

Investigation of the Influence of Parents-Child Communications on Consumption and Media Advertisements

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ABSTRACT

The present research aims to investigate the influence of family communications patterns on TV advertisements based on parent-child communication pattern using dimensions: easygoing, cautious, pluralist, and compatible in a number of boys and girls primary schools in Tonekabon City, Iran. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Sample members were selected from students and their parents in Tonekabon primary schools. 370 questionnaires were usable. Structural equations modeling method was used for data analysis. Results showed that socialization communications hypotheses, high statistics of parents with supportive thinking in relation to other groups, high statistics of parents conversation with pluralist thinking in relation to other groups, high statistics of the influence of supportive parents on children attitude towards advertisement in relation to other groups, high statistics of parents control with supportive thinking and on watching TV in children in comparison with other groups, and social environment have direct influence on family communications. Furthermore, the influence of conceptualism communications, high statistics of parents with pluralist thinking with high education level was not verified. Finally, the main hypothesis of the research was verified. In other words, parent-child communications have direct impact on consumption and media advertisements.

KEYWORDS: consumption and media advertisements, culture, social environment, demography

INTRODUCTION

Since early 1990s, marketers focused on children because children have found their independent role in consumption and their deep influence on family purchase behavior is undeniable nowadays. Studies have shown that 43% of families' purchases are affected by children. Potential ability of children in influencing on families purchase behavior has attracted attention of industries (Hoffsted, 1998, 145). Modern marketing is something beyond producing good products, appropriate pricing and convenient delivery. Companies should communicate with their potential customers, sellers, beneficiaries and people. Advertisement and its impacts on society is the main goal of this study. Electronic information has been seriously introduced in our lives. TV, cinema, video, music, video games and computers have important roles in our lives (Tabnak, 2012). Recent studies showed that even the youngest children in USA use mass media more than acceptable level for their age and this has raised a lot of concern. This is because scientists believe that school age and adolescence is the most crucial age for receiving negative impacts of such media and mass media result in obesity, aggressive behavior and sleep disorders. Therefore, an appropriate educational plan is necessary to deal with this problem. Parents and society's role is forbidding what is unacceptable in their opinion (Carlson et al, 1990).

Products advertisements indicate the depth of their owners who want to sell their products anyway and do no care about the products helpfulness. Marketers aim to facilitate sales and transactions, although it might be negative. Complex and rapid changes in different areas like science, technology and values have made organizations to direct their goals and methods towards recognizing their customers (Hoffsted, 1998, 145). Purchase decision-making process is affected by two sets of controllable and uncontrollable factors. Some of these factors include: social, cultural and group factors like: family, culture, micro-culture, age, life stage, character, reference groups and idea leaders and social class. Internal and personal factors include: perception, attitude, learning and life. Family has a special position in a society and it is in fact the basic unit of a society. Traditional attitudes and interests of families may also influence on the coming families (Carlson et al, 1990). Children aged 3-11 influence on family purchase behavior by simply wanting something. This indicates that young consumers are targeted and addressed by internal and external marketers (Naseri, 2010).

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RESEARCH LITERATURE

Consumption and media advertisement

Media is the third player in advertisement world. Media are communication routes which transfer messages from advertisers to addressees. Advertisement is a field of marketing. It is a plan which is used by companies to convince people to buy their special products. Advertisement is one of the most noticeable activities of marketing. Capitalism system has a strong link with modern advertisement. TV is the most prevalent medium in the world and its place in families is so great that it can be considered as a member of family (Kotler, 402, 1982).

Media have been organized for the following purposes:

- Selling space in printed media like newspapers, magazines, billboards and direct posts.
- Selling time in broadcasting media like radio and TV.
- Selling space and time in electronic media and other support systems like internet
- Aiding in selection and analysis of media
- Aiding in produce ads

Media programming in commercial and PSA advertisements is usually different. One of the difference reasons is hierarchy of impact. In commercial advertisements, there are four important stages of impact:

- Attention
- Interest
- Desire
- Action (Huffsted, 1998).

