



# The Physical and Mental Impact of the Advertisements on Youth

Jiahao Yang<sup>(✉)</sup>

Pasadena City College, Pasadena 91106, USA  
jyang152@go.pasadena.edu

**Abstract.** Teenagers' physical and mental health has been influenced in varied degrees with diverse orientations as a result of the advertising industry's tendency and development in recent decades to move its aim to adolescents. The psychological and physical impacts of advertising on teenagers are the subject of this research. Its findings are helpful in managing the advertising industry's growth while also directing teenagers to a healthier upbringing and imparting a healthy worldview. In this work, 20 Google articles on the physical and psychological consequences of advertising on teenagers were chosen for analysis. Advertising has been demonstrated to contribute to the erroneous values and bad impacts on teenagers, such as obesity, malnutrition, smoking, and alcohol usage, to some level.

**Keywords:** Advertising · Adolescent · Physical influence · Mental influence

## 1 Introduction

In recent years, companies have learned that marketing to children and teens may provide both short- and long-term benefits, and the activity has changed from being divisive to being a vital part of growing up. Global businesses invest billions of dollars annually to market to this crucial group of kids and teenagers, influencing their purchasing habits and fostering long-term brand loyalty [1]. The line between entertainment and advertising is also becoming more hazy as there are more outlets for reaching out to young people and marketers are using them more often. Researchers looking at how children and teenagers are affected by advertising have serious worries about the practice, particularly in respect to eating habits, family conflicts, marketing tactics, and children's susceptibility as an audience [1]. Furthermore, marketing to children is "business as usual" in the US, whereas the majority of European nations either forbid or severely limit it. The average teenager sees almost 3,000 advertisements every day across TV, the Internet, billboards, and magazines. In order to develop "brand preference" as early as possible, advertisers are increasingly focusing on newborn children. In an effort to discover fresh and creative methods to connect with kids, advertisers are turning to the Internet, schools, and even bathroom stalls. This paper discussed the current state of the field's research, the research question concerning the effects of advertising exposure on adolescents' physical and mental health, as well as how to learn more about the effects

**Table 1.** Impacts of advertisements on the youth

No. of papers	Impacts of advertisements on the youth	References
5	Physical impacts	[1–5]
5	Psychological impacts	[6–10]

of advertising exposure, how psychological development affects adolescents' responses to marketing, new media advertising issues, and research on the effects of advertising on health. The study then looks at potential avenues for further research and offers suggestions to important constituencies. The following issues can be addressed to some extent: whether young people require protection; how marketers can be more responsible when targeting children in online and social settings; and what parents and policies can do to regulate industry rules to improve children's exposure to these messages [1]. There are a number of difficulties relating to marketing and young people that demand serious study attention, including the exposure of young people to marketing messages regarding things that are detrimental to children as well as the idealized pictures and messages they encounter in advertising. The following sentences will review the present status of the study on this subject, make suggestions for more research, and provide advice to important stakeholders on children, youth, and marketing. Finally, we selected a total of 20 papers for inclusion in this paper's study by searching Google Scholar for works published between the years 2000 and the present using the keywords "advertising," "adolescent," "physical," and "psychological."

## 2 Impacts of Advertisements

This paper will analyze the impacts from physical and mental aspects. The specific classification of the papers can be seen in Table 1.

### 2.1 Physical Impacts

Teenage consumption has risen in the present and the future as a result of marketing communications and advertising exposure. Alcohol advertising both raises the possibility that young people will start drinking and increases the amount of alcohol that those who currently do drink [1]. As a result of the increased likelihood of later-life alcoholism caused by early drinking, this is particularly dangerous. Secondly, teen exposure to television advertisements for electronic cigarettes increased by more than a factor of two between 2011 and 2013, despite more than 40 years of bans on tobacco marketing on television [2]. Despite the advantages touted by the makers, research indicates that using an e-cigarette does not reduce teen smoking and could possibly increase it. As well as excessive exposure to the pictures in such marketing, many types of marketing may be harmful to kids and teenagers. For instance, research has consistently linked consumerism, exposure to advertisements, and parent-child conflict. Additionally, a meta-analysis revealed a link between negative body perceptions among women

and girls and representations of thin women in ads and other media. Due to this, many are concerned not just about the harmful impacts of selling unsafe goods, but also about how marketing exposure techniques affect young people's perceptions of themselves and their possessions.

