



Impact of Advertising on Children Aged 8–14: An Analysis of Consumer Behaviour and Media Influence

¹Dr. Telaram Meher, Faculty,

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication Odisha State Open University,
Sambalpur, E-mail: t.meher@osou.ac.in

²Dr. Guru Saran Lal, Faculty,

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication Odisha State Open University,
Sambalpur, E-mail: gs.lal@osou.ac.in

³Dr. Pradosh Kumar Rath,

Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication Central University of Odisha,
Korapat, E-mail: pkmath@cuo.ac.in

How to Cite this Article:

Meher, T. & Lal, G. S. (2026). Impact of Advertising on Children Aged 8–14: An Analysis of Consumer Behaviour and Media Influence. International Journal of Creative and Open Research in Engineering and Management, <i>02</i>(03).

<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijcope.v2i3.159>

License:

This article is published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author(s) and the source are credited.

© The Author(s). Published by International Journal of Creative and Open Research in Engineering and Management.



<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijcope.v2i3.159>

Abstract

Advertising has become one of the most powerful things that affects how people shop in today's world. Kids, especially those between the ages of 8 and 14, are a very susceptible group because their thinking, feeling, and critical reasoning skills are still growing. This study analyzes the influence of advertising on children's consumer behavior, emphasizing product preferences, brand awareness, purchase intentions, and lifestyle decisions. A quantitative study design was utilized, employing structured questionnaires distributed to 200 respondents within the designated age category. We employed statistical methods including percentage analysis, mean scores, chi-square testing, and correlation analysis to make sense of the data.

The results show that advertising has a big effect on what kids buy, especially when it comes to fast food, toys, and electronic gadgets. Digital channels, particularly YouTube and mobile media, have eclipsed traditional television as the foremost vehicle for commercial exposure. Most kids said they asked their parents for promoted items, which shows that the ads were quite convincing. The study also shows that kids often believe ads are true, which shows how easily they may be swayed by marketing.

The study stresses the need for better rules, parental guidance, and media literacy education to lessen the negative effects of advertising. Advertising can be educative and informative, but too much of it can make kids develop harmful habits and a need for things.

Keywords: Advertising, Children, Consumer Behaviour, Media Influence, Brand Awareness, Digital Advertising, Media Literacy1. Introduction



Introduction

Advertising is a big part of today's economy since it promotes goods, affects consumer choices, and affects how people decide what to buy. Children have been an important group for advertisers to target in recent years because they have more money to spend, they can affect family buying decisions, and they may be future customers. The age span of 8 to 14 years is very crucial because this is when kids start to develop their own likes, dislikes, and ways of spending money.

At this stage of development, kids slowly go from thinking in simple, tangible ways to more abstract ways. But they still can't critically assess commercial messages very well. Advertisers sometimes use this to their advantage by making ads that play on people's emotions, imagination, and need to fit in with their friends. They often utilize bright colors, animated characters, catchy jingles, famous people endorsing products, and interesting stories to get consumers attention and keep it.

Digital technology has also impacted the media environment a lot. Television used to be the main way for kids to watch media, but today there are other options like YouTube, social media, mobile apps, and online games that kids may use instead. These platforms allow for more targeted and interactive ads, which means that kids are more exposed than ever before.

Ads can change kids' eating patterns, brand preferences, and even the way they live their lives. For instance, seeing a lot of ads for sugary drinks and fast food might make you want to consume unhealthy foods, and ads for toys and gadgets can make you want things you don't need and make you materialistic. But advertising isn't always bad. Socially responsible advertisements and educational messaging can also help people learn more about health, safety, and the environment.

Because of these conflicting effects, it's crucial to know exactly how advertising affects how kids think and act. This study concentrates on analyzing the influence of advertising on children aged 8–14 years, specifically regarding their consumer behavior, media exposure, and psychological responses in a swiftly changing digital environment.

