



RESEARCH ARTICLE

EMPIRICAL STUDY ON EFFECT OF FOOD AND BEVERAGE ADVERTISEMENTS ON
FOOD HABITS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BHOPAL CITY

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ABSTRACT

Children's screen dependency is increasing day by day. They are either glued on television screen or on mobile phone screen most of the time. It has been proved in several studies that exposure to food ads on television has direct impact on food habits of children. Food and beverage companies apply various marketing techniques like toys, giveaways along with food products which insist them to buy that product. Cartoon characters, attractive packaging, and musical ads of food and beverage attract young children towards them. Pediatricians accept that fast food and snacks contains high level of sugar, saturated fat, high in calories and low in nutrition. Study concludes that majority of parents (69%) agreed that they know fast food and snacks are unhealthy for their child but they cannot stop them from eating that food. Sixty five percents respondents said that television viewing and exposure to food ads have made their kids stubborn. They demand for those food items which they have seen on television ads. Majority of parents (56%) especially fathers fulfill their kid's demand. This study shows that food and beverage advertisements affect children's eating habits. Food ads have made them fond of fast foods and snacks.

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INTRODUCTION

Though multiple factors influence eating behaviour and food choices of children but two major forces is kids' television viewing and their exposure to food advertisements on various media platforms especially on television and YouTube as most of the kids either watch television or videos on YouTube. Other factors are parents' busy schedule, peer pressure, taste of fast food and snacks. Working mothers do not get enough time to cook healthy nutritious food for their kid that is why they choose food which take less cooking time. Peer pressure is also one factor, when children see their friends eating fast food in their house or in Tiffin they demand the same from their parents. Taste of fast food, wafers and chocolates also attract them. Any new habit does not form in a day. According to the experts, it takes about 21 days to break or form a habit pattern of medium complexity. Habits which are more complex or difficult to incorporate with your lifestyle may take longer (Brain Tracy, n.d.). One of the most popular studies on the psychology of habits found that it takes an average of 66 days to form a habit.

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Researchers of that study defined habits:

"Habits are behaviours which are performed automatically because they have been performed frequently in the past. This repetition creates a mental association between the situation (cue) and action (behaviour) which means that when the cue is encountered the behaviour is performed automatically. Automaticity has a number of components, one of which is lack of thoughts (Lally, P et al., 2010)." Habit is an action we do frequently and automatically in response to our environment. When children watch television or access digital media platforms they also get exposed to food and beverage advertisements on them frequently which fascinate them to try that food and beverage. When they find fast food, snacks and wafers tasty and yummy, they demand more and if they get it frequently they become habitual of eating out side food. Food and beverage marketing is a major factor that influences children's food habit. Marketers use many avenues to reach children with their messages like using popular cartoon characters and toy giveaways (Arcan, 2013). Advertising is considered one of the principal factors influencing children's present and future eating habits. Many research shows that there is a causal effect between food and beverages advertising and obesity among children. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has stated that the commercial promotion of energy-

dense, micronutrient-poor food and beverages to children is a significant contributor to childhood obesity and chronic disease (WHO, 2006). Children's diets that are high in saturated fat, added sugars, and sodium are associated with increased obesity and other negative health consequences. Children who are obese are at increased risk of suffering psychological ill health (e.g., related to bullying and social isolation resulting in low self-esteem and poor quality of life), cardiovascular risk factors, asthma, chronic inflammation, orthopedic abnormalities, liver disease, and diabetes (types I and II) (Boyland & Whalen, 2015). Children are soft target of fast food companies to whom they can easily persuade with catchy advertisements as advertisements are great persuaders. Advertising is a means of stimulating sales and increasing profits. Indian fast food market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 18% by 2020 due to changing consumer behavior and demography (Research and market report, 2015 May 27). Food advertising companies use various techniques to attract children towards food ads like; musical ads using jingles, animated ads, attractive giveaways with food products, cartoon characters etc. Attractive packaging of food and beverage also play a major role to attract children towards them.

(Donahoe, 2005: 4) opined on this issue by stipulating that:

“The countless fast food promotions linked with familiar and lovable cartoons characters with, popular children’s movies or sport cars and the ad-emblazoned happy meal containing a benevolent gift inside, whether promotional cartoon character or action hero, coincidentally always in a series so the child is urged to return again and again, to “collect all ten...” are effective tactics fast food companies employ to get young children conditioned to believe in, and desire, their product.”

