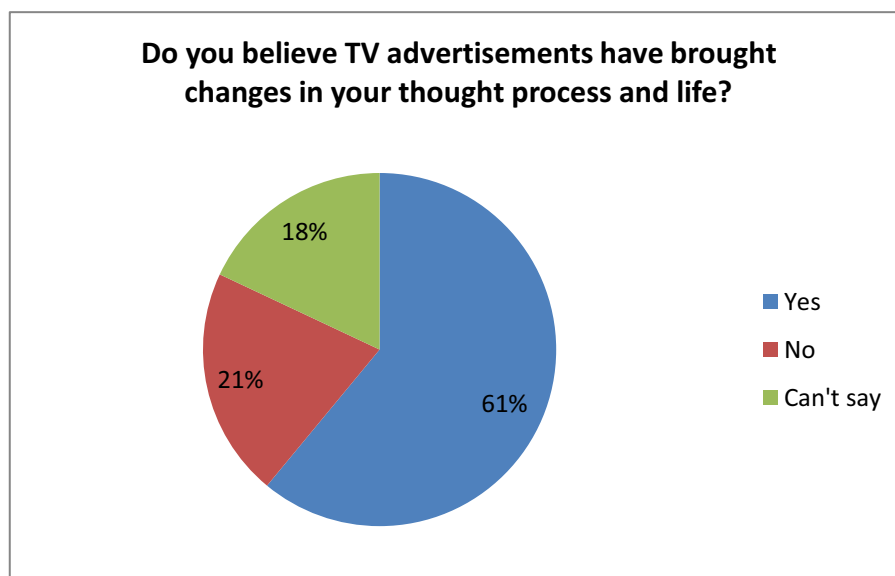


Fig. 11 Percentage of respondents who believe TV advertisements have brought changes in their thought process and life

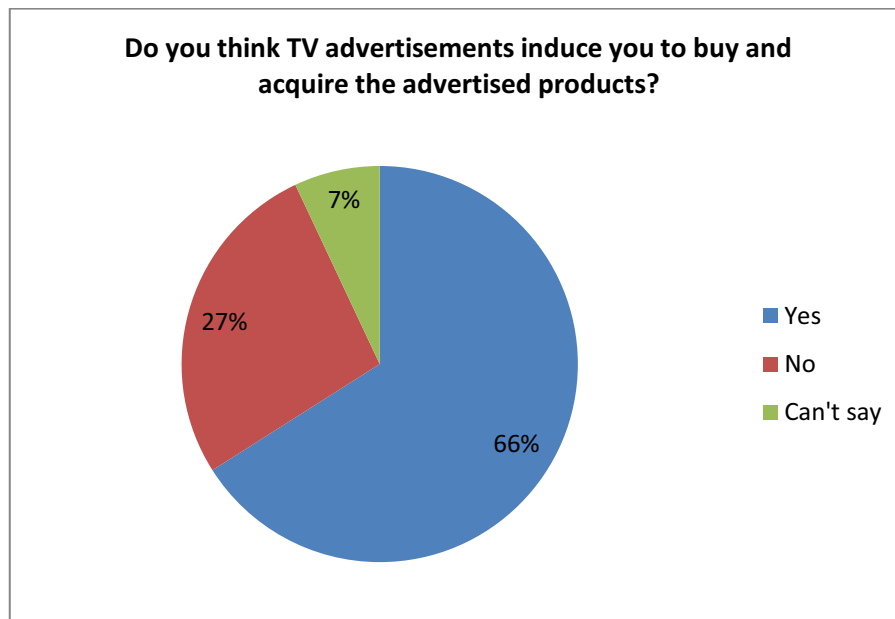


Fig. 12 Percentage of respondents who think TV advertisements induce them to buy and acquire the advertised products