Review of Literature

Many fields, including psychology, communication, and marketing, have looked into how advertising affects how kids act.

John (1999) proposed the notion of consumer socialization, elucidating how children progressively develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes pertinent to consumption. The study emphasized that younger children frequently do not comprehend the persuasive goal of advertisements, rendering them more vulnerable to influence.

Kunkel et al. (2004) studied how TV ads affect kids' dietary choices. Their findings demonstrated a significant link between exposure to junk food marketing and heightened consumption of high-fat, high-sugar items. The study highlighted the influence of advertising on the development of poor eating habits.

Livingstone and Helsper (2006) examined the correlation between media exposure and materialism in children. They discovered that prolonged screen time correlates with elevated consumption and brand awareness.

Buijzen and Valkenburg (2003) showed that repeating an ad a lot makes kids far more likely to remember the brand and ask for it. Their study also showed how emotional appeals can change how kids feel about things.

Nair and Pillai (2017) conducted a study in the Indian setting, revealing that television advertising significantly impacts children's preferences for food, toys, and lifestyle products. The study stressed how cultural and socio-economic aspects affect how people respond to ads.

Smith (2019) wrote on digital advertising and said that influencer marketing and social media sites have made advertising even more persuasive. Kids often look up to influencers as role models, which makes ads more believable.



Recent research underscores the proliferation of embedded advertising, wherein promotional material is incorporated into games, films, and social media feeds, complicating children's ability to differentiate between content and advertisements.

The literature indicates that advertising profoundly influences children's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions. Nonetheless, additional research is required to concentrate on digital media settings and novel advertising tactics.

Research Gap

Although extensive research exists on television advertising and children, limited studies focus on:

- The combined influence of traditional and digital media
- The role of interactive and personalized advertising
- The behavioural impact of social media and influencer marketing
- The Indian context in rapidly digitizing environments

This study addresses these gaps by examining both traditional and digital advertising influences on children aged 8–14 years.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the level of exposure of children to various advertising media
2. To analyze the influence of advertising on children's buying behavior
3. To study the impact of advertising on food preferences and lifestyle choices
4. To evaluate children's awareness and understanding of advertising messages
5. To suggest strategies to minimize negative impacts

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a quantitative descriptive research design, which is appropriate for identifying patterns, trends, and relationships related to the impact of advertising on children. The target population comprises children in the age group of 8–14 years. A total sample size of 200 respondents was selected for the study to ensure adequate representation. Simple random sampling technique was employed to maintain fairness and minimize selection bias. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires, which were distributed among children in schools and residential areas to gather relevant and reliable responses.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Age Distribution

Age Group	Respondents	Percentage
8–10	70	35%
11–12	80	40%
13–14	50	25%

Interpretation: Majority of respondents (40%) belong to the 11–12 age group.



The age distribution of respondents shows that the majority of children (40%) fall within the 11–12 years age group, followed by 35% in the 8–10 years category and 25% in the 13–14 years group. This indicates that early adolescence forms the largest segment of the sample. Children in this age group are at a critical developmental stage where they begin forming independent preferences, developing brand awareness, and becoming more responsive to external influences such as advertising. Therefore, the dominance of this group strengthens the relevance of the study, as it captures the behavior of children who are highly impressionable and actively engaging with media content.

