JUNK FOOD ADVERTISEMENTS AN EVALUATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Gone are the days, when Indian people used to pack their home-made food wrapped in a banana leaf and the parents and wives were satisfied that their households stay healthy. Now it's the contrasting situation where our young adults feel their tiffin box itself is a discomfort zone. In schools and colleges, our young generation is treated with parlours providing ice cream, coffee and the like and that creates a big threat towards a healthy society. When junk food is consumed very often, the excess fat, added carbohydrates, and processed sugar found in junk food contributes to an increased risk of obesity, cardiovascular disease, and many other chronic health conditions. This descriptive study analyses mothers' attitude towards advertisements of junk food products and evaluates the effects of junk food ads on use of junk foods among children. Mothers who have children in the age group of 10 to 15 have been selected for data collection. This study also aims to explore the harmful effect of food advertising and suggesting various measures to overcome the aftereffects. The sampling method applied for this study is a non-probability convenience sampling technique. The sample size is confined to 100 respondents. A mother who has a child in the age group of 10 to 15 is treated as a single respondent. The sample size is selected from Kochi City.

Keywords: Junk food, Food advertisements

INTRODUCTION

Gone are the days, when Indian people used to pack their home made food wrapped in a banana leaf and the parents and wives were satisfied that their households stay healthy. Now it's the contrasting situation where our young adults feel their tiffin box itself is a discomfort zone. In schools and colleges, our young generation is treated with parlours providing ice cream, coffee and the like.

Junk food is usually high in added sugars, salt and saturated or Tran's fats. Some evidence points to junk foods as being as addictive as alcohol and drugs. Fast food" is food that is prepared quickly and is eaten quickly or taken out. Although there are a growing number of healthier fast-food options, most fast food can still be classified as junk food. (Christy)

Youth is always misunderstood by their previous generation even in the case of food habits. It's not their fault to follow the trends and patterns that is visible in the society. It's the society that inculcating the trends into the people who reside in it. All are responsible for the functioning of the current system, and our elder generation as more experienced should educate our younger ones what is good and bad in it.

When junk food is consumed very often, the excess fat, simple carbohydrates, and processed sugar found in junk food contributes to an increased risk of obesity, cardiovascular disease, and many other chronic health conditions (wikipedia, 2018). The junk food consumption may create the following health problems among children:

- **Memory and learning problems**
- **Risk of dementia**
- **Lessens its ability to control appetite**
- **It makes you impatient and can cause uncontrollable cravings**
- **Can cause chemical changes that can lead to depression (Desk, 2017)**

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyse mothers' attitude towards advertisements of junk food products.
- To evaluate the effects of junk food ads on use of junk foods among children.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- *Nature of study* – The type of research is descriptive in nature using both primary and secondary data. The area of this research is to study the relationship between junk food marketing and children's physical health. Mothers who have children in the age group of 10 to 15 have been selected for data collection. This study also aims to explore the harmful effect of food advertising and suggesting various measures to overcome the aftereffects.
- *Sample Design* – The sampling method applied for this study is a non-probability convenience sampling technique. The sample

size is confined to 100 respondents. A mother who has a child in the age group of 10 to 15 is treated as a single respondent. The sample size is selected from Kochi City.

- **Data Collection** – The data collection is done using structured questionnaire and personal interview. Apart from this, various secondary sources such as books, magazines, online articles, various research reports, websites etc. are also used for data collection.

- 100 respondents have been selected from kochi city as per the convenience. Each respondent is selected following the criteria that they have at least one child in the age group of 10 to 15.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha

1. Variable	2. Cronbach's Alpha	3. N of Items
Negative attitude towards food advertisements	5. 0.377	6. 4
Positive attitude towards food advertisements	8. 0.591	9. 3
10. Effects of advertisements	11. 0.837	12. 6

Source: primary data

➤ **To analyze the Indicators of negative attitude towards food advertisements.**

Parents are asked with different statements to measure their negative attitude towards junk food advertisements.

H_1: Seeing most of the ads are a waste of time (NA1) is an indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements.

H_2: I don't buy the products for my child which are advertised for (NA2) is an Indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements.

H_3: Ads are not informative source for healthy products (NA3) is an Indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements.

H_4: Advertisements are exaggerated (NA4) is an Indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements.

Table 2: Model Fit Indices For CFA – Negative Attitude Towards Food Advertisements

	χ^2	DF	P	Normed χ^2	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA
Negative attitude towards food advertisements	78.619	30	0	2.621	0.961	0.906	0.987	0.905	0.987	0.146	0.253
Recommended value				<5	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	<1	<1

Source: primary data

All the attributes loaded significantly on the latent constructs. The value of the fit indices indicates a reasonable fit of the measurement model with data. In **Table 3** we present the regression coefficients.