Family communications patterns facilitate the possibility of evaluation of communications among parents, children, media and consumption patterns. Previous studies proved that family communication patterns are related to education styles and parents' role-playing (Carlson et al, 1990). Four dimensions of parents' influence on advertisements were studied:

1. watching TV together (parents with children)
2. discussion on TV ads
3. parents' impact on children attitude
4. controlling watching TV (Hofstede, 1980)

Culture

Empirical studies show that there are cultural differences in family communications patterns. Culture refers to "common and collective mental planning" which differentiates societies from each other. Values are important parts of a culture. Over the past two decades, cultural dimensions model provided by Hofstede (1980, 1983) has been one of the important frameworks for recognition of culture. Hofstede's primary research (1980) described four cultural dimensions: individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity and the last dimension is long-term orientation (Hofstede, 1998, 76). Individualism depicts cultural situation of a country in terms of the importance of individual or group. Power distance refers to hierarchical approach to dictatorship in society. Masculinity considers thinking about success, heroism, power, supremacy and material success, while femininity regards communications, modesty and nobility, need to care and attention due to weakness and life quality. It can be said that masculinity/femininity dimensions and isolation dimensions are not related to models of family communications. Therefore, evaluation of the fact that whether power distance and individualism have any difference and influence on family communications patterns is an important issue. Power distance is a situation in which weaker members of a society accept the unjust distribution of power. China has a long background in having a dictatorship society and Confucius relationships between: king and prime minister, father and son, husband and wife, old and young and friends emphasizes on this matter. The Chinese respect power a lot. In a traditional Chinese family, children should follow their parents and they should not express their disagreements (Hofstede, 1998, 321). Parents can be divided into four groups: parents who have economic freedom policy do not follow social orientation and also do not follow conceptual orientation. They rarely have communication with their children and therefore they have little influence on their children's consumption behaviors. Such parents do not insist on tendencies and communication between parents and children in such families is at minimum (Carlson et al, 1990). Parents who have supportive attitude have a high level of social behavior and follow less conceptual relationship. They emphasize on social order and insist on the fact that children should not be independent. Society-oriented emphasize on socialization and expect obedience and coordination with society from their children and do not care about conceptual orientation (Carlson et al, 1990). Pluralist parents have weak social thinking and insist on conceptual communication. They keep a relatively-horizontal parent-child communication and encourage their children to express their thoughts and interests. Such parents emphasize on conceptualism and respect individual interest. Therefore, such parents encourage children to discuss their beliefs without fear (Carlson et al, 1990). Parents have a high level of socialization and conceptualism. They both encourage their children to express their ideas and simultaneously

keep their control and power. Such families emphasize on socialization and conceptualism. In such families, children are persuaded to explore their surrounding world and form their ideas and beliefs (Carlson et al, 1990).