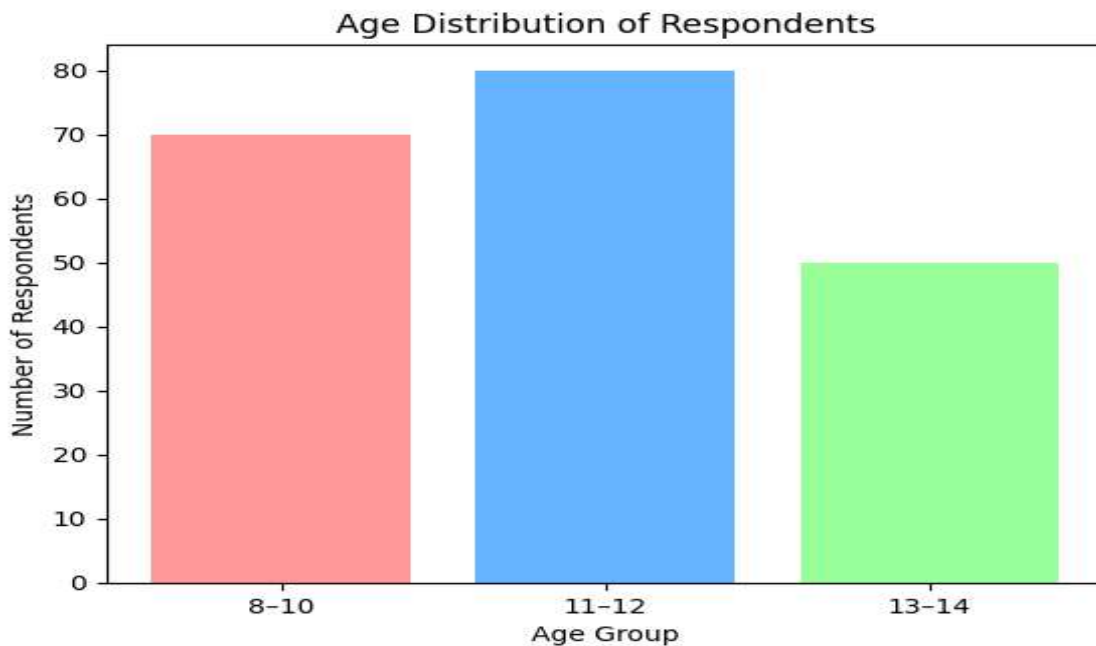


Table 2: Media Exposure

Media Type	Respondents	Percentage
Television	60	30%
YouTube/Internet	80	40%
Social Media	40	20%
Mobile Games	20	10%

Interpretation: Digital platforms dominate advertising exposure.

The data on media exposure reveals that digital platforms dominate children’s media consumption patterns. YouTube and internet-based media account for the highest share at 40%, followed by television at 30%, social media at 20%, and mobile games at 10%. This clearly reflects a shift from traditional media to digital environments. The growing dominance of YouTube suggests that children are increasingly exposed to personalized, interactive, and often embedded forms of advertising. Unlike traditional television advertisements, digital ads are more engaging and less distinguishable from content, making children more vulnerable to their persuasive intent.



