

DOES ISLAMIC ETHICAL VALUES HAVE ROLES TO PLAY? THE EFFECTS OF TV ADVERTISEMENTS TOWARDS MALAYSIAN CHILDREN'S BUYING BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

TV Advertisements play important roles on customers in choosing goods or services and especially are more effective on children as consumers. This study investigates the extent to which TV advertisement contributes towards Malaysian children's buying behaviour and to what extent these advertisements comply with Islamic ethical values. A qualitative research approach was employed for data collection. In-depth interviews were conducted with four parents. Participants were of different backgrounds and possess not less than 10 years of work experience. The results show that TV advertisements do contribute to children buying behaviour in Malaysia. The study revealed that; (1) Malaysian children resort to throwing tantrums to get parents to buy products regardless of products' relation to Islamic ethical values, (2) there is a connection between the age of a child and his/her understanding of an advertisement in relation to Islamic ethical values, (3) children learn to relate to brand names at an early age, recognising brand names in stores, developing preferences for some brands over others, and requesting branded items by name, yet, most face a bit of a challenge relating to its ethicality based on Islamic values and (4) Depending on children's family upbringing, education and training, children tend to develop and relate Islamic ethical values to TV advertisements as well as their spending behaviour. In terms of practical implication, there seem to be less emphasis placed on Islamic ethical values of advertisements in Malaysia especially those targeting children, which could be due to fierce classical capitalist competitions in the 21st century corporate world.

Keywords: Islamic ethical values, Influence, Children, Buying behaviour, TV, Advertising, Parents

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays children are more attracted to buying things that they see in television (TV). TV advertisement is one of the channels that companies use in marketing their products. Advertisement is one of the effective tools of integrated marketing communication to emotionally motivate consumers, especially children to buying advertised products. Advertisement featuring products like snacks, toys, confectioneries, cookies and fast food is specifically meant for the younger audiences, especially children, in order for them to get motivated to try new brands of products and to buy more. It also has a strong linkage with entertainment and the proliferation of media has blurred the distinguishing lines between advertisements and entertainments (Moore, 2004).

TV is an effective and popular advertising mass media and since it is a passive medium, it suits advertisements, which play with feelings and image (Rossiter & Percy, 1997). TV is the largest source of media messages. The average child or adolescent watches an average of three hours of TV per day (American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP], 2001). In Malaysia, most advertising agencies target children through their choices of advertising characters, especially children's toys and food such as Honey stars and CocoCrunch, fast food (pizza), and recently electronic gadgets. Children today mean business for the companies and marketing to children may be a passport to growth.

Companies are using this segment to take in profits. Children have a firmer grip over the society than what their parents ever had. Not only they are consumers in their own rights, they also have a major influence over the family's purchasing power (AAP, 2001). Advertising has changed the way kids learn, react and behave to a large extent. They start to understand TV from an early age. As they mature, they learn to draw distinctions between their own world, what is shown on TV and whether it is true to life. In a three-year British study of five year olds in a large urban school, Gosling and Richards (1999) established that children could talk about what was real in TV programmes, and some showed understanding of TV's basic technical processes. Children gradually develop different types of skills through watching TV. Over time, they learn how to understand TV, but may not perceive it as adults do.

Since early 1970s, TV in Malaysia has changed from a single-channelled, home grown, and government controlled network, to a system offering dozens of channels, options and unparalleled access to domestic and foreign advertising programmes. Advertisements also emotionally empower children as they are exposed to the overwhelmed amount of advertisements due to little regulations controlling the programmed advertisement ratio. Understanding the impact of the advertisement is important to both marketers and public policy officials. Marketers are fanatical to know about their advertising effectiveness. Policy officials however, scale their efforts to protect the children's concerns. This study is imperative, due to lack of empirical substantiation on this area in the setting of children from Malaysian ethnicities. Concern about children's ability to comprehend and evaluate these messages has stimulated heated debate since the early 1970s (McNeal, 1964; Young, 1990). Understanding what children can and cannot do with TV and how they perceive it is therefore essential for examining how it impacts their lives. As such, this study intends to explore factors contributing to the children's buying behaviour when they watch TV advertisement, whether the children are buying smartly or otherwise.

Given effects of advertisement, Islam has laid down collective responsibilities on the parents' shoulders "O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones" (Al-Tahrim, 66:6). Islam had also advised advertisers to be

mindful of the content of the advertisement. Do not use prohibited elements as a promotional tool: And they learned what harmed them not what profited them and they know that the buyers of magic would have no share in the happiness of the hereafter and vile was the price for which they did sell their souls if they but knew” (Al-Baqarah, 2:102).