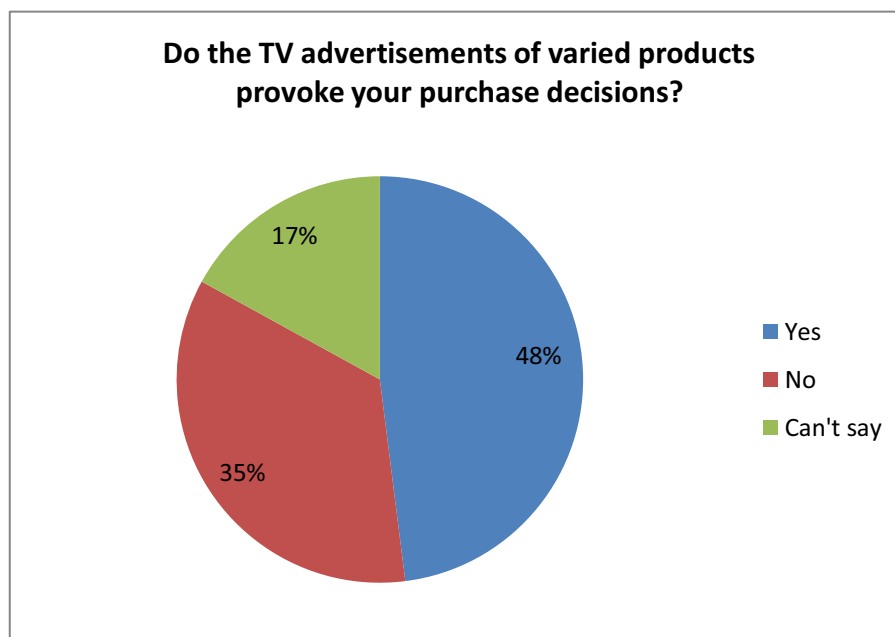


Fig. 13 Percentage of respondents who think TV advertisements of varied products provoke their purchase decisions

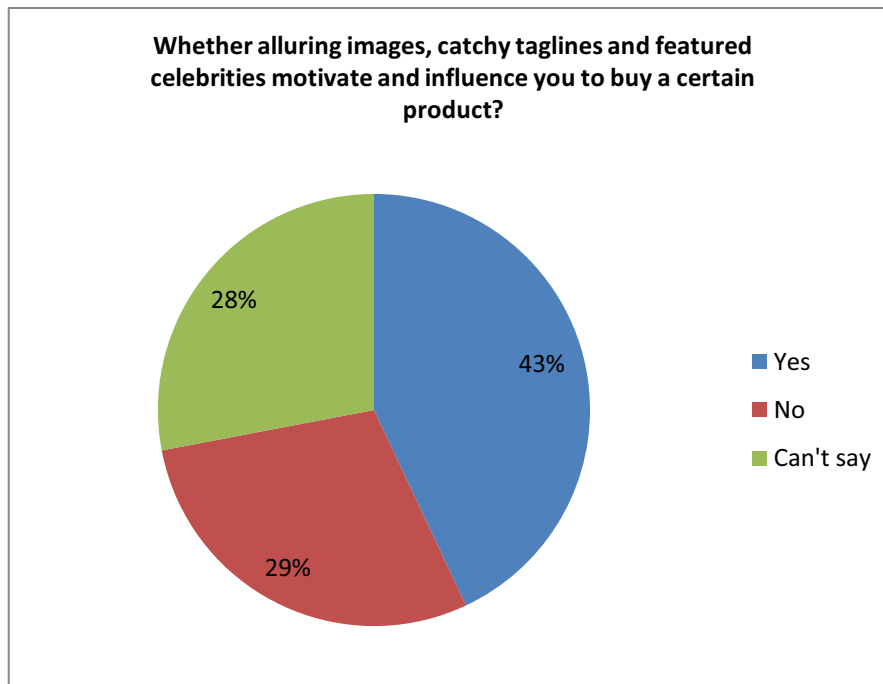


Fig. 14 Percentage of respondents who are motivated and influenced by alluring images, catchy taglines and featured celebrities to buy a certain product