According to research, advertising, on the other hand, promotes aggression and stereotyping among youths. Gender stereotypes are the most prevalent form of stereotype promoted by advertising. Females are depicted as sexual objects in advertisements to satisfy male sexual urges. Women's responsibilities are also shown as being restricted to the bedroom and the kitchen. Women are expected to marry, have children, and care for their families. In addition, they must be compassionate, caring, obedient, and subservient to their partners. To achieve these criteria, women must appear young, healthy, and appealing. Female teens are regarded differently at home, at school, and in society as a result of these advertising. Women's violence is often accepted in society. In many advertisements, violence is depicted as a habit and a sign of masculinity [3]. As a result, many communities are willing to accept violence while doing nothing to prevent it. When women are assumed to be inferior to men, they are debilitated and their potential is constrained. The media helps to the persistence of stereotypes by encouraging preconceptions and attitudes that reinforce stereotypes. The portrayal of women as sexual objects encourages aggression and bigotry. As a result of the media's presentation of women as sexual objects, males have lost respect for them [4]. Gender violence is also common since men are accustomed to believing they are superior to women. As a result, any disrespectful or aggressive behavior on the side of women is out of the question. Men will take all measures necessary to maintain their dominance over women. In advertising, women are shown as naked, weak, and obedient, indicating that they are inferior. Only a few guys are shown naked or servile in advertisements. Because women are considered as sexual objects in society, they are naked. Advertisements like these have an influence on the attitudes of young males toward women [5]. To satisfy their sexual desires, they learn to manipulate and exploit women. Advertising has a long-term negative impact on the personalities of young boys and girls. This is because they've been exposed to aggressive personalities and attitudes in advertising on a regular basis. Because of the negative effects of violent information in many advertising, adolescents accept violence.

The most detrimental aspects of television media for kids today are violence, consumerism, and sex. The Television and Social Behavior Study defines violence as the overt use of physical force that results in actions taken against the will of others. Violence-inducing events, which are frequently shown on television, include fights, killings, use of force, and the imposition of behavior on others by use of a variety of weapons. By the time they turn 18, youngsters in the United States have reportedly seen 200,000 acts of violence in the media. As a result, they also provide society rewards in the form of various suicides, murders, and genocides. California has also witnessed a wide range of youth violence, including twin girls who poisoned their devoted parents and set their homes on fire, illegal anti-social youth gangs who commit all kinds of crimes, and the China Youth Research Association, which claims that at least 10 million idle minors are involved in various criminal activities. Up until now, entertainment shows and TV series have been the major vehicles for the general avoidance of violence on television, but TV news has an even bigger influence. Real violence depicted on television news may have

a greater effect on children than violence in television dramas, according to a reliable study conducted jointly by the British Independent Television Commission, the BBC, the Broadcasting Standards Board, and the British Film Classification Authority. There is a misperception that children's cartoon programming is more uplifting and beneficial for kids. In reality, Western academics have long examined and noted that the amount of violence in television cartoons is far higher than that of typical adult viewing. There are several cartoon shows that utilize violence against the bad guys, that use justice-related violence to encourage violence, and that use heroic images of violence to sell merchants' violent products. There are conflicting results from research on how violence affects young people. The father of social learning theory, Albert Bandura, contends that youngsters who routinely watch violent television shows are far more likely to emulate them. Because violence on television is frequently followed by reprisal or punishment, some youngsters who have watched violent television shows are behaviorally unaffected and have more fear when acting aggressively, which curbs their aggressive inclinations [3]. According to some academics, television violence encourages teenage aggression that is cathartic and lessens aggressive impulses. The research done by William Stout, head of the U.S. Public Health Service, came to the most well-known and widely accepted conclusion that television violence did have adverse impacts. The Television and Social Behavior Research Group study from 1972, which was led by U.S. Public Health Administrator William Stout, is the most well-known of these investigations. The report has 1305 pages and 5 enormous volumes. The study came to the conclusion that viewing violent television is linked to acting aggressively in the real world, but the impacts of television violence also depend on the children watching it. Children and teenagers who watch excessively violent television frequently come to believe that violent situations reflect social reality, that using violence is the only way to settle disputes or accomplish objectives that are difficult to achieve through other means, and that using violence is the only way to solve problems. Children are susceptible to the suggestive effects of violent events, and after repeated exposure to them, they are more inclined to act violently when faced with comparable situations in real life.