Table 3: The Regression Coefficients –Negative Attitude Towards Food Advertisements

Path	Estimate	Critical Ratio (CR)	P	Variance explained
NA1 →Negative attitude	0.658	7.773	<0.001	43.3

NA2 →Negative attitude	0.446	4.724	<0.001	19.9
NA3 →Negative attitude	0.521	5.690	<0.001	27.1
NA4 →Negative attitude	0.499	5.397	<0.001	24.9

Source: primary data

H_1: Seeing most of the ads are a waste of time (NA1) is an indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements

The results exhibited in Table 3 revealed that the regulatory construct NA1 is an indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Negative attitude was 0.658, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4. So, the hypothesis H_1 is accepted and concludes NA1 is an indicators of negative attitude towards food advertisements

H_2: I don't buy the products for my child which are advertised for (NA2) is an Indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements

The results exhibited in Table 3 revealed that the regulatory construct NA2 is an indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Negative attitude was 0.446, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4. So, the hypothesis H_2 is accepted and concludes NA2 is an indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements

H_3: Ads are not informative source for healthy products (NA3) is an Indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements

The results exhibited in Table 3 revealed that the regulatory construct NA3 is an indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Negative attitude was 0.521, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4. So, the hypothesis H_3 is accepted and concludes NA3 is an indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements

H_4: Advertisements are exaggerated (NA4) is an Indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements

The results exhibited in Table 3 revealed that the regulatory construct NA4 is an indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Negative attitude was 0.499, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4. So, the hypothesis H_4 is accepted and concludes NA4 is an indicator of negative attitude towards food advertisements.
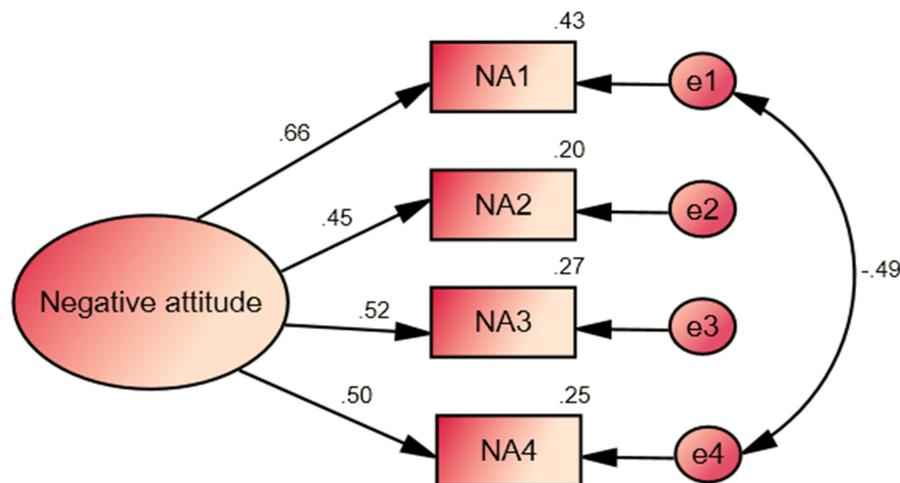
Figure 1:
Source: primary data

➢ **To analyze the Indicators of positive attitude towards food advertisements.**

Parents are asked with different statements to measure their positive attitude towards junk food advertisements.

H_1: Advertisement is a valuable source of information (PA1) is an indicator of positive attitude towards food advertisements

H_2: Advertisements help to learn new trends in eating habits (PA2) is an Indicator of positive attitude towards food advertisements

H_3: Advertisements helps to select healthy food products for my kid (PA3) is an Indicator of positive attitude towards food advertisements

Table 4: Model Fit Indices For CFA – Positive Attitude Towards Food Advertisements

	χ^2	DF	P	Normed χ^2	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA
positive attitude towards food advertisements	.058	1	.810	.058	1.000	.998	.998	1.123	1.000	.012	.000

Source: primary data

All the attributes loaded significantly on the latent constructs. The value of the fit indices indicates a reasonable fit of the measurement model with data. In **Table 5** we present the regression coefficients.

Table 5: The Regression Coefficients –Positive Attitude Towards Food Advertisements

Path	Estimate	Critical Ratio (CR)	P	Variance explained
PA1 → Positive attitude	0.658	7.773	<0.001	43.3
PA2 → Positive attitude	0.673	8.039	<0.001	45.3
PA3 → Positive attitude	0.628	7.270	<0.001	39.5

Source: primary data

H_1: Advertisement is a valuable source of information (PA1) is an indicator of positive

attitude towards food advertisements

The results exhibited in Table 5 revealed that the regulatory construct PA1 is an indicator of positive attitude towards food advertisements as the standardised direct effect of this construct on positive attitude was 0.658, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4. So the hypothesis H_1 is accepted and concludes that Advertisement is a valuable source of information (PA1) is an indicator of positive attitude towards food advertisements

H_2: Advertisements help to learn new trends in eating habits (PA2) is an Indicator of positive attitude towards food advertisements

The results exhibited in Table 5 revealed that the regulatory construct PA2 is an indicator of positive attitude towards food advertisements as the standardised direct effect of this construct on positive attitude was 0.673, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4.