Fast food ads fascinate children due to the associated benefits like toys or other giveaways whenever any food or snacks bought. Many products advertised on TV are strategically displayed in the super market at the child’s eye level. Sweets for example are put at the pay points at the child’s eye level. Techniques used by television food advertisers also include prizes, giveaways, animation, special effects, story vignettes, jingle and popular personalities. The predominant message directed to children are related to having fun, being ‘cool’ and the food being tasty (DE Klerk, 2008).

Aim of the study: Aim of this study is to explain relation between fast food, beverage advertisement and food habits of children. The researcher will try to explain how fast food and beverage advertising leads to change food habits of children which causes obesity, malnutrition and fast food addiction among children.

Objectives

- To find out the changes in the food habits of children with the influence of advertisements
- To investigate how food and beverage advertising technique influence eating behaviour of kids
- To examine the opinion of parents regarding the impact of advertisements on children’s eating habits

Literature Review: In a study on ‘Impact of advertising on children with special reference to eating habits’ based on ‘on the spot’ sample of 100 children between 5-15 and interview schedule of 50 parents, authors (Murty et al., 2013) stipulated

that 79% parents said that television advertisements have negative impact on children’s eating habit. About 60% parents accepted that their children aggressively demand some food items and dominate the purchase decision due to its advertisement on television. Study concludes that there is a definite impact of Ads on eating habits of children. Majority of children are influenced by television advertisements. Majority of parents opined that ads related to food items should be either banned or regulated. It was found also found that advertising severely affect eating habits of children. Role of parents and legal system plays crucial role in preventing the anti-health ads influencing the children’s eating habits.

In a research article on ‘Influence of television advertisement in the food habits among the children in Kerala, author (Shabeer, 2015) states that a longitudinal study conducted over seven years found that the television commercial is the most effective mass-market advertising format. Television is the most powerful and most commonly used medium in advertising. Niche market advertising is a new kind of trend. Advertisement of food products for children is example of niche market advertising. Study concludes that majority of parents (95%) felt the need for regulation of television advertisements related to food as majority of children spent their free time watching television. Even though majority of parents are well conscious about the health of their children and don’t like to purchase junk foods for them but are compelled to purchase these items due to stubborn of children who were influenced by the television ads. In India, there are no specific advertising laws that regulate ads of children based junk foods.

A review study on ‘Evidence of food advertising effects on children’ (2016) reveals that food promotion especially television advertising contributes to the unhealthy food preferences, poor diet and consequently growing obesity among children in Western societies. In a study on ‘Effect of television advertisements for food on food consumption in children’ authors (Halford et al., 2004) stipulated that excessive TV viewing does contribute to weight gain. The effect of TV viewing in weight gain seems to be, at least in part, due to lack of physical activity rather than the act of viewing itself. There is evidence that TV viewing is also stimulates food intake and is associated with overconsumption in girls especially of snack foods. Children who eat their meal in front of TV tend to consume more dietary fat. It was a quasi experimental study which revealed that obese and overweight children recognized significantly more food ads than did the lean children.

In the study ‘Due to television commercial, change in eating habits and its direct impact on obesity of teenagers of Jammu’ authors (Mishra & Singh, 2012) found that children watching television consume unhealthy and low nutritional product and also insist their parents to buy those eatable which they have seen in television ads. Excessive TV viewing leads to laziness and inactivity and thus contributes towards childhood obesity. Children who watch lot of television are found to be the ones who are not involved in healthy and sport activities and are consumers of high fat and high energy snack foods. Study concludes that food advertisements evoke children’s desire to eat fatty and high level of sugar contain products and such eating habits leads to obesity and other health problems in children.

Table 1. Showing demographic detail of respondents (Parents)

S. No.	Category (s)					
1.	Gender	Male			Female	
		30 (30%)			70 (70%)	
2.	Education	Up to 5 th Class	High School	Higher education	Graduation	Post Graduate
		4 (4%)	6 (6%)	25 (25%)	27 (27%)	38 (38%)
3.	Age	25-30 yrs.	31-35 yrs.	36-40 yrs.	41-45 yrs.	46 & above
		19 (19%)	44 (44%)	18 (18%)	12 (12%)	7 (7%)
4.	No. of Kids	1	2	3		
		49 (49%)	41 (41%)	10 (10%)		

Study conducted by (Loya, Hussain & Ismail, 2016) in Pakistan 'Impact of food advertisement on childhood obesity' also conclude that obesity has direct relationship with the overeating, hunger, impulsive and status Co among children who watch television excessively.