## 2.2 Psychological Impacts

How psychological development effects children's attitudes to marketing is linked to a component of teenage consumer development related to their inability to perceive persuasive intentions in advertising. In recent study that goes beyond the age-stage model of cognitive development, researchers have discovered several components that have a role in boosting teens' capacity to eat. According to research, theory of mind predicts students' ability to discern sales purpose and brand social symbolism (i.e., the ability to think about what others believe and feel). Adolescents who had a strong theory of mind were also better at recognizing persuasive intent. In addition, executive functioning (a form of cognitive development that encompasses impulse control, planning, and categorization abilities) has been connected to teens' ability to perceive marketing messages. What isn't obvious is how kids move from basic consumer skills to critical thinkers capable of resisting persuasion [6]. Children are susceptible until they become skeptical due to their drive to learn from their social surroundings. The long-term development of executive functioning (which continues until adolescence) perhaps explain why this

skepticism takes so long to manifest [6]. Late adolescence should reveal a child's aptitude to respond to advertising. We may be skeptical even as adults, but we do not regularly employ our critical thinking skills.

In the current media landscape, however, marketing to teenagers is fraught with logistical challenges, as websites may change in minutes and social networks can reach commercially desirable young people in a private manner. Second, online advertising is no longer about passively receiving messages, but rather about actively engaging teenagers through advertising platforms (such as sponsored content games) and/or brand ambassadorship requests (e.g., encouraging teens to connect with friends about products). Marketers are also reaching out to minors online with little regulation and more aggressive marketing strategies [7]. Similarly, the cloud computing capabilities of the big data age enable more precise ad placement and placement in the marketplace. This significantly boosts the effectiveness of advertising, and when combined with other marketing techniques, it allows advertising to have a major impact on teens.

Advertisers have long used techniques that are more likely to influence children and teenagers, such as product placement in movies and television shows, pairings of movies and fast food restaurants, pairings of television shows with toy figures or other products, and kids' clubs associated with popular shows and celebrity endorsements [6]. Cell phones are presently being sold to children aged 6 to 12, and they have the capability of targeting specific marketing to children and preadolescents. Toy premiums are currently referenced in around 20% of fast-food restaurant advertising [8], according to reports that Coca-Cola paid Warner Bros. Studios \$150 million for the global marketing rights to Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. Some tie-in merchandise may be unavailable to children. Children's commercial protection on digital television requires an update, which will be finished by 2010 [6]. Children will soon be able to navigate websites by clicking on on-screen links while watching television programmes. Interactive games and adverts on digital television will attract children away from traditional programming, encouraging them to spend long periods of time in environments where the lines between content and advertising are blurred [7]. Advertisers will be able to acquire a wealth of information on children's viewing habits and preferences using interactive technology, allowing them to tailor their adverts accordingly. Advertisers will be able to gather a wealth of information about children's viewing habits and interests and target them appropriately utilizing interactive technologies.

The materialistic values conveyed in the ads are now increasingly leading children to focus on tangible material products, teaching them a seemingly easy and fun way of life, that all difficulties, worries and problems can be solved by purchasing certain goods, and that once they own certain products, they are equivalent to having a prestigious status, and so on. The misleading nature of these advertisements encourages young people to blindly compare and compete with each other to chase after famous brands, as if all the inner wine of life is confined to the advertised goods, and whoever can enjoy and possess more is truly successful.

Some advertisements have such problems: vulgarity, beauty tricks and rubbish. For example, a lot of cosmetic lotion advertisements use the same half-naked beauty or legs, while the same old, human desire like fire inciting language, while the explicit and implicit display of sexual action. Some advertisements do not take into account

the physiological characteristics of adolescents, misleading adolescents to early sexual maturity [9]. For example, a certain instant noodle advertisement: the picture is a bowl of instant noodles, a beautiful woman, the advertising words are: “just waiting for you to soak” [10]. Another example is a brand of soda cookies TV commercials, eating cookies metaphorically kissing image, these ads seem to have a novelty, but too much exposure to this information, but also easy to make the adolescent sex strange, easy to get into the wrong, early love, adolescent sexual behavior is not yet mature treatment of feelings of adolescents competing to imitate, for the development of adolescents there are negative effects.

### 3 Conclusion

In the United States, advertising is definitely a “big industry,” and it has a significant impact on young people. The First Amendment does not protect commercial speech in the same manner that it does free speech. If there is a significant risk to public health, advertising may be restricted or even forbidden. Commercials for cigarettes and alcohol appear to fall into this category, however junk food advertisements may be easily regulated. The straightforward and non-controversial solution is to educate children and teens about the effects of advertising-media literacy. There have been developed curricula to teach young people how to be critical viewers of all forms of media, including advertising. The negative effects of media, such as cigarette, alcohol, and food ads, appear to be mitigated by media education. It is also true, however, that exposing teenagers to alcohol advertising may have harmful consequences. Advertising for alcohol increases the likelihood of youth starting to drink and increases the amount of alcohol consumed by those who already do. This is especially problematic because early drinking increases the risk of developing alcoholism later in life. However, using e-cigarettes does not prevent or lessen the smoking of traditional cigarettes among minors. Furthermore, simply being aware of advertising does not ensure that children will react to it in a thoughtful and critical manner. Due to the types of appeals used and children’s growing cognitive skills, young people may not be motivated or able to evaluate advertising and make informed purchase decisions. As a result, further research is needed to discover how successful educational interventions are, as well as what individual differences are typical among conscious children and teenagers.