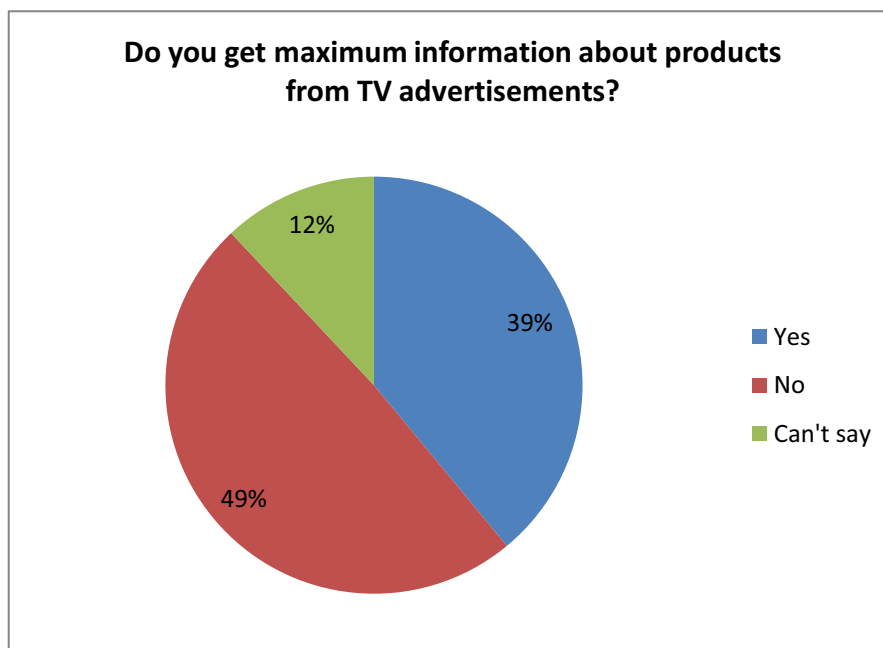


Fig. 15 Percentage of respondents who get maximum information about products from TV advertisements

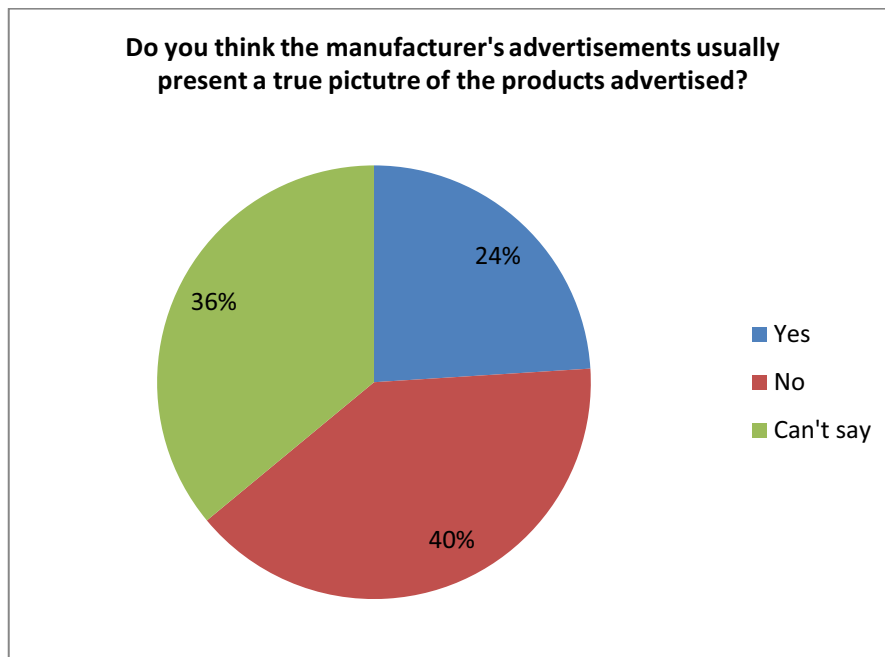


Fig. 16 Percentage of respondents who think the manufacturer's advertisements usually present a true picture of the products advertised