Media Exposure Distribution

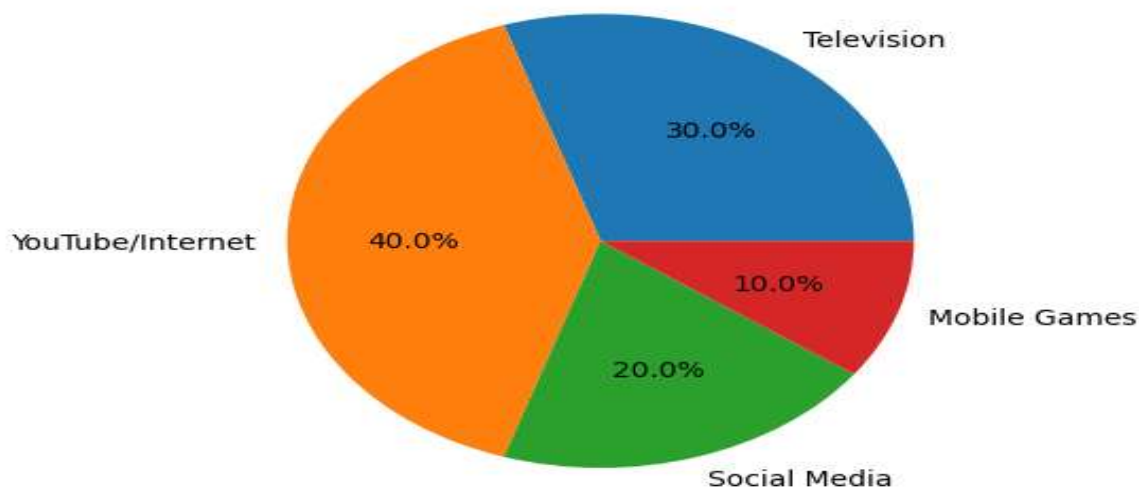
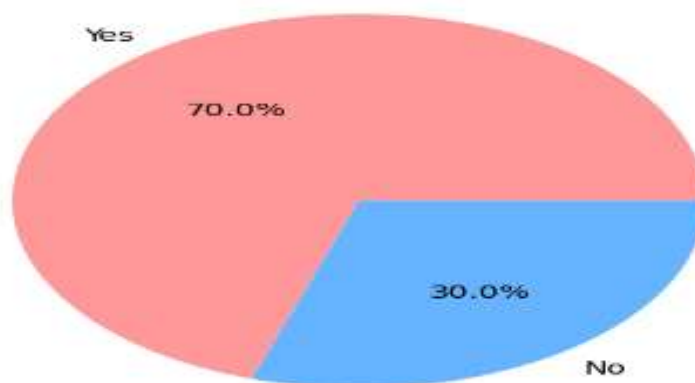


Table 3: Purchase Requests

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	140	70%
No	60	30%

Purchase Requests by Children



Interpretation: A significant majority request advertised products.

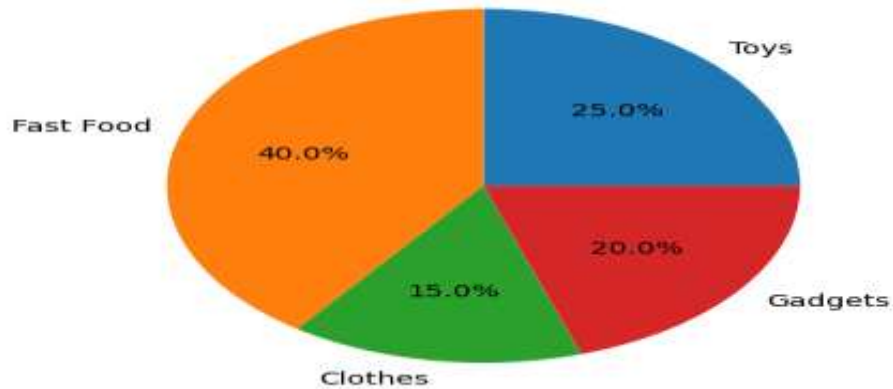
The findings indicate that a significant majority of children (70%) request products that they see advertised, while only 30% do not. This highlights the strong persuasive power of advertising in shaping children’s consumption behavior. It also demonstrates that children play an active role in influencing family purchasing decisions. Advertisements successfully create desire and demand among young audiences, leading them to communicate these preferences to their parents. This behavior confirms that children are not passive viewers but active participants in the consumer market.



Table 4: Product Preference

Product	Respondents	Percentage
Toys	50	25%
Fast Food	80	40%
Clothes	30	15%
Gadgets	40	20%

Product Preference After Watching Ads



Interpretation: Fast food advertisements have the strongest influence.