MATERIALS AND METHDOS

Survey sample method was used for data collection. Purposive sampling technique has been used to obtain data from parents as target respondents for this study. Tool for data collection was questionnaire. Twenty four items were included in questionnaire. Questionnaire were distributed among 120 respondents, response rate was n=100.

Data Interpretation and Analysis: The data gathered for this study is organized, coded and analysed on SPSS where frequency and percentage method were used to present the result of the study.

DemoGraphic Distribution:

- Table 1 shows that maximum of respondents were female (Mother) as it makes 70% of whole data and rest 30% were male (father).
- Out of 100 respondents maximum of them i.e. 38% of respondents were post graduates followed by 27% graduates, 25% were 12th pass, 6% were 10th pass and 4% of them studied up to class 5th.
- Maximum of respondents i.e. 44% falls into the age group of 31-35 years, 19% belongs to age group 25-30 years, 18% belongs to age group 36-40 years, 12% belongs to age group 41-45 years and only 7% of them falls in age group of 46 years and above.
- Out of 100 respondents, 49% of them have only one child, 41% of respondents have 2 children and only 10% of them have 3 children.
- It is analyzed from the data that society pays attention to education now days as maximum of respondents are found post graduated. It can also be derived from data that only few people prefer 3 kids and most of them have only one or two kids.

Television viewing habit of kids: To know about television viewing habits of kids, it was asked from parents that for how many hours their kids watch television. Through data analysis it was found that 34% kids watch television for 1 to 2 hours daily followed by 29% for 2 to 3 hours, 13% for 3 to 4 hours, 12% for 1/2 to 1 hour and 12% for more than 5 hours. The Graphical representation of same is shown in Graph 1.

Kids liking towards TV channels: A question was made to know which channel kids prefer to watch most. The data revealed that 70% of kids like to watch cartoon channels, 8%

like to watch sports and discovery each, 7% like to watch entertainment channels, only 3% like to watch movie channels and 4% of them like to watch all channels. The Graphical representation of same is shown in Graph 2.

Kid's attention towards advertisements: To identify that weather kids watch advertisements targeted to them, parents were asked to answer that do their kids watch ads cautiously. The data revealed that 32% of kids always watch ads cautiously, 27% of kids watch them cautiously most of the time, 28% of kids watch it sometimes, only 13% of kids rarely watch them cautiously and none of the parent ticked not at all to ascertain that their kids don't watch advertisements. The Graphical representation of same is shown in Graph 3.

Favorite Advertisement of Kids: A further open ended question was made to know that which one is the most popular and favorite ad among kids. Surprisingly it was found from the data that 52% of parents does not know which one is their kid's favorite ad, as they left the space blank. 17% of parents said that kinder-joy chocolate ad is the favorite ad of their kids. 6% said of Maggie, 11% said ads which portrays cartoon character. 7% said of ads with animation and only 3% said that their kids like advertisements of soft drinks. The Graphical representation of same is shown in Graph 4.

Advertisements and Demand of Kids: It was asked from respondents that weather their kids demand for food and beverage products shown in the advertisements. out of 100 respondents, 26% parents admitted that their kids always demand for such products, 29% admitted that they demand for products most of the time, 30% admitted that they sometime demand of products, 8% said that they rarely demand anything and 7% of parents said that their kids never demand of any product after watching their ads.

Food and Beverage in High Demand: Out of all (N=100), 31% of respondents said that their kids mostly demand for chocolates, 23% of them said of fast food, 10% of kids mostly demand for soft drinks and ice-cream each, 7% kids demand for wafer and biscuits, 17% said that their kids demand for all of this things and only 2% of parents said that their kids do not demand for any such product. The Graphical representation of same is shown in Graph 5.

Effect of Free Toys delivered with Products on its Demand: To understand the marketing strategy of advertisers and child psychology, it was asked from parents that weather their kids demand for products with whom they get free toys. It was found from the data that, 69% of kids always demand for products with which they get free toys, 13% of kids sometimes demand for such products and 18% parents said that their kids don't demand for product in greed of any toy. The Graphical representation of same is shown in Graph 6.