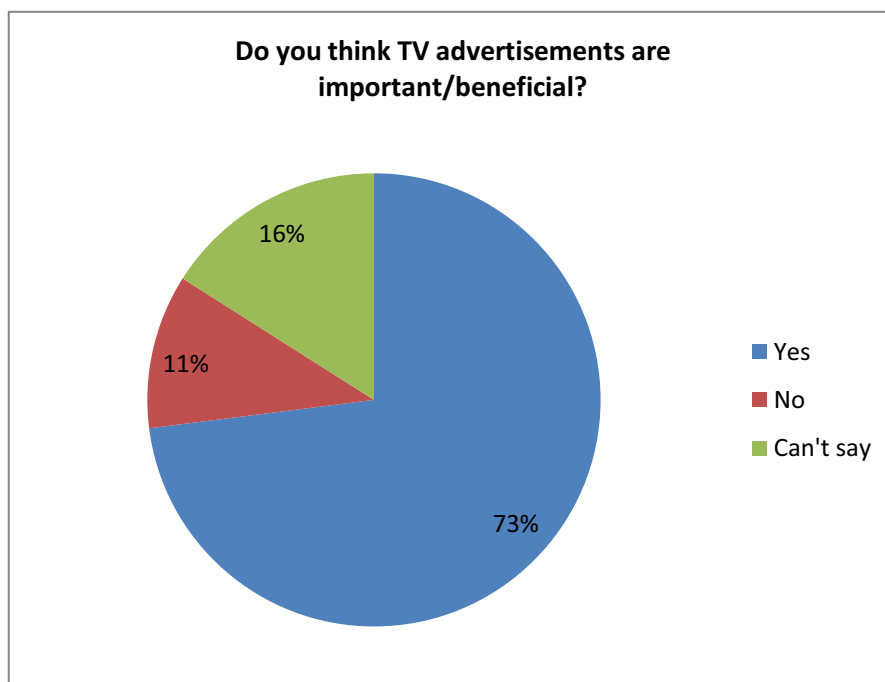


Fig. 17 Percentage showing if respondents think TV advertisements are important/beneficial

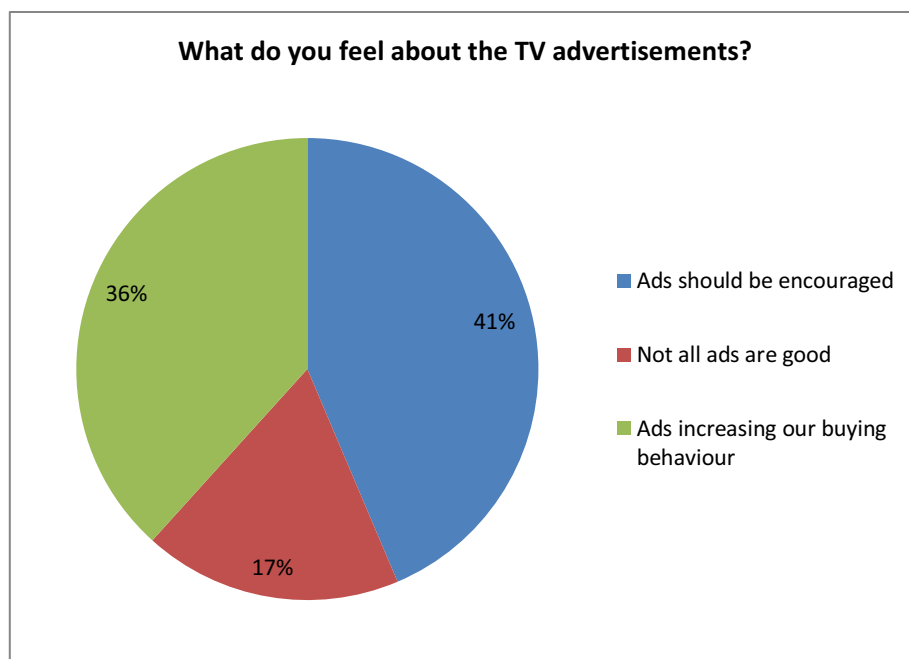


Fig. 18 Percentage showing what respondents feel about TV advertisements

Findings

The major findings of the representative survey include:

- 51% of respondents watch television for 1-2 hours a day.
- 67% of the respondents like to watch TV advertisements.
- When asked regarding the type of advertisements they like, 71% respondents said that they like government advertisements and 58% adolescents like advertisements related to health and hygiene. 64% of respondents liked advertisements for food and drink. A large number of respondents (72%) like advertisements of fashion, clothing and accessories and 68% like skincare and makeup commercials. Advertisements related to games and sports are also liked by 29% respondents; 39% respondents like music, film and drama and only 23% like advertisements of daily essentials.
- Maximum respondents (71%) said they want to buy the product after watching television advertisements that they like.
- When the respondents were asked regarding the advertisements which they can recall, 72% recalled 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' and 69% respondents recalled 'Padhega India Tabhi to Badhega India'. Advertisements related to 'Swatchh Bharat Abhiyaan' were recalled by 77%. 85% respondents recalled advertisement related to Aquaguard followed by 83% respondents who could recall advertisements related to sanitary napkins. Majority of the respondents (87%) recalled advertisements for body wash/soap. Only 11% of respondents recalled advertisements related to social evils. Whereas 84% of the respondent could recall the tagline "Why should boys have all the fun?"