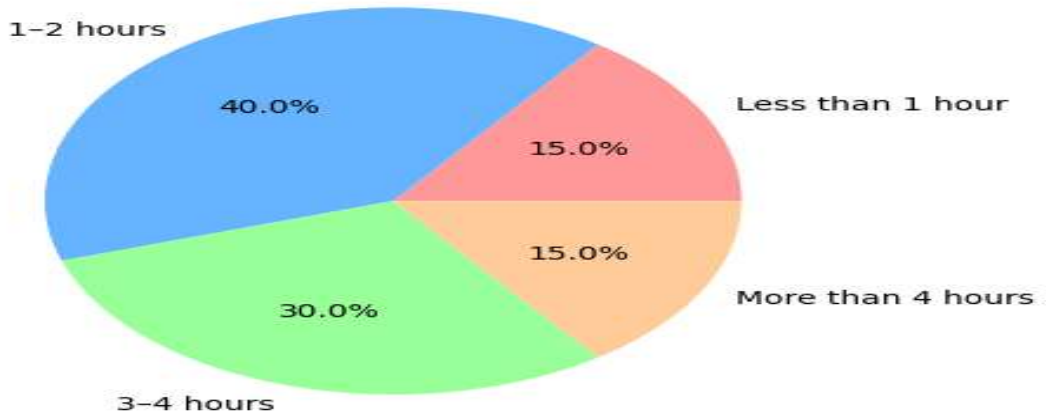
The analysis of product preferences shows that fast food is the most preferred category, accounting for 40% of responses, followed by toys (25%), gadgets (20%), and clothes (15%). This indicates that food-related advertisements have the strongest impact on children. The dominance of fast food reflects the effectiveness of visually appealing, emotionally engaging, and repetitive advertising strategies used by food brands. This trend raises concerns about unhealthy eating habits among children, as frequent exposure to such advertisements may encourage the consumption of high-fat and high-sugar foods.

Table 5: Media Usage (Hours per Day)

Response Category	Respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	30	15%
1–2 hours	80	40%
3–4 hours	60	30%
More than 4 hours	30	15%
Total	200	100%



Media Usage (Hours per Day)

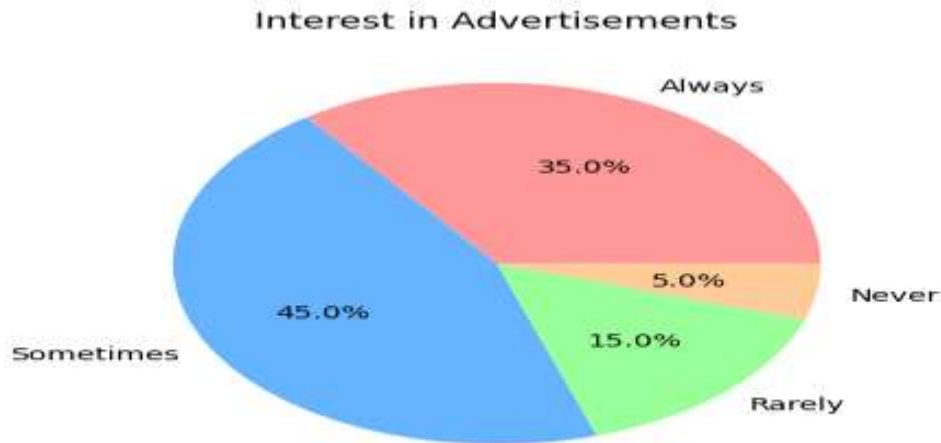


Interpretation: Majority (40%) spend 1–2 hours daily on media, indicating moderate exposure.

The data on media usage shows that the majority of children (40%) spend 1–2 hours per day on media, while 30% spend 3–4 hours. Additionally, 15% spend less than one hour, and another 15% spend more than four hours daily. This indicates that most children have moderate to high exposure to media. Even though the largest group falls within the moderate usage category, a substantial proportion of children spend extended hours on media platforms, increasing their exposure to advertisements. This suggests that even limited daily exposure can significantly influence children’s attitudes and behavior due to the repetitive and engaging nature of advertisements.