Brand with High Recall value and Purchase Behaviour: To know which brand is most likable among kids, it was asked that for which of the following products their kids gets irresistible after watching their ads. The data revealed that 39% of kids get irresistible for kinderjoy after watching its advertisement, 24% of kids like cracks, 9% like just jelly and chocos each, 5% like lickables and 14% of kids get irresistible for Maggie. The Graphical representation of same is shown in Graph 7.

Fulfilling Kid's Demand of Product viewed in Advertisements: Out of all, 56% of parents said that they fulfill their kids demand of such products sometimes, 23% of them fulfill it most of the time, 3% of parents always fulfill their kids demand, 13% of them do this rarely and 5% of parents admitted that they never fulfill any such demand made by their kids. The Graphical representation of same is shown in Graph 8.

Person who fulfills kids demand most of the time: It was asked from respondents that which family member fulfills their kids demand most of the time. It was found from the data that demand of 44% kids were fulfilled by their father, 23% of kid's demand fulfilled by their mother, 29% by their grandparents and 4% by paternal aunt. The Graphical representation of same is shown in Graph 9.

Advertising as a factor developing fast food eating habit of children: To analyze the effect of food and beverages advertising on food habits of children, it was asked from parents that weather kids have developed a habit of eating fast food due to its excessive advertising. Out of all, 56% of parents denied on this statement, 34% agreed that due to such advertisements food eating habits of children are being developed and 10% of respondents were not sure about it. it was also found that 40% of kids always demand for fast food and beverages after viewing them in advertisements. The Graphical representation of same is shown in Graph 10.

Eating while television watching; a reason for obesity: A question was asked from parents that weather their kid's weight is increasing due to continuous eating in while watching television. 65% of parents said no, 22% said yes and 13% were not sure about it.

Fast food diverting kid's choice from home cooked food: It was asked that weather fast food is influencing kid's choice and taking them away from home cooked food. Out of all, 44% of parents agreed on this statement, 37% disagreed and 19% were unable to make any opinion. The Graphical representation of same is shown in Graph 11.

Fast food eating as a status symbol: A statement that 'fast food has become a status symbol among kids and they think if they won't eat them, they will lag behind in their friend circle' was made. Out of all, 49% of parents agreed, 36% disagreed and 15% were not able to make any kind of opinion on this.

Preventing kids from eating fast food and their stubborn behavior: Although it is known to all that fast food and beverages does not have any nutritional ingredients but still parents are unable to stop their kids from eating them. Out of all 69% of parents agreed on this statement, 25% disagreed and 6% were not sure. It was further stated that advertisements are making children stubborn, 65% of parents said yes, 25% said

no and 10% were not sure about it. The Graphical representation of same is shown in Graph 12.

Observation: While survey, when parents were asked to fill questionnaire, many other things are been observed by researchers. Some parents were getting cautious to share details about their kids as they were thinking that people might judge their kids of being good, bad or stubborn. Some parents has also explained their kid's whole day routine to claim that their kids are very well bought-up, are well cultured and carry good manners. Few of respondents were living in joint family and were feeling hesitant to share true details about their kids, in such families domination of mother-in-law was also been noticed by researcher as they were giving all answers on behalf of their daughter-in-law. A very high impact of cartoon channel was been observed in a kid of one nuclear family, the mother of kid explained that his kid often behave rudely due to excessive watching of *shin chan cartoon* on pogo channel.

RESULTS

The major findings of this study are as follows;

- The demoGraphic details revealed that maximum of respondents are highly educated as post graduate parents make 38% share of whole data and 70% of respondents were mothers. It was also found that maximum people prefer to have 2 kids only and not more than that.
- Maximum of kids with 34% watch television for 1 to 2 hours daily and 29% watch for 2 to 3 hours. Only 5% kids watch television for more than 5 hours daily. It can be interpreted from the data that all kids watch television for at least 30 minutes to 1 hour.
- Children are having more inclination and liking towards cartoon as most of them (70%) watch cartoon channels. Only few of them have liking towards other channels like discovery, sports and entertainment.
- It has been found that all kids are exposed to advertisements directed towards them and maximum of them (59%) watch this ads cautiously.
- It was found that maximum of parents doesn't know about their kids liking, as 52% were unable to answer that which one is the favorite ad of their kids. Parents should pay more attention towards their kids while they watch television to know them better.
- The data revealed that kids are becoming very demanding due to advertisements targeted to them, as 85% of kids demand for products seen in an advertisement.
- The most demanded product among kids is chocolates (31%), followed by fast foods (23%), ice-cream (10%) and wafer biscuit (7%). Although 17% of kids demand for all type of products.
- A product with freebies make good sale. It has been found that marketing strategy of providing free toys on kid's product always work. The data shows that 82% of kids demand of such products with which they get some free toys.
- It was found that kinder joy has the highest recall value and purchase behavior as children get irresistible after wreathing its ad. Maximum of kids (39%) demand for kinder joy, this is also due free toy which kids get with it. Cracks are also one of the most demanded products among children.

