

## Impact of media on buying behaviour of adolescent girls

■ RAGINI MISHRA, VIDYA DAYAL AND SUDHA MISHRA

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See end of the paper for authors' affiliations

Correspondence to :

**RAGINI MISHRA**

Human Development and Family Studies, College of Home Science, Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology, UDAIPUR (RAJASTHAN) INDIA

Email: raginimishra.2008@gmail.com

■ **ABSTRACT** : The present study was conducted in Kanpur city of Uttar Pradesh. The aim of research study was to find out the impact of media portrayal on buying behaviour of adolescent girls. Purposively, from the schools 120 adolescents (60 early adolescent girls and 60 late adolescent girls) were randomly selected from different schools of Kanpur city. A self-constructed questionnaire was used to find the impact of media portrayal on buying behaviour of adolescent girls, with respect to, willingness to use cosmetics to enhance physical appearance, willingness to buy trendy/modern cloths to enhance physical appearance and willingness to buy accessories to enhance physical appearance. Data were analyzed in terms of percentage, frequency and Chi square ( $\chi^2$ ). Findings revealed that all girls (100%) willing to buy cosmetics and trendy/modern clothes enhanced their physical appearance according to the current trends they observed through the media. Majority of girls (87.50 % ) were willing to buy trendy/modern accessories (e.g.-goggles, earring, belts etc.) to enhance their physical appearance according to the current trends they observed through the media.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Impact of media, Buying behaviour, Adolescent girls

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Media especially, television, cinema and more recently the Internet, that provide information along with audio-visual experiences exert a powerful influence on the users since they affect the eyes, ears and the mind simultaneously. Child psychologist, Hurlock (2003) explained that mass media provides models of socially personality traits, which, children can use as models for their own personality development. For example, in matters of appearance, the children learn concepts of culturally approved stereotypes of the “right body build”. Further, according to her, children create aspirations of what they would like to look like, or concept media. Berk (1990) explained that children acquire knowledge of sex-appropriate behaviour, appearance, occupations and achievements by observing others around them. For instance, the term “fairer sex” alluded to women, has been persistently projected as a stereotype of women by the media. The results of a market survey reported in newspaper article, pointed out that the user profile of fairness creams had got younger (age 12-15 years), which was much less than a few years ago (The Times of India, Kanpur, April 8, 2009). The cause for

consumption of fairness creams by teenagers for enhancing their physical appearance, was attributed to the high exposure they have of various media that propagate standards of beauty and emphasis on “fairness” or fair complexion is one such standard of physical appearance that has particularly influenced young adolescents girls and even boys.

According to Kotwal *et al.* (2008) buying is a complex process involving a number of decisions to be made as to what to buy, where to buy, when and how much to buy. This process is divisible into stages such as awareness, information, application, trial and adoption. The buyers are aware of the product through one source, yet other sources might provide more information at the information stage. It might still be a different source influencing at the application stage when the purchase is made. The results of the study revealed that the girls viewed T.V., magazines, newspapers and Internet advertisements with interest and found them entertaining and informative to enhance their physical appearance. The non-informative factors like celebrities, catchy slogans, visual effects funny advertisements, easily affect the adolescents to

buy what can make them perfect. From the preceding discussion, it is evident that media portrayal of current trends related to physical appearance holds an awesome power to influence adolescents. The drive for thinness set off by media portrayal of 'size-zero' trend related to women's physical appearance is an example of how media influences adolescents as well as controlling their buying behaviour of adolescents.

### Objectives :

To find out the influence of media portrayal of current trends related to women's physical appearance on buying behaviour of adolescent girls, with respect to the following-

- Willingness to buy cosmetics to enhance their physical appearance.
- Willingness to buy modern cloths to enhance their physical appearance.
- Willingness to buy modern accessories to enhance their physical appearance.

### RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in Kanpur city of the Uttar Pradesh. Three schools/colleges (R.B.R.D. Inter College, Nawabganj, P.P.N. Inter College, Parade and Swaraj India Public School, Kakadev) were selected randomly for the survey. The list of adolescent girls, studying in different standards viz., IX, X and XI, from these schools was procured. A sample of one hundred twenty adolescent girls (60 early adolescent girls and 60 late adolescent girls) were selected by purposive sampling. A self-constructed questionnaire was formed to collect the relevant information, such as background characteristics of the respondents, impact of media portrayal on buying behaviour of respondents, in response to observation of media portrayal of current trends related to women's physical appearance. Data were analyzed in terms of percentage, frequency and Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ ).

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 1 out of the total sample of 120 adolescent girls, all girls (100%) wanted to buy or were buying

cosmetics to enhance their physical appearance according to the current trends they observed through the media. Kotwal *et al.* (2008), explain that television and advertising together present a lethal combination and has become an integral part of modern society. It is the most convenient route to reach not only adult consumers but also the adolescents. Adolescents are manipulated by advertisement promise that the product will do something special for them which will transform their life. Advertisements played a vital role in introducing a new product in the family list and making better choice during shopping. Majority of the respondents after watching an advertisement wanted to buy the new brand introduced in the market, they were disappointed when they were not allowed to buy products of their choice and were of the opinion that T.V. advertisements helped them to make better choice during shopping. The girls utilized their pocket money received every month for shopping. The main items purchased from the pocket money were food, cosmetics, gifts and cards. They mostly went to shopping with parents. The girls planned their shopping after discussion with family members. In purchase of food items, stationery, cosmetics and toiletries, the girls were influenced by T.V. advertisements. In case of clothing they were guided by fashion, friends and boutiques. The respondents preferred to buy branded and standardized products which are more advertised on television. The study suggests that adolescents like advertisement in magazines, television, newspapers etc. and the advertising has enhanced their involvement in product selection and purchase. They prefer to buy advertised products and it is helpful in buying the new products, getting the best products and also supports collective decision making.