The teenage consumers are still in the immature stage psychologically and physically, and one of the most significant characteristics of their way of thinking and behavior is imitation. The purpose of advertising is to create new desires, adjust and guide existing desires. TV commercials are more intuitive and dynamic, with realistic performances, superb animation design, exaggerated narration and fantastic ideas to show the products in front of teenagers’ eyes. As a result, the content of TV commercials has become an object of imitation for teenagers. Bad TV commercials largely influence their social views and values, and have a negative impact on the growth of adolescents.

Words have a unique mystery and charm, which is even more reflected in the fancy TV advertising world, where many TV commercials’ advertising slogans like or are accustomed to working on words. For a while, the use of borrowed idioms, poems, sayings as advertising language in TV commercials are widely used, and become popular.

Although this technique makes the advertising slogans meaningful and long, young people will be able to speak out of turn and treat them as a kind of alternative toys, and the misleading effect on them cannot be ignored.

The different articles in previous research have progressed relatively closely, each standing in a similar light in terms of longitudinal and cross-sectional analysis of the impact caused by the advertising industry, with the focus distributed between the physical and mental health aspects of adolescents and the perspective of business operations, with the focus distributed between the physical and mental health aspects of adolescents and the perspective of business operations. Because most researchers use a qualitative approach to their research, few use a quantitative strategy to forecast and generalize the theoretical framework obtained from quantitative research, current studies may be confined to the populations investigated in this study. Furthermore, several proposals have been made based on gaps in the present study literature. To begin, an interdisciplinary content analysis might be undertaken to measure and track the marketing messages that kids are exposed to on mobile and social media platforms. Second, a longitudinal study of how adolescents process marketing messages across media platforms and across age groups was conducted, with particular attention to the following: understanding the link between persuasive intent understanding and message perception and acceptance using direct and indirect measures, and identifying possible developmental and ecological factors modera development. Finally, based on the results of the first two recommendations, the most effective ways to improve the acceptance of health messages and to enhance the protection of harmful marketing messages are identified.

## References

1. Lapierre, M. A., Fleming-Milici, F., Rozendaal, E., McAlister, A. R., & Castonguay, J. (2017). The effect of advertising on children and adolescents. *Pediatrics*, *140*(Supplement\_2), S152–S156. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-1758V>
2. Strasburger, V. C. (2001). Children and TV advertising: Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*, *22*, 185–187.
3. Kunkel, D. (2001). Children and television advertising. In D. G. Singer & J. L. Singer (Eds.), *Handbook of Children and the Media* (pp. 375–393). Sage.
4. Comstock, G., & Scharrer, E. (1999). *Television: What's on, who's watching, and what it means*. Academic Press.
5. Sargent, J. D., Tickle, J. J., Beach, M. L., Dalton, M. A., Ahrens, M. B., & Heatherton, T. F. (2001). Brand appearances in contemporary cinema films and contribution to global marketing of cigarettes. *LANCET*, *357*, 29–32.
6. Committee on Communications; Children. (2006). Adolescents, and advertising. *Pediatrics*, *118*, 2563–2569. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2006-2698>
7. van Reijmersdal, E. A., Rozendaal, E., Smink, N., van Noort, G., & Buijzen, M. (2017). Processes and effects of targeted online advertising among children. *International Journal of Advertising* *36*, 396–414. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2016.1196904>
8. Cornish, L. S. (2014). Mum, can I play on the internet? *International Journal of Advertising*, *33*, 437–473. <https://doi.org/10.2501/IJA-33-3-437-473>

9. Dahl, S., Eagle, L., & Carlos, B. (2009). Analyzing advergames: Active diversions or actually deception. An exploratory study of online advergames content. *Young Consumers*, 10, 46–59.
10. Owen, L., Lewis, C., Auty, S., & Buijzen, M. (2013). Is children’s understanding of nontraditional advertising comparable to their understanding of television advertising? *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 32, 195–206. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.09.003>

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