- Maximum of parents (56%) always fulfills demand of product made by their kids after watching its advertisements, while 23% fulfills it sometime, 5% parents never fulfill such demands.
- It was found that maximum time it is father (44%) who fulfills their kids demand of such products followed by mother (23%) and then grandparents (29%).
- In spite of excessive exposure of such advertisements, 56% of parents denied that this kind of ads are developing fast food eating habit in their children while 34% agreed that such advertisements are influencing their kids and they demand for such fast food and beverages which is making them habitual of eating such products.
- It is clear from the data that eating while television viewing is not a reason behind obesity in children of Bhopal city, as parents of 65% kids said that their kids does not suffer from obesity.
- All this advertisements of food and beverages targeted towards kids have a major impact on child eating habits. 44% or parents said that children are more attracted towards outside food rather than home cooked food while 37% disagreed and said that their kids eat home food properly.
- Fast food eating has become a status symbol in present scenario. Children also adopt eating them because maximum of their friends eat them. 49% of parents agreed on this statement and only 36% disagreed.
- As this advertisements have high influence on children, maximum of parents (69%) are unable to stop their kids from eating such unhealthy fast food and beverages. Also, 65% parents believe that such advertisements are making their kids stubborn and demanding.

Recommendation

Healthy eating and physical activities do not become habits overnight. It really takes time and efforts to make them part of daily routine. The very first thing we really need to do is to involve children in outdoor activities so that their screen dependency (watching TV, mobile, playing online or video games) can be reduced. If they will be busy in other activities rather than watching television in their free time they will be less exposed to TV ads which would lead towards fewer demands of outside food and snacks. Involve your kid in picking up food from grocery store also in kitchen while cooking. These habits will give you hints about your kid's food preferences and an opportunity to teach your children about nutrition. Instead of ordering food from outside try to cook them at home use lots of vegetables in it. Do not give your child sweets, chocolates, fast food, snacks, soft drinks or ice-creams to reward him/her either for doing good in exams or for winning any award as next time he/she will expect same from you as reward and slowly will become habitual of it. Eat meals together as a family as often as possible and make your dining area mobile free zone so that you can get involve with your family without interruption.

Discourage your child eating meals or snacks while watching TV. Eating in front of TV may make it difficult to pay attention to feeling of fullness which may lead to overeating. Healthy eating habits are established in childhood only. Children should be guided to eat healthy, nutritious and right food. Ask your family and friends to bring fruits instead of chocolates, wafers or other fast food for children when they

visit to you. Good food habits are developed under guidance so guide your child towards healthy life and healthy future. Children love stories, if they demand unhealthy food try to make them understand with the help of imaginary stories that those who eat unhealthy food become skinny like that particular character. Be aware, attentive and conscious about your child's eating habits.

Conclusion

The study concludes that food and beverage advertisement has high influence on food eating habits of kids. There was a phase when products are developed due to its raising demand, but, in present scenario it won't be an exaggeration to say that demands are been created and their most potential target are kids. It has been observed from the study that all kids watch television and they watch it daily for at least half-an-hour to 1 hour. Cartoon channel is found to be the favorite channel of kids which they watch the most. As kids are regular viewer of television their exposure to advertisements is obvious. The present study also observed the same and analyzed that 59% of children watch advertisements cautiously.