Table 6: Interest in Advertisements

Response Category	Respondents	Percentage
Always	70	35%
Sometimes	90	45%
Rarely	30	15%
Never	10	5%
Total	200	100%

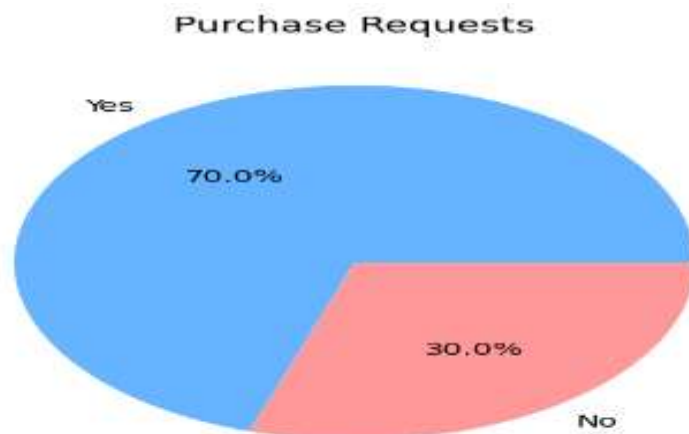


Interpretation: Most children (45%) are sometimes influenced by advertisements.

The data reveals that 45% of children are sometimes interested in advertisements, while 35% are always interested. A smaller proportion shows limited engagement, with 15% rarely interested and only 5% never interested. This indicates that advertisements are generally effective in capturing children's attention. The fact that a large majority shows at least occasional interest suggests that advertisements have a consistent presence in children's media experiences. Even intermittent interest can lead to recall and influence, highlighting the subtle yet powerful nature of advertising.

Table 7: Purchase Requests

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	140	70%
No	60	30%
Total	200	100%



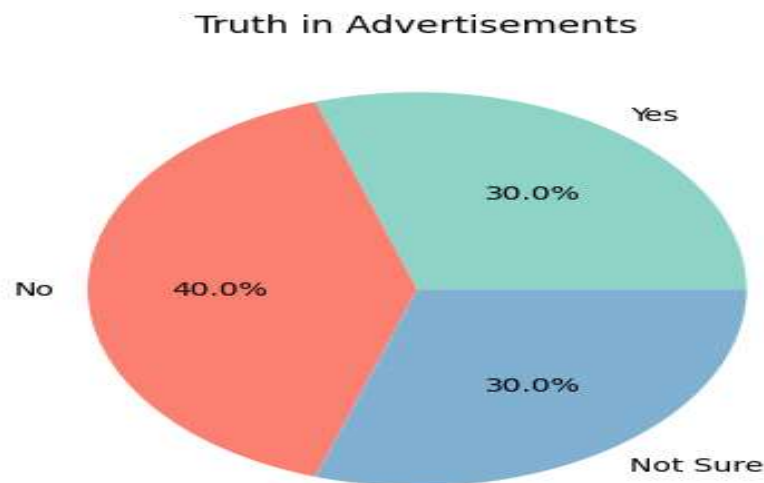
Interpretation: A large majority (70%) ask parents to buy advertised products.



The data reveals that a large majority of children, 70% (140 respondents), request products after being exposed to advertisements, while only 30% (60 respondents) do not, clearly demonstrating the strong persuasive impact of advertising on young audiences. This indicates that advertisements are highly effective in transforming attention into desire and demand, encouraging children to actively influence family purchasing decisions. Children, therefore, function as important contributors in consumer behavior, often acting as intermediaries between advertisers and household consumption. The relatively smaller proportion of children who do not make such requests may reflect factors such as parental guidance, limited exposure, or greater awareness. Overall, the findings highlight that advertising plays a significant role in shaping children’s consumption patterns and reinforces their position as a key target group in the marketing ecosystem.