In view of this, the study’s main objective is to explore the extent to which TV advertisements contribute towards children’s buying behaviour given its relations to Islamic ethical values. The study also aims to specifically explore the role of Islamic ethical values in Malaysian TV advertisements particularly those targeting children.

The research is guided by the following research questions; (1) How does TV advertisements contribute to the children buying behaviour in Malaysia given its relation to Islamic ethical values? (2) How do children understand the meaning of advertisements that make them insist on buying a product? (3) How do Malaysian children relate to brand names and its relation to Islamic ethical values? and (4) What are the roles played by Islamic ethical values in Malaysian advertisements especially those targeting children?

To seek answers to the following research questions, the present research is organized into five (5) main sections. Section one highlights the introduction, section two provides discussions on extant literature pertaining TV advertisements and Islamic ethical values, section three highlights the qualitative research approach which was employed in this study, section four captures the findings and discussion, and last but not least, section five highlights the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Advertisements

Gone are the days when children used to play in the open environment, build castles using clay sands, and make toys out of recycled materials from woods and tins, etc. Today’s children are unique in many ways from previous generations. Uniqueness may be attributed to the vast array of products and services that are present for 21st century children which were non-existent for previous generations. For instance, the rise of smartphones and smart gadgets and toys such as x-box has gone a long way to influence 21 century children’s taste of needs and wants. Children of previous generations used to spend very less time watching TV, even if available at home, compared to 21st century children. Perhaps, among the most influential elements with the children of the 21st century is the TV advertisements. Everywhere we go we can see many types of advertisements. A sale at the supermarket or a billboard for a radio station, are two of the many forms of advertisements. Currently, advertisements that target children are very controversial. Marketers choose children because they can easily lure them in.

Advertisement is a means by which goods or services are promoted to the public (Petley, 2003). The advertiser aims at increasing sales, goods or services by drawing people’s attention to them and showing them in a favourable light (Petley, 2003). According to Arens as cited in Ayanwale, Alimi and Ayanbimipe (2005), the advertiser wishes to reach prospective customers and influence their awareness, attitudes and buying behaviour.

The advertiser spends a lot of money on research to keep individuals, which are their targeted consumers interested in their products. To succeed, they need to understand what makes potential customers behave the way they do. Advertisements show the latest styles and the new popular products in the market. It displays ideal individuals wearing the nicest clothes and looking good. This strategy undoubtedly lures the consumers racing to be among the first users of a new product. To them, it will be a triumph if they could be the first users. Being a human

and regardless of whether the consumer is young or old, they would always want to be the first users.

Many children are often the target for most advertisers, because they know if they pester their parents enough, parents give in and fulfil the urge by their children to buy their product. Following the rationale presented in a study by Soni and Upadhyaya (2007), 80% of the respondents agreed that TV advertisements represent the primary ways through which kids learn. According to the researchers, the top 5 products for which kids have pestered their parents in the last six months include; fast food restaurants, clothing, chips, chocolates and games, and toys (Soni & Upadhyaya, 2007). Eighty percent of the parents interviewed confirmed that their children have an appreciable good recognition of brand names and logos. Ten to thirteen percent of children have a favourite clothing store.

Teens admit that they 'nag' when they want something. Parents report that children influenced them into buying by adopting a variety of strategies. Fifty percent of teens are reported using "doing better at school" as a medium to persuade their parents to buying something. Parental susceptibility to teen request-fifteen percent of parents usually succumb to the children's request and buy the children the requested item.

Peer influence appears to be important in early life, especially during adolescence. The youth's desire to conform to their peers' norms is often exemplified in terms of product ownership, making the child more likely to purchase or to request the purchase of such products. Thus, it is not surprising to find evidence indicating that young people who frequently interact with peers about consumption matters are likely to get ideas from their peers regarding the products they should own (Caron & Ward, 1975); they are likely to discuss peer consumption behaviour with their parents (Churchill & Moschis, 1979); they are likely to play an important role regarding the kinds of products and brands they or their family should buy (Moschis, George, Moore & Smith, 1983); and they are actively involved in the purchasing process (Moschis, Moore, & Stephens, 1977).

Most parents acknowledged that their children do influence their purchasing decisions. It also revealed that mothers' employment status, child's gender and the number of children in the family are the determining factors for the children's influence on the decision of the family to purchase certain product types (Isin & Alkibay, 2010). Advertised products are heavily influenced by the children's attitude towards advertisements. Furthermore, the cognitive changes among the different age groups lead to the formation of varying attitudes towards the advertisements. Yet there are other potent factors apart from advertisements, which result in the requests for a product or brand (Priya, Kanti, Baisya & Sharma, 2010).