Although children are watching advertisements and also demanding for products displayed in them, still parents are unaware of their kid's favorite advertisement. It is important at this point that parents should spend more time with their kids. They should not let busy schedule and hectic lifestyle of present generation affect bonding with their kids. As slowly and steadily fast food is becoming an integral part of today's generation, there is an urgent need of making parents and kids aware about negative impact of fast food and beverages on their health. It is also important because most of the parents try fulfilling their kid's demands due to love and affection, especially father, and hence they fail to stop them from eating such unhealthy things. The study also makes an inference that advertisements directed to children are making them stubborn. Hence, the study concludes that more attention should be paid towards kids for their healthy lifestyle and better future.

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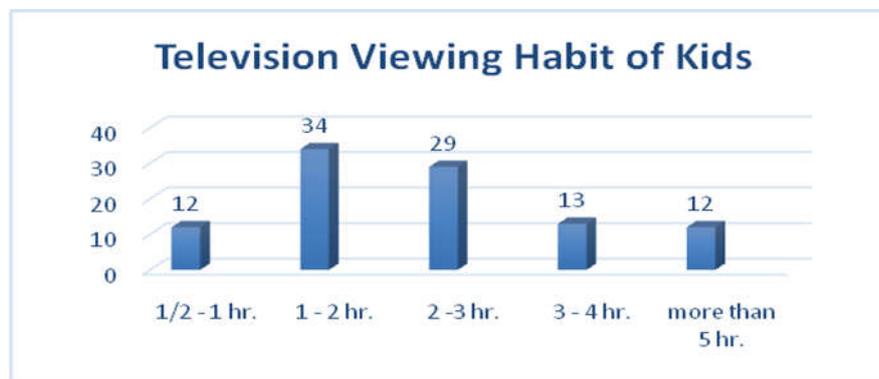
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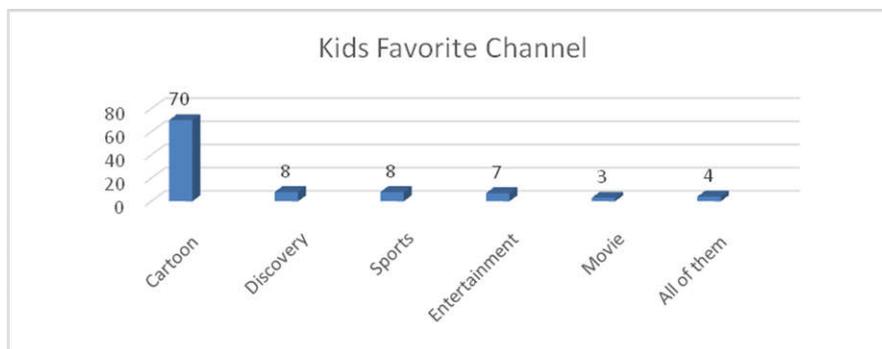
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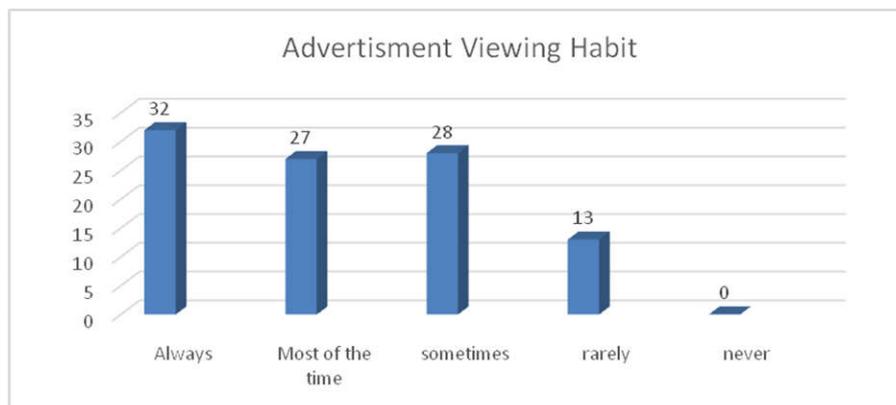
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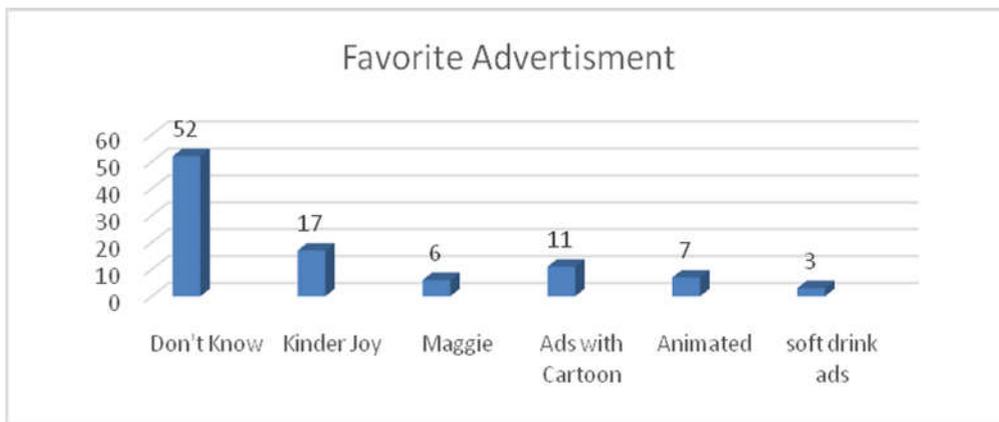
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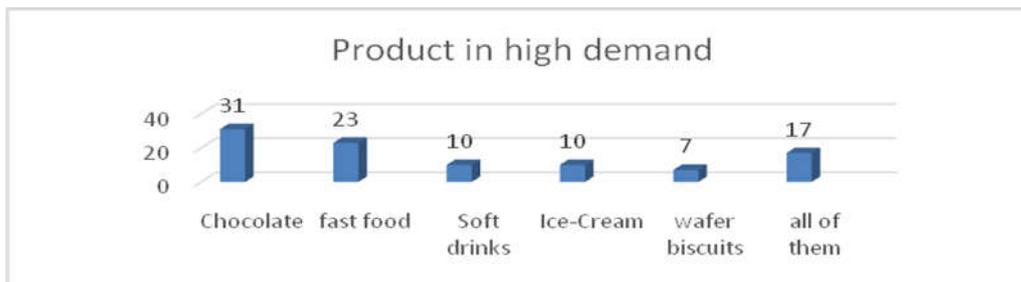
Graph 2.