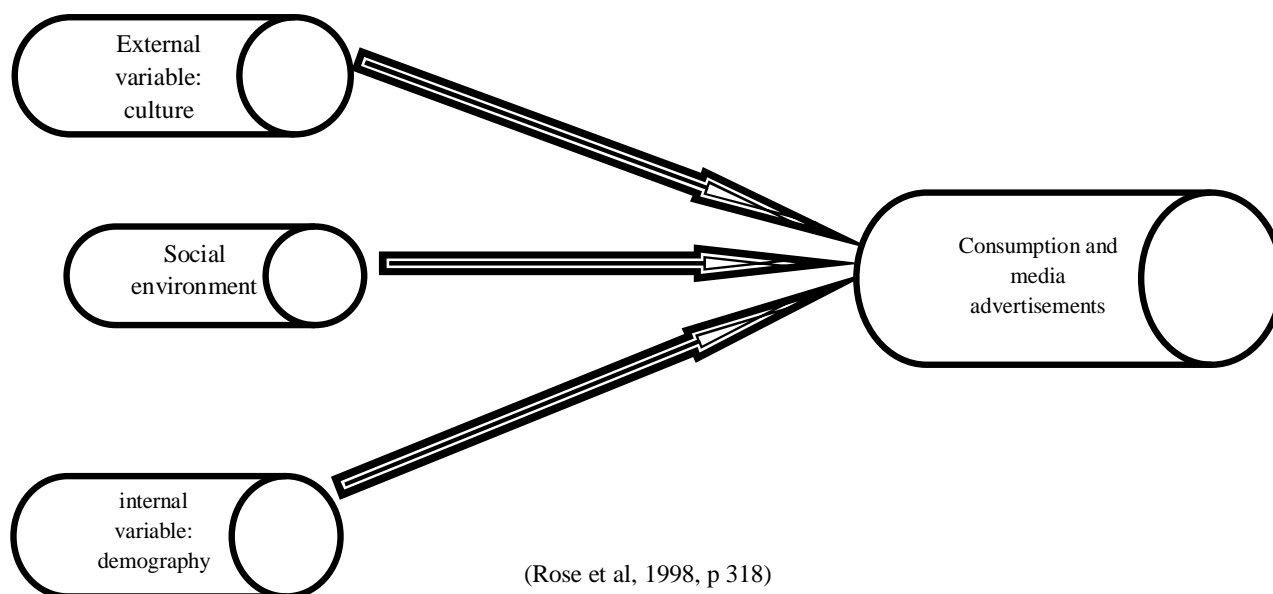
Demography

An individual belongs to several groups and is a member of several groups (family, club and organization). Situation of an individual in an organization is determined according to his/her role and position. Demography means study of human populations especially births, deaths and migration. In a definition, demography means: mathematical and statistical study of the size, combination and distribution of human populations and the changes over time, through 5 processes: reproduction, deaths, marriages, migration and social motivation (Sarmad, Zohreh et al, 1999). One of the factors investigated in the present research is the influence of the level of parents' education on family communications.

Social environment

Communications among parents and children within family environment is different from that of social environment. They sometimes behave more strictly or more easy-going. This is while similar behavior in family and social environment can be more helpful for children (Carlson et al, 1990). Such differences cause different influences on children.

Research conceptual model



Research hypotheses can be developed as follows considering research conceptual model and relationships among variables:

H1: culture influences on consumption and media advertisements.

H2: demographic variables influence on consumption and media advertisements.

H3: social environment influences on consumption and media advertisements.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Questionnaire

A questionnaire based upon 5-point Likert scale (1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree) was used to collect data. Questions of the questionnaire were obtained from previous studies like Fry et al (2005) and Spreitzer (1995). Before distributing all questionnaires, 30 questionnaires were used as a pretest in order to measure reliability and all variables had Cronbach's alpha above 0.7. Therefore the questionnaire had enough reliability.

The sample members were selected from children and their parents in primary schools in Tonekabon city in Iran. Tonekabon city schools were divided into 15 categories and 5 schools were selected from each category. In the end, 20 schools were selected for data collection and 20 questionnaires were distributed in each school (totally 500 questionnaires). 372 questionnaires were usable. In other words, 74.4% of the questionnaires were returned. Demographic information of the respondents has been summarized in table 1.

Table 1: respondents' gender

Gender	frequency	Frequency percentage	Cumulative percentage
Male	117	%31.5	%31.5
Female	255	%68.5	%100
Sum	372	100	

As it can be seen In table 1, 31.5% of the respondents are male and 68.5% of them are female.

Table 2: respondents' education level

Education level	frequency	Frequency percentage	Cumulative percentage
Secondary school or below	52	%14	%14
High school	197	%53	%67
Bachelor	107	%28.8	95.8%
Master degree	13	3.4%	99.2%
PhD or above	3	0.8%	%100
Sum	372	%100	

As it can be seen in table 2, 53% of the respondents have high school degree and 0.8% of the respondents have PhD or above.

Table 3: respondents' occupation status

Occupation	frequency	Frequency percentage	Cumulative percentage
Civil servant	66	17.7%	17.7%
Technician	26	%7	24.7%
Self-employed	148	%39.8	64.5%
Teacher/researcher	21	5.7%	70.2%
Worker	37	9.9%	80.1%
Housewife	74	19.9%	%100
Sum	372	%100	

As it can be seen in table 3, self-employment, housewife work, and civil servant have the greatest frequency, respectively. Teachers (researchers), technical workers and workers have the least frequency.

Table 4: indices of model fit after adjustment

model	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN / DF	RMR	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
Final model	635.210	536	0.002	1.185	0.060	0.916	0.966	0.022
Saturated model	0.000	0		0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000	
Independent model	3556/132	630	0/000	5/645	0/186	0/582	0/000	0/112

According to the results of table 4, we first deal with general model fitting. Because Kai-squared is not significant, model fit is acceptable and other indices are favorable. goodness of fit index which should be close to 1 is equal to 0.916 in the present research which is a satisfactory value. Comparative fit is another index and its acceptable value is close to 1. Its value was equal to 0.966 which is a satisfactory value. This index is based upon correlation between the present variables of the model.

Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is equal to 0.022 (satisfactory range is less than 0.05) which is favorable. It can be concluded that the model is of a very good fit.

First hypothesis test

Culture influences on consumption and media advertisement.

Table 5. direct, indirect and total influences (culture)

From	Path	To	Direct influence	Indirect influence	Total impact
Culture	consumption	Concept-oriented communication	0.882	---	0.882
		society-oriented communication	1	---	1
	Media advertisement	Controlling watching TV	---	0.302	0.302
		Parents' influence on children attitudes	---	0.279	0.279
		Discussion and conversation on TV advertisements	---	0.152	0.152
		Parent-child joint TV watching	---	0.054	0.054

As it can be seen in table above, culture has the greatest influence on society-oriented society (coefficient 1) and has the least influence on common parent-child TV watching variable (coefficient=0.054).

Second hypothesis test-demography variable has influence on consumption and media advertisement

Table 6: table of direct, indirect and total influences (demography variable)

From	Path	To	Direct influence	Indirect influence	Total impact
Demography variable	consumption	Concept-oriented communication	-0.054	---	-0.054
		society-oriented communication	-0.028	---	-0.028
	Media advertisement	Controlling watching TV	---	-0.012	-0.012
		Parents' influence on children attitudes	---	-0.015	-0.015
		Discussion and conversation on TV advertisements	---	-0.018	-0.018
		Parent-child joint TV watching	---	-0.071	-0.071

As it can be seen in table above, demography has the greatest influence on common parent-child TV watching variable (coefficient=-0.071) and the least influence on controlling TV watching variable (coefficient=-0.012).

Third hypothesis test

Social environment has influence on consumption and media advertisement

Table 7: table of direct, indirect and total influences of social environment

From	Path	To	Direct influence	Indirect influence	Total impact
Social environment	consumption	Concept-oriented communication	0.173	---	0.173
		society-oriented communication	0.054	---	0.054
	Media advertisement	Controlling watching TV	0.440	0.033	0.473
		Parents' influence on children attitudes	0.419	0.044	0.463
		Discussion and conversation on TV advertisements	0.298	0.067	0.365
		Parent-child joint TV watching	-0.115	0.229	0.184

As it can be seen in table above, social environment variable has the greatest influence on controlling TV watching (coefficient=0.473) and the least influence on society-oriented relationship (coefficient=0.054).

Table 8. hypotheses tests results

Hypotheses	Significance number	Path coefficient (standard)	result
Hypothesis 1. Culture influences on consumption and media advertisements.			Hypothesis verified
Hypothesis 2. Demography influences on consumption and media advertisements.			Hypothesis verified
Hypothesis 3. Social environment influences on consumption and media advertisements.			Hypothesis verified

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The present research aimed to investigate the influence of parent-child communications on consumption and media advertisement. The results can be used by managers, marketers and parents.

Culture has the greatest influence on society-oriented variable with coefficient 1. Results showed that culture has the greatest influence on parents with supportive thinking. On the other hand, demography has the greatest strongest influence on common parent-child TV watching (coefficient=-0.071). According to Tuki's paired test, demography has the greatest influence on parents with thinking and has the least influence on parents with social freedom thinking. The influences are negative and considerable. Social environment has the greatest influence on controlling TV watching (coefficient=0.473). According to t-test, means difference between domestic and social environment is 0.305. Results of Tuki's paired tests showed that social environment has the greatest influence on parents with thinking. Results of the present research can be used by schools managers, parents and marketers. Iranian parents reflect a high level of social communications and an average level of conceptual communications. TV advertisements are controlled voluntarily in Iran by Iranian parents and Iranian parents probably put low limitation on selection of advertised products by children and allow children to decide on their own. Average level of conceptual communications concerning consumption shows that Iranian parents do not regard themselves as good consumers. They rarely talk to their children about consumption experiences. Family income and education level significantly depend on conceptual communications. Parents with low level of education and income are expected to focus on price rather than global thinking. They are expected to have inadequate information on market and new products. Therefore, their children may play important role in family purchase behavior. Marketers are advised to advertise and offer products addressed to children with enough care and considering cultural and legal restrictions. Products which prevent children from studying will be banned and products which help grow children mentally will be encouraged and children will be allowed to use them.

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