Findings from Chan's (2000) study indicate that the comprehension of commercial intent is related to age. The results indicated that children in grade 2 (aged 7-8 years) were beginning to understand what advertisements were and were aware of the persuasive intention of TV advertisements. Over one-third of the older children from grade 4 understood that TV stations carried advertisements for money (Chan, 2000). Children's ability to decode and process advertising messages and to understand their intents is influenced not only by their cognitive abilities at different age strata but also by their social and personal environments. Social norms related to the acceptability and appropriateness of gender behaviour also influence the processing of advertisement messages by the children of both sexes. Other elements such as likeability of the model, character or endorser, story line, slogan and the music also creates liking or disliking for a particular advertisement and hence decoding of its message (Panwar & Agnihotri, 2006).

In TV advertisements, techniques are frequently employed to enhance the appearance of a product. Adults know that the sparkle on the newly cleaned-floor in the TV advertisement is unlikely to be the exact 'sparkle' in reality. On the other hands, for a TV viewer aged of between 4 or 5 years for example, they are heavily affected by product factors because they are not able to understand that appearances can differ from reality. Two- and three-year-olds, in fact, believe that images on TV screens are exact real objects inside the set (Flavell, J. H., Flavell, E. R., Green, & Moses, 1990). Huston and Wright's (1998) study found that young children believed a bowl of popcorn would spill if the set was turned upside down. When Jaglom and Gardner (1981) showed 2- and 3-year-olds an egg breaking on TV, the children tried to clear it up. This reality perception is important because TV that is perceived as real has a greater impact on children than if it is judged unreal (Berry & Asamen, 1993). Without an awareness of production techniques and the representational nature of TV, young children believe that a product can be real like in the TV.

In a study by Gulla and Purohit (2013), four major factors were found to be influential in determining the attitude of children towards TV advertisements. The factors were entertainment, likability, credibility, and informativeness. The researchers further revealed through their analysis, that the positive attitude of children towards TV advertisements leads to pester power and pester power has a significant impact on the buying behaviour of parents. All the four factors were found to be significant, showing varied regression weights with the focal construct, children's attitude. The children's attitude was found to have significant regression weights with the focal construct, pester power and was found to have significant regression weights with the focal construct, buying behaviour of parents. The proposed model also explains the overall buying behaviour of parents getting influenced by children's pestering power as high as 70% (Gulla & Purohit, 2013).

Advertisements on TV have significant impact upon the brand preference of the target audience. This brand preference thereafter positively impacts the purchasing behaviour of children. This has been validated in product categories like health drinks, fast food and sport shoes- categories which the target audience is very familiar with as what had been found by Khandai and Agrawal (2012). According to Rathod and Parmar (2012), young children play an important role as consumers. Especially when it comes to confectionery products such as chocolates, children are not concerned about the price of the product they want to buy. Also, children do not care whether these products are healthy for them or not. While shopping, the first thing that comes in their minds is to purchase the advertised products.

A study on children's buying behaviour in China found that Chinese children regard TV advertisements as an important information source for new products (Fan & Li, 2009). However, they place greater level of trust in interpersonal information sources, especially in their parents who are perceived as the most credible information source with respect to their learning about new food products. It was further stated by Fan & Li (2009) that when shopping, children often reached and pointed toward products at their level. As they recognised brands or products, children often commented on their associations or experiences with them. The diaries revealed a variety of TV and film viewing choices for pre-schoolers and the daily occurrence of logo recognition throughout the environment (Kinsky & Bichard, 2011).

A study by Nassar and Al Zien (2012) revealed that negative impacts of advertising lead to major social and behavioural problems in children, such as physical and verbal violence, materialism and other "value issues" identified by parents, and health problems such as low nutrition and obesity. The results also indicate that although many forms of advertisement affect

children negatively, the effects of TV advertisements are particularly noticeable. Due to marketing competition, the impact of advertisements on the health and behaviour of children has been the subject of considerable attention throughout the world for several decades (Boddewyn, 1984). It is unquestionably true that advertising has an influence on children's behaviour, social and moral values; including materialism, parent-child conflicts and general unhappiness (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2008).