Graph 3.



Graph 4



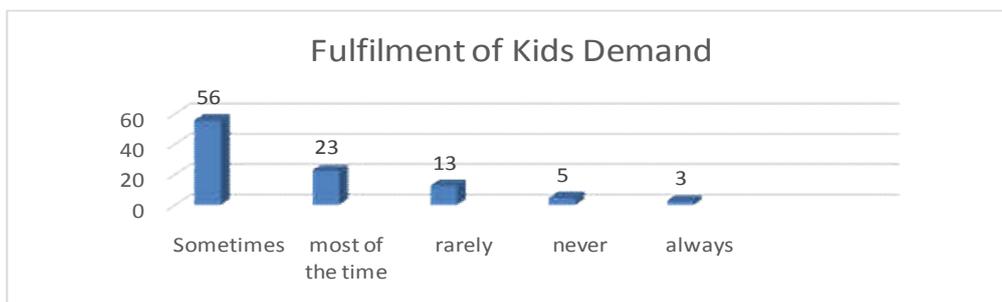
Graph 5



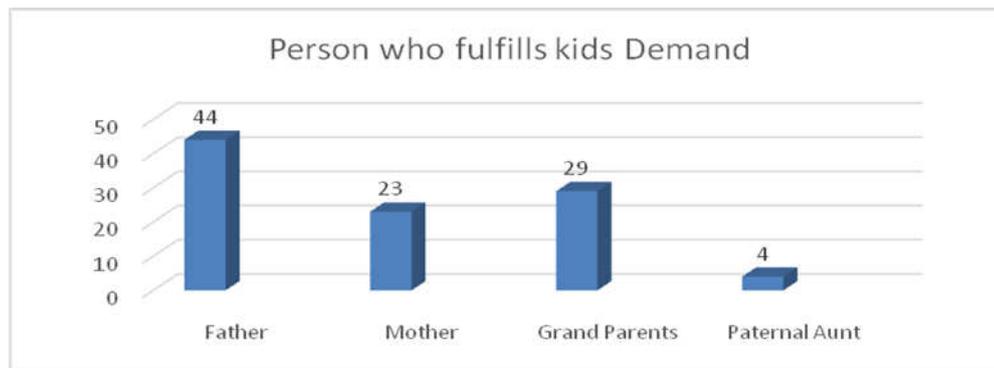
Graph 6



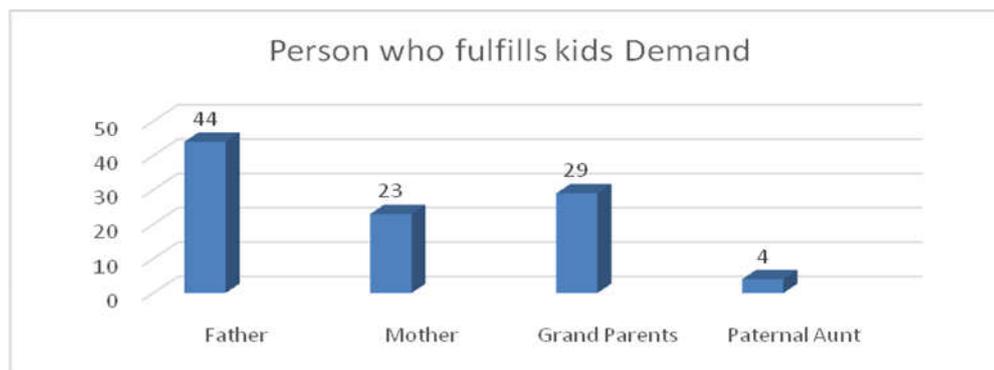