So the hypothesis H_2 is accepted and concludes that Advertisements help to learn new trends in eating habits (PA2) is an indicator of positive attitude towards food advertisements

H_3: Advertisements helps to select healthy food products for my kid (PA3) is an Indicator of positive attitude towards food advertisements

The results exhibited in Table 5 revealed that the regulatory construct PA3 is an indicator of positive attitude towards food advertisements as the standardised direct effect of this construct on positive attitude was 0.658, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4. So the hypothesis H_3 is accepted and concludes that Advertisements helps to select healthy food products for my kid (PA3) is an indicator of positive attitude towards food advertisements
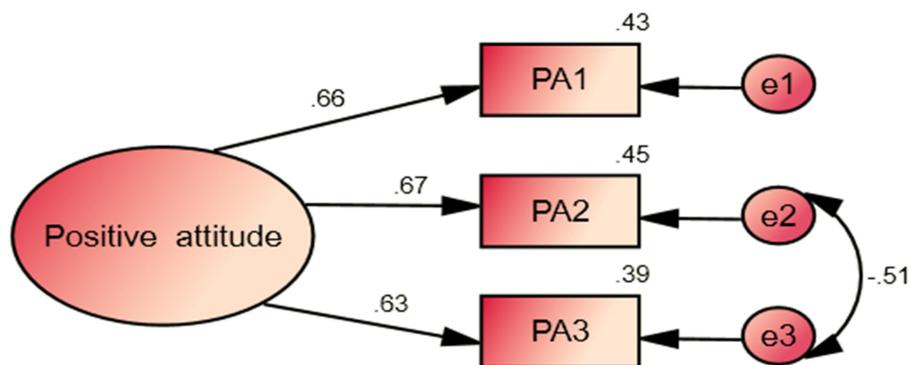

Figure 2:
Source: primary data

> **To analyze the Indicators of how watching food ads affects your child. We test the following hypothesis:**

H_1: Consuming more junk foods in the place of healthy foods (EA1) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements

H_2: Avoiding homely food (EA2) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements

H_3: Gradually losing immunity power (EA3) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements

H_4: Getting frequent health problems (EA4) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements

H_5: Not having food in a timely manner (EA5) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements

H_6: Blindly following unhealthy food habits (EA6) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements

Table 6: Model Fit Indices For CFA – Factors Which Affects The Child On Watching Food Advertisements

	$\chi 2$	DF	P	Normed $\chi 2$	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA
Effects of advertisement	32.370	7	.000	4.624	.954	.962	.957	.939	.985	.191	.191

Source: primary data

All the attributes loaded significantly on the latent constructs. The value of the fit indices indicates a reasonable fit of the measurement model with data. In table 7 we present the regression coefficients.

Table 7: The Regression Coefficients –Factors Which Effects The Child On Watching Food Advertisements

Path	Estimate	Critical Ratio (CR)	P	Variance explained
EA1 → Effects of advertisements	0.713	8.798	<0.001	50.9
EA2 → Effects of advertisements	0.719	8.919	<0.001	51.7
EA3 → Effects of advertisements	0.813	11.186	<0.001	66.1
EA4 → Effects of advertisements	0.768	10.001	<0.001	59.0
EA5 → Effects of advertisements	0.748	9.538	<0.001	56.0
EA6 → Effects of advertisements	0.878	13.463	<0.001	77.1

Source: primary data

H_1: Consuming more junk foods in the place of healthy foods (EA1) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements

The results exhibited in Table 7 revealed that the regulatory construct EA1 is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Effects of advertisements was 0.713, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4. So, the hypothesis H_1 is accepted and concludes that Consuming more junk foods in the place of healthy foods (EA1) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements.

H_2: Avoiding homely food (EA2) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements

The results exhibited in **Table 7** revealed that

the regulatory construct EA2 is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Effects of advertisements was 0.719, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4. So, the hypothesis H_2 is accepted and concludes that avoiding homely food (EA2) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements.

H_3: Gradually losing immunity power (EA3) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements

The results exhibited in Table 7 revealed that the regulatory construct EA3 is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Effects of advertisements was 0.813, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4. So, the hypothesis H_3 is accepted and concludes that gradually losing immunity power (EA3) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements.

H_4: Getting frequent health problems (EA4) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements

The results exhibited in **Table 7** revealed that the regulatory construct EA4 is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Effects of advertisements was 0.768, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4. So the hypothesis H_4 is accepted and concludes that Getting frequent health problems (EA4) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements.