A good advertisement showing happiness can produce effectiveness and a positive cognitive response to the advertisement as well as better and effective recall (Gorn & Goldberg, 1982). The Canadian Teachers' Federation (2003) conducted a study to investigate the impact of TV on children and their behaviour. The results revealed that the constant marketing of junk food to young audiences can contribute to childhood obesity. In addition, the study argued that only 4 percent of advertisements often advertise healthy foods. Advertisement causes children to be concerned with their body image, leading to eating disorders in children as young as six years old.

Wimalasiri, (2004) points out that children use various influencing tactics to persuade the parents to comply with their requests. Parents' responses vary from outright denial to total acceptance. Children are less demanding and more persuasive in their attempt to obtain parental approval. According to Douglas (2008) TV is considered to be the most appropriate advertising tool to reach children because children spend much of their free time watching TV where they not only watch colourful animated images but also listen to rhymes or songs playing in the background of commercials.

Children are said to be involved in purchases, or rather persuasion of their parents' purchases. For example, Beatty and Talpade's (1994) study found that children's product involvement is said to contribute to children's level of influence on their parent's decisions. When involvement is high, the children will be motivated to spend more efforts in requesting and persuading their parents, thus leading to greater relative influence in purchasing a product. In order to illustrate how children socialise their parents, product categories where children have a relative high interest and knowledge should therefore be considered.

Watne, Lobo and Brennan (2011) investigated how children function as socialisation agents for their parents in influencing their purchase intentions of computer and high-tech product and found that children are important agents of socialisation for their parents when it comes to technology. They are perceived by families to be more knowledgeable than their parents in both the product categories. Significant differences were observed between the dyad's perception of parent's knowledge and the dyad's perception of children's knowledge in both product categories, except in the case of computer related products associated with father/daughter dyads. Marketers should be aware that children are likely to be the decision makers for the procurement of small high-tech products, even when these products are used mainly by the parents. This clearly indicates that children, educate their parents in product categories where children are perceived to be experts. Such socialisation situations may only exist when the child is seen as an expert in the category. This may seem obvious, but it still represents a change in terms of consumer behaviour.

According to Shoham and Dalakas (2005), the amount that children spend in family purchase decisions has risen over the last 40 years. Indian children have recently attracted considerable attention from marketers because the market for children's products offers tremendous potential (\$1,110mn) and is rapidly growing (Kaur & Singh, 2006). The research on family decision-making was initially directed to spouses, however, the role of children on

decision making and negotiation strategies has become an important issue of study (Kaur & Singh, 2006). For almost all product categories, children have an important role (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2008). Children are, to the greater extent, initiators than influencers in their family's purchase decisions, independent of the sub-decision stage (Wimalasiri, 2004; Martensen & Gronholdt, 2008). Children consistently exerted the most influence in item selection and the least influence in how much to spend (Flurry & Veeck, 2009). Wut and Chou (2009) found that children have more influence in the choice-making stage of decision making and parents still control the final decision.

Children have their own strategies to get what they want. Young, Bruin and Eagle (2003) conducted a research in the United Kingdom, Sweden and New Zealand about children's attitudes toward advertising and found that most of the parents are concerned about the number of advertisements that children see. However, they think that children might be encouraged to want products they did not really need. Parents also think that advertisements led children to pester their parents to buy things for them and that young children might not fully understand the intent of advertisement. Children often try to get from their parents what they want by force and they nag their families to buy food they have seen advertised.

Gotze, Prange and Uhrovska (2009) found that children influence parent's decisions on the adoption of innovation and their influence is the strongest in the problem recognition (knowledge stage). Children who are more knowledgeable on certain products than their parents, or have mutual hobbies with their parents, exert considerable influence also in the information search (persuasion stage) and evaluations of alternative stage (decision stage). Cotte and Wood (2004) agreed that children do not only influence overall family decision making per se, they also presumed to impact the purchase of innovative products.

Given effects of advertisement, Islam has laid down collective responsibilities on the parents' shoulders "O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones" (Al-Tahrim, 66:6). Islam had also advised advertisers to be mindful of the content of the advertisement. Do not use prohibited elements as a promotional tool: And they learned what harmed them not what profited them and they know that the buyers of magic would have no share in the happiness of the hereafter and vile was the price for which they did sell their souls if they but knew". (Al-Baqarah, 2:102)

It is noteworthy from the discussion in the literature of various researchers, that advertisements have significant impacts on children's buying behaviour. However, little has been highlighted by the researchers, especially the extent to which TV advertisements contribute towards children's buying behaviour in the Asian setting. Particularly, most of the studies were conducted in non-Malaysian societies. The current study conducts in-depth interviews with Malaysian parents, particularly in the Klang-Valley area, in order to delineate salient features that advertisements have on children's buying behaviour.