Graph 7



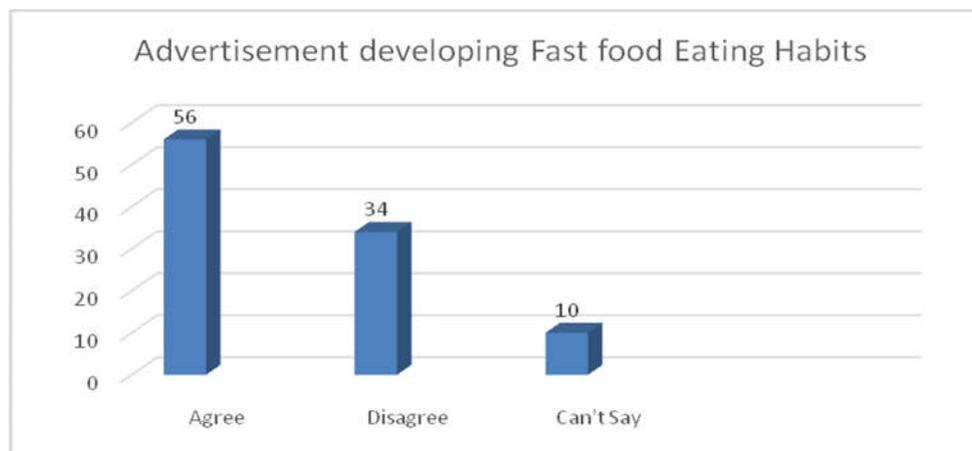
Graph 8.



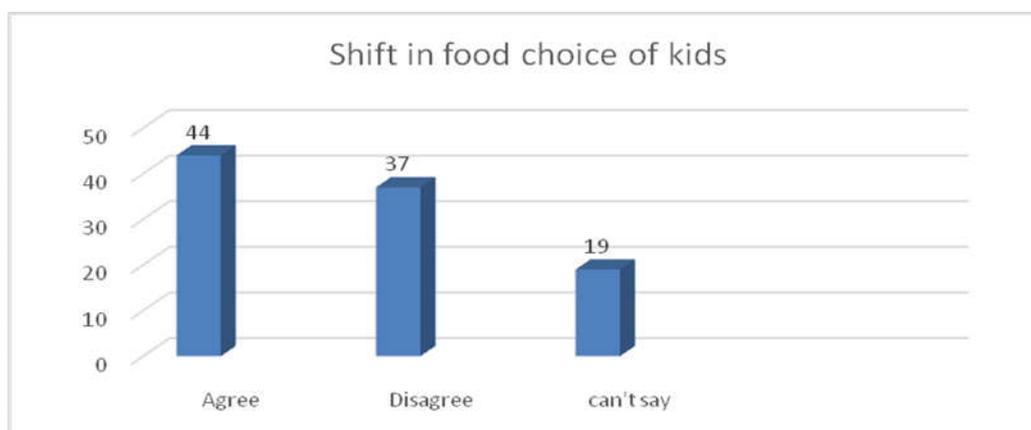
Graph 9.



Graph 10.



Graph 11.



Graph 12