H_5: Not having food in a timely manner (EA5) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements

The results exhibited in Table 7 revealed that the regulatory construct EA5 is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Effects of advertisements was 0.748, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4. So, the hypothesis H_5 is accepted and concludes that Not having food in a timely manner (EA5) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements.

H_6: Blindly following unhealthy food habits (EA6) is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements

The results exhibited in **Table 7** revealed that the regulatory construct EA6 is a factor which affects the child on watching food advertisements as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Effects of advertisements was 0.878, which is more than the recommended value of 0.4. So the hypothesis H_6 is accepted and concludes that Blindly

following unhealthy food habits (EA6) is a factor which affects the child on watching food
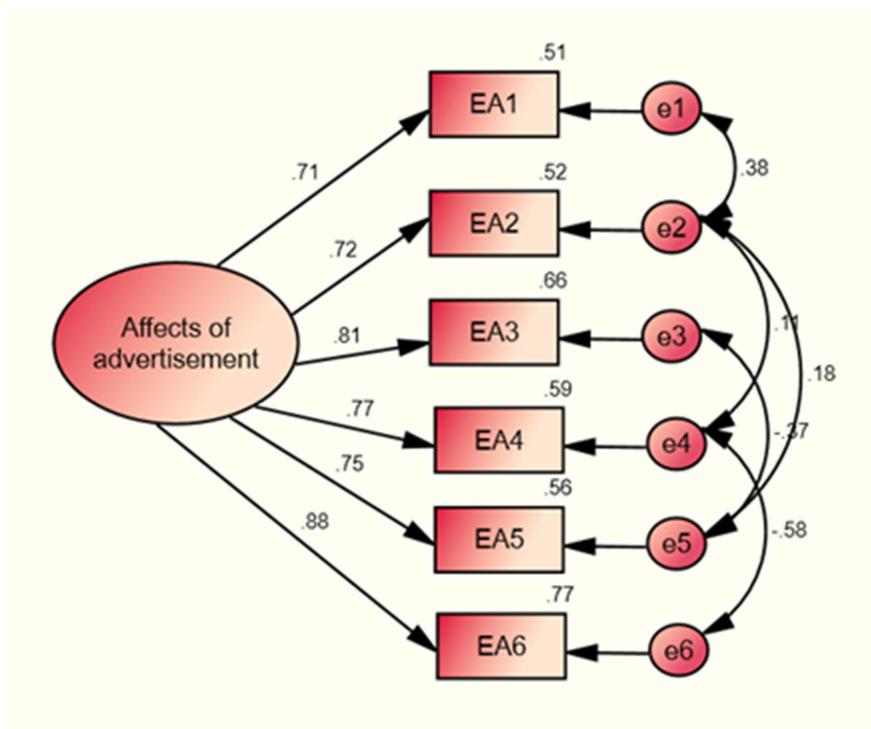
advertisements.

Figure 3:

Source: primary data

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Respondents have a negative attitude towards food ads since they feel that it is a waste of time.
2. Mothers are not interested to purchase the food items for their children, particularly which they are constantly watching through different advertisement medias.
3. Respondents have the opinion that food advertisements are not an informative source for selecting healthy foods. It gives misleading information that does not promote healthy foods.
4. Respondents have the opinion that advertisements are exaggerated and magnify the real fact.
5. The indicators of positive attitude towards food ads are: advertisement is a valuable source of information and advertisements shows new trends in eating habits.
6. Impact of food advertisements that clearly supported by the mothers are:

gradually losing immunity power and blindly following unhealthy food habits.

7. The positive attitude towards food advertisements differ among age groups. Age 30-40differs significantly with age group 41-50. But there is no difference among age groups in the case of negative attitude and factors affecting food decisions.

8. The positive attitude towards food advertisements differs among educational qualifications. Post graduates differ significantly with graduates. But there is no difference among educational qualifications in the case of negative attitude and factors affecting food decisions.

CONCLUSION

This is the era of digitalisation. People use online media for various services and to get information. Companies especially fast-food organisations use digital media for marketing their goods and services in an extensive manner. Digital Interactive technologies and available television channels have made our younger generation as a target group of consumers. Marketers exploit these situations since kids are the most sensitive target group of fast-food products. They watch various advertisements through digital medias and television in an extensive manner without the direct intervention of parents. Children have the tendency to believe all the coloured and flavoured misleading information in the food ads. This may induce the children to follow the new trend of eating habits that are anti thesis of a healthy food behaviour. The end result will be increased rate of obesity, overweight, diabetes and related health issues among the kids. Currently this forms a big threat to our society since today's children are tomorrow's citizens and we need our younger generation to be healthy mentally and physically. Mainly parents and schools have a major role to address this issue by educating the children about the pros and cons of food ads and restrict them from being addicted to online medias and tele vision programs since these are the major source of advertisements.

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