METHODOLOGY

Exploratory qualitative research design was employed for data collection. It is useful in referring to meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things (Berg, 2001). This type of design maximises the collection of intensive and high quality information for the success of the study. Qualitative data sources include observation and

fieldwork; interviews, documents and texts; and the researcher's impressions and reactions (Myers, 2000). However, it should be noted that this study relied on reports by parents not that of the children.

The interview guide was designed to encourage participants to contribute their own ideas and share their experiences with relevant examples and by providing their own experience-based views on the relevant issues. An approach as such allows in-depth exploration and identification of perceptions, attitudes and beliefs that may not have been identified previously or may not be well captured in quantitative research.

Participant Characteristics

Four parents took part in this study. They came from different backgrounds. The parents were aged between 35 and 45 years. Most of them are working in private organisations and they have an average 10 years work experience. Respondents' profile is captured in Table 1.0 below.

Table 1.0 Respondents' profile

Code	Position	Location	Experience
P1	Executive	Bangi	14 years
P2	Manager	Putrajaya	12 years
P3	Senior Manager	Kuala Lumpur	11 years
P4	Manager	Shah Alam	10 years

Data Collection Method

According to Malhotra (2004), data should be collected with an objective in mind and it should ultimately determine the reason for which that particular information is useful and applicable. This study includes qualitative primary data collection. Parasuraman (1991, p18) defined primary data as "data collected specifically for a project". Malhotra (2004) mentioned that the researcher produces primary data for a particular reason of mentioning the issue in hand. Primary data collection is used if the data is unavailable or inappropriate due to lack of importance or accuracy. However, primary data collection could be time consuming and expensive (Malhotra, 2004). There are various types of qualitative research procedures like focus group, structured, unstructured, semi structured, in-depth interviews, participant observation and so on (Malhotra, 2004). This study employs in-depth interviews.

Interviews

Interviews are perhaps the most powerful and versatile of techniques for gathering information directly from another person. Routinely, they involve face-to-face interaction. Exchange between the person seeking information and the person giving it (Creswell, 2007). Personal interviews allow for some personal contacts between the interviewer and the respondent (Valenzuela & Shrivastava, 2002). The interviewer's primary goal is to gather relevant data by encouraging, facilitating, and guiding the respondents to provide unbiased and clear answers to necessary questions (Creswell, 2007).

In the case of the extent to which TV contributes to the children's buying behaviour, it helps to understand the relationship between the child with his/her parent, or peer or any other influential party in that matter. Depending on the kind of interaction, the purchase decision of a child would differ. There are various types of interviews used in a research. The type of

interview also depends on the kind of research carried out. Since this study included elaborative understanding of the complicated behaviour of children, in-depth interviewing was utilised Malhotra (2004). Also, where in situations like product consumption would be sensory in nature affecting emotions, in-depth interviewing would be useful for gaining understanding and insights of the problems Malhotra (2004) faced by the children.

In this research, the interviews related to qualitative research were carried out both as person interviews face-to-face interview. In order to identify the attitudes related, the form of the effect of TV advertisement on children as consumer, data was collected from parents. The sections were made to guide the researchers with the discussion with their respondents. For each section, questions were framed to guide the research in the correct direction, but they were not asked directly. 5 questions which are related to the influence of TV advertisement on children were asked during the interview. Semi-structured questions were used to extract the meaning parents ascribe to the understanding of their children's buying behaviour. According to Seale, Silverman, Gubrium, and Gobo (2006) interviewers must establish a relaxed and persuading relationship with the interviewees. The warm up section also helps the researchers to evaluate the interviewee and his/her background. According to Malhotra (2004), an in-depth interview might last for thirty minutes or more than an hour.

The interview for this study lasted for about 30- 45 minutes. Probing in-depth interviews plays an essential role in attaining meaningful responses and trying to explore hidden issues Malhotra (2004). This helped the researchers in getting insights of their buying behaviour along with the way they were influenced by advertisement and the impact it had on the children.

The tape recording was used to collect the data, where the permission of the interviewee for using a tape recorder was taken before the interview. Respondents were sampled for inclusion in this study based on purposive sampling, thus, only a parent with about 10 years of work experience are included in this study. This is necessary in order to delineate the meanings and judgements respondents (parents) ascribe to the subject matter of this research.