As shown also in Table 1 out of the total sample of 120 adolescent girls, all girls (100%) wanted to buy or were buying of women's physical appearance they observed through the media. Jessie (2002) has pointed out that male and female spent similar amounts of money on clothing and had similar degrees of conformity, sexual attraction, and recognition motivations. For both genders, friends were the most important clothing information source, and price was the most important criterion for store selection. Significant differences were also

**Table 1 : Percentage distribution of influence of media on buying behaviour of the adolescent girls**

Sr. No.	Questions	Response	Early adolescents (n=60)		Late adolescents (n=60)		Total (n=120)		Chi square
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1.	Willingness to buy cosmetics	Yes	60	100.00	60	100.00	120	100.00	
		No	0	00.00	0	00.00	0	00.00	
2.	Willingness to buy cloths	Yes	60	100.00	60	100.00	120	100.00	
		No	0	00.00	0	00.00	0	00.00	
3.	Willingness to buy modern accessories	Yes	52	86.67	53	88.33	105	87.50	0.0761
		No	8	13.33	7	11.67	15	12.50	

\* Indicates significance of value at P=0.05, respectively

found between genders. Female participants shopped significantly more often than males and had higher recreation clothing purchase motivation. Certain information sources, such as friends and magazines/books, had more influence over clothing purchase decisions made by females compared to males. Certain criteria such as product variety/availability and store display carried more weight for females than males when making a store selection. When impulse and non-impulse shoppers were compared, significant differences were found in all the clothing behaviours examined in the study (*i.e.*, clothing shopping frequency, expenditure, purchase motivations, information sources, store selection criteria). Educational and marketing implications are recommended.

As shown in Table 1 out of the total sample of 120 adolescent girls, majority of girls (87.50 %) wanted to buy or were buying trendy/modern accessories (e.g.-goggles, earring, belts etc.) to enhance their physical appearance according to the current trends they observed through the media. Out of out of 60 early adolescent girls, majority of late adolescent girls (88.33%) wanted to buy or were buying trendy/modern accessories to enhance their physical appearance, followed by early adolescents (86.67%). The chi square value (0.0761 for 1 df) indicates that the both the variables- age of adolescent girl and willingness to buy trendy/modern accessories (e.g.-goggles, earring, belts etc.) to enhance their physical appearance were independent.

Cheung (2002) explained that female participants shopped significantly more often than males and had higher recreation clothing purchase motivation. Certain information sources, such as friends and magazines/books, had more influence over clothing purchase decisions made by females compared to males. Certain criteria such as product variety/availability and store display carried more weight for females than males when making a store selection. The sources of information, the rural respondents gave primary importance to advertisements through radio, followed by posters to some extent but were least affected by magazines. Urban respondents were affected maximum by television and magazines. Kaur and Kaur (2002) studied the impact of media on lifestyle of adolescents in the age group of 12-18 years of age and found that media especially television and satellite channels certainly affected the lifestyle of individuals. They tend to buy the product advertised by media, irrespective of its cost. The way of presentation mattered in case of food items whereas in case of clothing, designer label mattered.

It might still be a different source influencing at the application stage when the purchase is made. The results of the study revealed that the girls viewed T.V. advertisements with interest and found them entertaining and informative. The main reasons for liking an advertisement was the information it provided regarding the discount, special gifts attached, brands and quality of the product. The non-informative factors like celebrities, catchy slogans, visual

effects funny advertisements, good music and action were also the reasons for liking an advertisement, in order of priority. Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that T.V. advertisements play a vital role in introducing a new product in the family list. Convincing to purchase, the product and reinforcing the familiarity were rated second and third respectively. Some were of the view that the advertisement also act as a "Time saver" during shopping, as they do not have to go for an initial survey in the market. Researches have shown that for an average consumer, advertising acts as a source of information, a time saver and assurance of quality Malathi and Kumar (1989) The fashion, look style and trend are the primary motivation to buy a particular brand. Friends and T.V. advertisements are the primary source of information. Kotwal *et al.* (2008) explained that high school boys aged 16 to 19 years spent most of their money on movies, dating, entertainment, car expenses and clothing, whereas girls spent most of their money on clothing, cosmetics and fragrances. The informative factor influencing the purchase was 'brand' and the non- informative factor were 'Celebrities', 'Catchy slogans' and 'Visual effects' in the advertisements. The influence of friends/peers was the main reason (60%) for the purchase of clothing items. The girls gave a lot of importance to the views expressed by their friends and peers. Boutiques were the next influencing factor (40%) for clothing choice. Although the respondents watch the advertisements to see the brands of the product, but it did not affect their consumption pattern. Kaur and Kaur (2002) observed that television was the most important media of information regarding fashion awareness among the adolescents, while friends were the next important source of information .

### Conclusion :

Media and advertising together present a lethal combination and have become an integral part of modern society .It is the most convenient route to reach not only adult consumers but also the adolescents. Adolescents are manipulated by advertisement promise that the product will do something special for them which will transform their life. In light of results of the present study and other research reviews, it can be concluded that the adolescent girls are being influenced by media advertisements and willing to enhance their physical appearance through cosmetics, trendy cloths and accessories eg.-goggles, earring, belts etc.

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#### Authors' affiliations:

**VIDYA DAYAL**, Department of Human Development, College of Home science, C.S. Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, KANPUR (U.P.) INDIA  
E-mail:dayal\_vidya@yahoo.com

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**SUDHA MISHRA**, Anirudh Shukul Balika Mahavidyalaya, Fatehpur, BARABANKI (U.P.) INDIA  
E-mail:sureshanujoshi@gmail.com

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