

The Impact of Television Food Advertisements on Children, with Special Reference to the Plantation Community in Badulla District

H.M.W.M. Herath

Department of Management Sciences, Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka

Many studies have been conducted on the impact of advertisements on children, and it has been accepted that the television advertisements make the biggest impact on children. Children spend many hours watching television and they are bombarded with advertisements daily. Hence, the parents should be conscious about the messages the advertisements bring to their children. This study aims at investigating the impact of advertisements on children in the plantation community in Badulla district. Using the convenient sample method, 50 children (20 males and 30 females) in age between 4 to 6 years were selected for the survey. The survey was conducted in an estate located in Passara area in the Badulla district, where socio-economic and health indicators were very low compared to other districts of the island. A self-constructed questionnaire was used to collect data and interviews were held with the children and their parents in order to collect personal qualitative data. Close observation was also used as a qualitative data collection method. To analyze data, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 17 was used. It was found that the food advertisements have a statistically significant impact on children's behavior. Further, it revealed that when children watch more television they are likely to request unhealthier junk foods than the proper healthy meals. Further, it found that the uneducated parents are inclined to buy the food demanded by the children rather than giving them healthy and balanced meals. The majority of the children showed that their attitude of food advertisements were very positive and that they rely on the information given by the advertisements.

Keywords: Advertisements, Children, Plantation Community, Healthy meals