To ensure validity and reliability of interview questions, respondents were provided with a preamble and prior knowledge of the subject matter for discussion in order to prepare them physically and psychologically. As well, interview questions were checked with subject matter experts to identify suitability and face validity of the interview questions. Collected data was analysed using content analysis method. Reporting of the research propositions was done with low to moderate reflexivity, whereby the authors attempt to capture how parents ascribe meanings to the research variables in question based on their perspectives instead of the authors' perspectives.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that young children (6-9 years) are pertinacious to reach wishes, which they see on TV advertisements. They pester their parents to purchase products without needing. With the result of this research, it was confirmed (Gulla and Purohit, 2013), who concluded that pester power significantly impact the buying behaviour of parents as a result of what children see in the TV advertisements. The results show that children have a major impact on their parents' decision while shopping. This finding coincided with Wut and Chou (2009) who concluded that children have more influence in the choice-making stage but parents still control the final decision.

Strategies that children use to get parents to buy products.

Respondent (P1) has the following to say:

“I have 3 children with the different characters. My 1st and 2nd children are both girls and the last one is a boy. Their favourite food is fast food. Once they saw something new about the fast food like new burger new fries, they will beg me to buy it. Sometime they want it on the spot. If there is any rejection from me or my wife... the youngest one will be shouting and crying and lastly, I can hear his words....saying “oh God....I had not eaten anything today. If I cannot get the new burger I will die..”

In a similar way, another respondent (P2), stressed that:

“My son has a very good strategy just to get something from me. For example, there was one day while I was doing my works, there was an extremely effective TV advertisement, when he suddenly cried out loud says that he want to eat the new burger. He acts like he was being scolded. I was so shocked”

Respondent (P3) mentioned:

“As for my children...the 6-year old always wants all the new products in the advertisement, no matter what no matter how. Even if I told him that those things are not suitable for kids”

Similarly, another respondent (P4) said:

“Of course, for your information my children will keep on asking for things they can't have and don't take 'no' for an answer. This is the tough area. Sometimes for me it can be tolerated. But sometimes it is too much.”

The foregoing responses revealed that children try to get from their parents what they want by force and they nag their families to buy food they have seen advertised. In order to obtain their wishes, they can effectively play on parents tender spots. Furthermore, the responses also disclosed a number of strategies children use to get products. Specifically, children use nagging, crying, persistence to get parents to buy products.

How age affects reactions to advertisements

Children's ages are important to understand the message of the TV advertisements. Children's comprehension of TV advertisements increases with age. Young children have a low awareness of what advertisements want to say. The results showed that young children are more persuadable than are older children. Hence, they should be more vulnerable to advertising messages.

Even a majority of 5-8 years old have only a low awareness of what an advertisement really is; and although three quarters of 9-12 year old children may demonstrate a medium level of awareness. However, it is possible to say that even though they are very young to understand, the most important thing is the fact that advertisements exhibit impact on children.

There is a relationship between the age and understanding of advertisement (Gunter & Furnhan, 1998). The age of a child has an impact on the children's understanding of TV advertisement,(Gunter & Furnhan, 1998). Children's desire to possess products which they have seen on TV, is said to lead to “pester power” which means that children pester their parents or other adults to buying things for them (Gunter & Furnhan, 1998).

This aforementioned assertion by respondent (P1) is in line with another respondent who said that:

“My children can spend the whole day watching the TV only. I am worried on this situation. But still my children know about all the news about the new products, brand and others through the advertising even though I had limited the time. So, you imagine how advertising is powerful or not? I also believed that exposure to hours and hours of TV at young ages will negatively impact the development of a child's mind.”

Similarly respondent (P3) agreed that age is one of the factors:

“They have different characteristic while persuading us to buy something. From my experience, this is relevant to their age. I think so. I found that children with age 3 years to 6 years were able to make the distinction, but had no understanding of the selling motives of advertisers while 12 years and above, can distinguish advertisements and understand the selling motives of the advertiser. As for my children...the 6 years old always wants all the new products in the advertisement, no matter what no matter how”

Nevertheless, there are no comments regarding age factors for respondent (P2), because they just only had one child. It is quite difficult for them to describe. In this research, parents were asked about what their children's favourite advertisement is. Generally it seems to suggest that young children (6-10 years old) likes entertaining advertisement on TV and generally their favourites characters are not seen on cartoons programs, they are imaginary characters seen on TV advertisements.

In much the same way, respondent (P4) mentioned that:

“Yes.... There is a gap, especially between my children that from secondary school and primary school.” “One example when my daughter aged 14 told us that she wants a smartphone because it will help her academically. She also mentioned that, using the tablet's educational apps to help her study, she'll get an A on her next math test...you see how they pester you in many ways.”