Table 8: Truth in Advertisements

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	60	30%
No	80	40%
Not Sure	60	30%
Total	200	100%

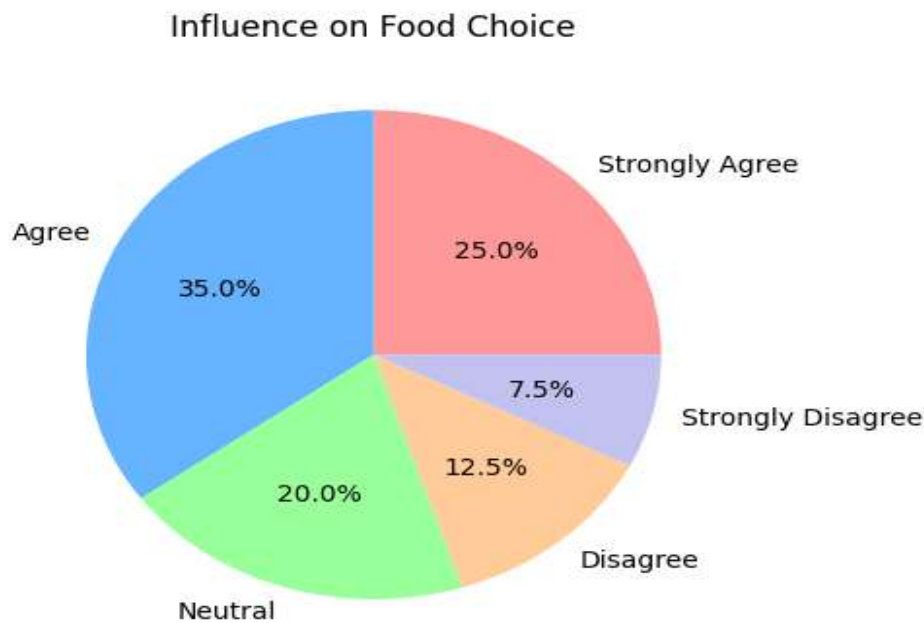


The perception of truth in advertisements is divided among respondents, with 40% believing that advertisements are not truthful, while 30% believe they are truthful and another 30% remain unsure. This indicates a level of skepticism among children, but also highlights confusion and limited critical understanding. While a significant proportion questions the credibility of advertisements, the equal share of uncertain respondents suggests that many children are unable to clearly evaluate advertising messages. This reflects their developing cognitive abilities and vulnerability to persuasive communication.



Table 9: Influence on Food Choice

Response Category	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	50	25%
Agree	70	35%
Neutral	40	20%
Disagree	25	12.5%
Strongly Disagree	15	7.5%
Total	200	100%



Interpretation: Majority (60%) agree that advertisements influence food choices.

The data shows that 60% of respondents (25% strongly agree and 35% agree) believe that advertisements influence their food choices. Meanwhile, 20% remain neutral and 20% disagree. This clearly demonstrates that advertising plays a significant role in shaping children's dietary preferences. The strong agreement level indicates that food advertisements, particularly those promoting fast food and snacks, have a direct impact on children's eating habits. This raises concerns about the long-term health implications, as repeated exposure to such advertisements can encourage unhealthy consumption patterns.

Findings

The findings confirm that advertising plays a powerful role in shaping children's consumer behavior. Digital media platforms, especially YouTube, are the most influential sources of advertising exposure. The high percentage of children requesting products indicates strong persuasive effects.

Food-related advertisements are particularly impactful, raising concerns about unhealthy eating habits. The study also reveals that children tend to trust advertisements, reflecting limited critical evaluation skills.



The integration of advertising into entertainment content (e.g., games, videos) further increases its effectiveness, making it difficult for children to distinguish between information and persuasion.

Discussion

The data indicates that children aged 11–12 years form the largest respondent group (40%), suggesting a critical stage for advertising influence. Digital media, particularly YouTube and the internet (40%), dominate exposure, reflecting a shift from traditional television. A significant 70% of children report requesting advertised products, highlighting strong persuasive effects. Fast food emerges as the most preferred category (40%), indicating the impact of food advertising on young consumers. Most respondents spend 1–2 hours daily on media, showing moderate exposure levels.

Interest in advertisements is occasional for 45% of children, while 60% acknowledge that ads influence their food choices. Perceptions of advertisement truthfulness remain divided, indicating varying levels of awareness.