- 51% respondents said that they are influenced by TV advertisements of different brands.
- More than half of the respondents (62%) said that they follow the fashion and style shown in TV commercials.
- 39% of respondents think that television advertisements promote family bonds and relationships.
- 49% of the respondents said that they do not think societal norms shown in television advertisements represent a true picture of the society. While 30% believe so.
- Most of the respondents (69%) think TV commercials encourage them to adopt healthy habits like washing hands, wearing seatbelts and keeping their surroundings clean.
- 61% of respondents believe television advertisements have brought changes in their thought process and life.
- Maximum respondents (66%) said that they think TV advertisements induce them to buy and acquire the advertised products. While 27% do not think so.
- 48% of respondents said that TV advertisements of varied products provoked their purchase decisions.
- When asked if alluring images, catchy taglines, and featured celebrities motivate and influence the respondents to buy a certain product, 43% agreed while 29% of respondents disagreed.
- 49% say that they do not get maximum information about products from the television advertisements. Only 39% say so.
- 40% of respondents think the manufacturer's advertisements usually present a true picture of the products advertised.
- A large number of the respondent (73%) think that TV advertisements are important/beneficial.
- When asked about how the respondents feel after viewing TV advertisements, 47% of respondents say that advertisements should be encouraged. While 36% say that these increase their buying behavior and 17% respondents say that not all advertisements are good.

Conclusion

The young people are a major target of the advertising industry. Every time they watch TV, they are being exposed to a stream of advertisements and the effects of these advertisements on adolescents are largely wide. The results reveal that advertisements of different brands play a major role in influencing the adolescents. Advertisements provoke their purchase decisions and persuade the adolescents into buying such products which may not have any actual use. While many adolescents say that advertisements increase their buying behavior, it is interesting to note that the majority of the adolescents also think that television advertisements should be encouraged. On the positive spectrum, the majority of the respondents said that they think TV commercials encourage them to adopt healthy habits like washing hands, wearing seatbelts and keeping their surroundings clean. Advertisements certainly hold the power to shift the attitudes, opinions, behaviors and thought process of the

adolescents. But these shifts are not always positive. The consumers have to be aware of the possible dangers of the negative impact of advertisements. They have to be conscious of the fact that through the advertisements, they are being covertly attacked every single day. The parents and guardian should provide necessary guidance and supervision so that the adolescents do not become impulsive buyers but wise consumers. It is equally essential to make them realize that success and self-worth are never valued by what they own.

References and Bibliography

1. A Structural Theory of Social Influence1998CanbridgeCambridge University Press
2. Effectiveness of Mass Media Advertisements: A case study of Mysore City audience1989Vidura 26(1) 26-27
3. Effects of Advertising on Youth (Age Group of 13-19 Years Age)2015International Journal of Management and Economics Invention, Volume 1, Issue 10 422-435
4. Effects of Television Advertising on Children: With Special Reference to Pakistani Urban ChildrenIslamabadMunich Personal RePEc Archive
5. Impact of Advertising on Youth Essay
6. Impact of T.V. Advertisements on Buying Pattern of Adolescent Girls2008J. Soc. Sci., 16(1) 51-55
7. Impact Of Television Advertisements On Children: A Case Study2013IOSR Journal of Humanities Ans Social Science, Volume 10, Issue 3 82-91
8. Impact of Television Programs and Advertisements on School Going Adolescents: A Case Study of Bahawalpur City, Pakistan2013bulgarian Journal of Science and Education Policy, Volume 7, Number 1 26-37
9. Impact of TV Advertisements on Teens
10. Marketing: An Introduction1993Englewood CliffsPrentice-Hall
11. Online Advertisements & Consumerism2017International Journal of Communication Development 1-7
12. Pitching to Preschoolers: the impact of television food commercial on sample Head Start children2001J. Amer. Dietetic. Assoc., 101 42-46
13. Study on the Effectiveness of Television Advertisement on Youth, in Relation to their Lifestyle & Culture2014International Journal of Management and Social Sciences Research, Volume 3, No. 6 4-12
14. The Effects of The Advertising On Youth Media Essay
15. The Influence of TV Commercials on the Lifestyle of Youngsters2016Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology, Volume 13, No. 2 156-166
16. 1980The nature of television advertising to childrenNewYorkAcademics Press
17. What is the impact of advertising on teens?2018
18. WOMEN IN ONLINE ADVERTISEMENTS: A STUDY OF YOUTUBE2015International Journal of Communication Development 1-8
19. You are what you buy: mass mediated judgement of people's worth1989J. Communalization, 39(2) 46-54