It's clearly shown that children's understanding of TV advertising depends heavily on their age. The age of a child turns to have a positive effect. As the results found a relationship between the age and understanding of advertisement. The results also show that young children, who have less ability to understand advertisements intent, attend to commercials more than older children. Hence, they should be more vulnerable to advertising messages.

How Knowledge About Brands Influences Children In Advertisement

Marketers use TV as the most powerful medium of communication. Over the last three years the spread of multi-channel TV reception around the world has led to an exponential growth in the number of channels targeting children (Wimalasiri, 2004). Children have a power of purchase in many ways. Children sometimes play a big role in family decision making. According to Enis, Spencer and Webb (1986); TV advertising is a powerful promotional tool for reaching children. On the contrary, Goldstein in Jarlbo (2000) claimed that playmates are the principal influence on children's wants and desires. In this study it was found that TV is an effective way for reaching children especially the young ones. While conducting the interview, the respondents were initially asked about how advertisements had influenced their children, most of them were able to recall of the stories, then they were asked about the brand names that affect their children. Knowledge can be facts, information, and skills acquired through experience or education. For example, respondent (P1) mentioned that:

“My children are able to recognize brand names and symbols, and they also willing and able to make judgments about the products and people based on associations with those brands. For

example, my young boy told me that his friend had a birthday party at McDonald's and it seems so wonderful (here, the questioned this child can point that my young boy saying about wonderful is something about the brand which the place is famous and so on) you also know how famous the McDonald's is. Everybody loves it. When I offered him to go to somewhere else like domino or maybe other fast-food, which is not quite famous.....huhhhhh he rejected to go there."

Respondent (P2) said:

"well like I just said before....they know about the brand names whether in details or just in general mostly is from the advertising and also from friends and relative. Even me, as his mother, I'm not denying that some of the products knowledge especially about the quality and the brand names is also came from my explanation to him."

Respondent (P3) is somehow similar to respondent 1:

"To tell you honestly, although we as parent always think our children the importance of the quality in a product we also tie with the brand names. For example, I would like to buy a note book for my children. Of course, they will advise me to buy the one that mostly being advertise....ermmmm they easily can tell me about the HP brand, Apple and so on. Ok. Back to your question, the brand name influenced them so much. Yes, I am sure that my children are prone to liking the branded items. I can see it clearly. My son told me that he likes the service of the salesman at Habib Jewels. He heard of our conversation between the salesmen. He told me that how he can see people treat customer, so good, because of the brand name, is same as what he had saw in the advertisement."

Respondent (P4) added an opinion which depends more on the products itself:

"My children are very open with the brand names. It is, the same goes to both of us. It's also depending on the item itself. Sometimes, they might want the branded items. For example, mobile, notebook and so on. My youngest child is not looking at the brand names, but how famous is the products like toys, ice cream, fast food and others. Well, if they ask for something that I think has great utility and the price is right, then I won't mind paying for it, and I'll just get it."

Explore the way that children use brand names in making consumer judgments. Children of different ages relate to brand names in different ways. Children learn to relate to brand names at an early age, recognizing brand names in stores, developing preferences for some brands over others, and requesting branded items by name.

It was noticed that most of the respondents were in close agreement about the effect of advertisement towards their children. There is a positive correlation between TV advertisements and purchase intentions. One of the key findings in this research is the age factor. When the age increases, the impact of advertising decreases. This study reached the conclusion that the most interesting audiences of the TV advertisements are children. They spend a lot of time watching TV. In the circumstances of seeing something to eat or to drink, they want to try them immediately and do not care of time.

The roles played by Islamic ethical values

Some of the respondents mentioned that their children try to relate Islamic ethical values to some of the advertisements they see on TV and also how they spend in buying some products. One

parent echoes as well, that her child attends a religious school and tends to have some idea of the Islamic ethicality of buying things when there is no need to, as it is considered “*tabdhir*” (i.e. extravagance) which is forbidden in Islam, and Allah warns against in the Qur’an. For instance, respondent P2 mentioned:

“...My son always remember what his ustaz says at school that we have to buy only the things we need else Allah will be angry at us, because Allah does not like people who are extravagant....”

Similarly, respondent P4 also said:

“whenever my son start to cry of buying a toy which he already has, I remind him about how Allah does not like people who are extravagant in their spending....well..sometimes it works and other times he will argue and fight it out till he gets what he wants...”

However, most of the parents were of the opinion that their children seem to have difficulty relating to Islamic ethical values when it comes to TV advertisements or buying products. For instance, respondent P1 mentioned:

“Sometimes my daughter sees some of the indecent dresses that some non-Muslims wear on TV and she tells me...mom...look at that dress, it is nice...sometimes we find it challenging to get her to understand that it is unIslamic to dress as such but proves difficult..which we think it is because of the age factor, and we hope to keep advising her about that....”