Implications of the Study

This study has important implications across academic, social, and policy areas. Academically, it adds value to media and communication research by improving our understanding of how digital advertising influences audiences, especially children. Socially, it brings attention to the growing risks of unhealthy consumption habits shaped by persuasive advertising and highlights the need for greater awareness among parents and educators. From a policy perspective, the study supports the need for stricter regulations on advertising practices and emphasizes stronger child protection measures. Overall, it underlines the shared responsibility of researchers, families, and policymakers in creating a healthier and more responsible media environment for young audiences.

Recommendations

To address the growing impact of advertising on children, a combined effort from different stakeholders is essential. Schools should introduce media literacy programs so children can better understand and question advertising techniques. Parents also play a key role by monitoring and guiding their children's media consumption habits. At the policy level, governments need to enforce stricter regulations on advertisements promoting unhealthy foods to young audiences. Meanwhile, advertisers should act responsibly by adopting ethical practices that prioritize children's well-being over profit, helping create a safer and more balanced media environment.

Scope for Future Research

Future research can build on this study by exploring several important and emerging areas in greater depth. Comparative studies between rural and urban settings could reveal meaningful differences in media exposure, access, and its impact on children's behaviour and consumption patterns. Longitudinal research is also essential to understand how advertising influences habits over time and whether these effects are temporary or long-lasting. The increasing role of influencer marketing deserves focused attention, particularly in shaping young audiences' preferences and choices. Additionally, cross-cultural studies can provide valuable insights into how social and cultural contexts influence responses to advertising, helping develop a more comprehensive and globally relevant understanding of its effects.

Conclusion

Advertising plays a significant role in shaping children's attitudes, preferences, and consumption behaviour in today's highly digital and media-driven environment. With the rapid expansion of platforms such as television, smartphones, social media, and online streaming, children are exposed to advertisements more frequently and at increasingly younger ages. While advertising can sometimes be informative and entertaining, helping children learn about new products and ideas, it also carries potential risks. Many advertisements promote unhealthy food choices, unrealistic lifestyles, and materialistic values, which can influence children's thinking and behaviour in ways they may not fully understand or question critically.



To manage these challenges effectively, a balanced and responsible approach is necessary. Parents play a crucial role by guiding and monitoring their children's media consumption and encouraging healthy habits. Educators can support this by introducing media literacy education that helps children understand and evaluate advertising messages. At the same time, policymakers must enforce stricter regulations to limit harmful advertising targeted at children. Advertisers, too, have a responsibility to follow ethical practices. Together, these efforts can create a safer media environment while still allowing children to benefit from positive and meaningful media exposure.

References

1. Buijzen, M., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2003). The effects of television advertising on materialism, parent-child conflict, and unhappiness. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 24*(4), 437–456.
2. Calvert, S. L. (2008). Children as consumers: Advertising and marketing. *The Future of Children, 18*(1), 205–234.
3. John, D. R. (1999). Consumer socialization of children: A retrospective look. *Journal of Consumer Research, 26*(3), 183–213.
4. Kunkel, D., Wilcox, B., Cantor, J., Palmer, E., Linn, S., & Dowrick, P. (2004). *Report of the APA task force on advertising and children*. American Psychological Association.
5. Livingstone, S., & Helsper, E. (2006). Does advertising literacy mediate the effects of advertising on children? *Journal of Communication, 56*(3), 560–584.
6. Nair, K. S., & Pillai, R. (2017). Impact of television advertising on children's buying behavior in India. *International Journal of Research in Commerce & Management, 8*(5), 45–52.
7. Smith, A. (2019). Digital advertising and children: The role of social media influencers. *Journal of Digital Marketing, 12*(2), 78–92.
8. Story, M., & French, S. (2004). Food advertising and marketing directed at children. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition, 1*(3).
9. World Health Organization. (2010). *Set of recommendations on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children*.