In a similar manner, respondent P3 said:

“When I watch TV with my children at home, sometimes they are curious and ask, mom...why this lady on TV does not wear “tudung” (veil) and why we have to wear all the time?...and questions like...how come this lady’s hair is long and beautiful and can freely dress out like that, but mom does not take care of her hair like that woman?...like these questions...they come up sometimes and we try out best to contain it and explain to our children about Islam and how Islam guides our lives”

It can be noted that Islamic ethical values play important roles in the lives of respondents pertaining to advertisements and spending behaviour as most of the them unanimously agreed with. Whilst some children seem to have ease in understanding some Islamic values at an early age, others seem to have no clue about Islamic ethical values in relation to their spending behaviour or what they see on TV. This may be largely due to family upbringing or the kind of school children attend. Thus, parental upbringing and training play significant roles in shaping the understanding of Islamic ethical values in relation to what children see on TV and their spending behaviour.

Summary of Findings

Firstly, based on the interview results with reference to the strategies children use to get products, it is clearly evident that some children resort to throwing tantrums to get their parents to buy products that they need, regardless of its relation to Islamic ethical values or not.

Secondly, children's understanding of TV advertisement depends heavily on their age. The age of a child turns to have a positive effect on the buying behaviour. The results also disclosed that age and understanding of advertisement did correlate. The results further show that young children, who have less ability to understand advertisements intent, attend to commercials more than older children. Hence, they are more vulnerable to advertising messages. However, most children encounter challenges relating advertisements that they see on TV to Islamic ethical values.

Thirdly, children of different ages relate to brand names in different ways. Children learn to relate to brand names at an early age, recognizing brand names in stores, developing preferences for some brands over others, and requesting branded items by name. However, they also undergo a sort of challenge relating their knowledge of brands to Islamic ethical values.

Fourthly, depending on children's family upbringing, education and training at home, children may develop and relate Islamic ethical values to TV advertisements as well as their spending behaviour.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Advertisers need to gain the trust of children and their parents through effective and honest advertising. The revelations from the interviews indicate that parental control is weaker. Parents should take the responsibility for their children; monitor what they watch, determine how they spend their free time and educate them to become responsible and wise consumers. Advertisement to children become less controversial only when advertisers and parents assume mutual responsibility for its content and exposure as Qur'an commanded.

Parents should be alert in taking full responsibility towards guiding their children. As well, advertisers should also try to put their message across creatively and honestly. This ensures parents stay within the loop and can monitor the demands of their children. With a balanced approach, the negative effects of advertisement can be curbed to a great extent.

Future research can further empirically examine the propositions of this study in order to authenticate findings. Again, future research may extend the boundaries of this study by examining other social contexts and backgrounds to learn how TV advertisements affect children of other environments and if culture plays a role. These studies can be carried out in light of the Islamic ethical value requirements in order to contribute holistic new knowledge to the subject matter.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS TO THEORY AND PRACTICE

The findings showed that TV advertisement has a strong connection with the effect and create a huge impact on the children. It is a sensitive and emotional issue because children can easily be influenced to what the advertisement promotes. Children like to experiment with new things and they would be the easy target. Marketers choose children because they can easily lure them in. Children do not have their parents buying their toys, but they make purchases of their own. Children's spending has roughly doubled every ten years for the past three decades, and has tripled in the 1990's. No matter how you look at it, advertisers choose children because they are the most easily influenced and spend their money if they find something interesting.

Advertisement affects children in different ways. How children react to ads depends on several things, including their age, what they know or experience, and how much opportunity they have and would like to question and talk about what they see in the media. The findings established a association between the age and understanding of advertisement. As children

become older, their comprehension of TV advertisement increases. Ward & Wackman as cited in Evra (2006) supported that children's comprehension of TV advertisement and its persuasive intent increases with age.

The effect of advertisement to children's knowledge, attitudes and values does not come alone. This study had found that parents play a major role in the level of influence of advertisement which a child is being exposed too. This is why Islam had tasked parents with responsibility of guiding and protecting the family "O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones" (Al-Tahrim, 66;6). How much a parent is taking part is determined by the social class and educational level of parents. They can either influence directly or indirectly because children's value mirrors their parent's. Therefore, in some situation, it is a good idea to communicate with a child on the basis of their parent's characteristic. Although many advertisements are negatively affecting children there are those few advertisements out there that are beneficial.

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