

## IMPACTS OF TV CHILD FOODS ADVERTISING IN INTERLINKING THE PARENTS AND CHILDREN'S BUYING BEHAVIORS WITH SELLERS SELLING MOTIVATION

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### **Abstract**

The study examines the impact of TV child foods advertising on the buying and selling behaviors, the way parents and their children buy child food products from sellers, likewise, sellers keep storing and selling these products to parents and their children again. The study reveals the factors behind the parent-child-sellers' dependency on TV advertising in buying child food products. The study also shows a very interesting result that the flow of parents and children's buying behaviors smoothly impacts sellers, who usually give priority to parents and children firstly from own their choice, then to the preference of children's demand and afterward to the parent's demand. In this way, this study finds a complete buying chain that interlinks children parents, and sellers together in creating false needs and demands in buying and selling child food products. The study also finds some behavioral changes (anger, pressure) among children while deciding on buying foods.

**Keywords:** Advertising, Buying behavior, TV, Child-foods

### **1. Introduction:**

Advertisement is considered a very potent power that can bring a very important change in people's life. Advertisement is the presentation and extension of ideas, products, and services where several people take initiatives through the exchange of money. Advertisement has introduced its journey in Bangladesh after the expansion of radio and television in 1980. At that time advertisements are being produced on the theme of melodrama, emotion, and animation. In the modern advertisement, it is not confined to only informing others but the shield of disseminating appliance. Advertisement is explained as commercial realism whereas advertisement presented anything believing others as it exists in reality but deceiving while creating a false reality in the mind of every people. McGinnis et al. (2006) state that there is a new theme of advertising which are included targeting children in 1950. At that time, Advertisers produces some mentionable and popular advertisements; Howdy Doody, the Mickey Mouse Club, and Roy Rogers, etc. There are strong messages in these advertisements and producers

circulated through them to people. Eventually, media starts different types of programs on children which inspires producers to get the way to increase their production of children advertisement (McGinnis et al., 2006, p.180). In 1960, the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) formulates some rules on the advertisement of kid's toy product broadcasting. At the same time, some researchers and critics discuss the impact of television advertisements on children. But this impact and result of the research don't get attention in the United States before 1970 nationally (Wimmer & Dominick, 1983, p. 394).

In the time of globalization media has become a powerful way of communication. All organization in this world depends on this media for propaganda or disseminating their ideas, motives, services, and products. Media makes the way more convenient for advertisement. With the help of advertisement production strategy and mechanism advancement, any kind of luxury product has become the necessary thing through creating false needs. Advertisers are trying to raise their product consumption in the name of the brand. The brand itself advertises the value of products with some distinction. Satellite channels influence production and consummation through the cultural exchange among countries in the world. Bangladesh first introduced a satellite channel in 1995. With the advantages of satellite Bangladeshi companies and foreign companies took shelter of advertisement, especially of food products for children. This research finds the buying behaviors of the consumers including children, family members, and sellers as well.

### **1.2 Objectives of the study**

This study has conducted based on a survey of selected consumers and assessments of some selected popular advertisements on child foods broadcasted in Bangladeshi TV channels. This study follows some specific objectives. These are:

1. To identify the factors which lead parents, children, and sellers to buy and sell child food products more than usual.
2. To assess if TV advertisements on child foods product play any role in changing children's behavior.
3. And to find out if child foods' TV advertisements influence on creating a fake needful consumer relationship among sellers, parents, and children

## **2. Definition and Literature review**

### **Definition of terms**

**2.1.1 Child:** According to UNICEF, in Bangladesh child is a person who is below the age of 18 (UNICEF, 1989). The term 'child' is defined in three ways. 1. Infant: below 5 years, 2. Youngster/child: Age of 6-10 years 2. Adolescent: Age of 11-14 years children (male and female). As per constitutional law, any person below the age of 16 years is considered as a child but another picture of defining age for children is all individuals of fewer than 18 ages in National Children Policy 2011 (Salam & Hossain, 2012).

**2.1.2 Child Food:** Besides infant foods, all foods which are produced and made for 4 months infants to 2 years age child are called child foods. According to WHO, UNICEF and other related organizations, all types of child foods are harmful to less than 6 months aged child (WHO). In this study, child food refers to food products that are provided to children of ages 2 to 11 years as additional food.

**2.1.3 Advertisement:** Advertisement is considered as a marketing tool communication that employs an openly sponsored, non-personal message to promote or sell a product, service, or idea (Stanton, 1984). Earlier these marketing tools include newspaper, radio, television advertisements for publicity with the message, all are these processes called advertising. Advertising is 'a paid, mediated, the form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the reader to take some action, now or in the future' (Richards, Daugherty & Logan, 2015, p. 3). In this advanced world, Advertisers bring advertising into online marketing platforms naming as Internet advertising, digital advertising or web advertising, etc. Advertisement is different from public relations in that way when advertisers pay and take control over the message. Advertisement spreads a non-personal message which differs from the personal message that is not directed to a particular individual personal selling.

## **2.2 Literature review**

There are a lot of applied researches on children whereas some advertisements are shown to understand their comprehensibility and impression about child foods. Hoffmann (2019) discusses a broad spectrum of advertising which impacts a child, with a particular emphasis on television advertising. Age is considered very important for advertising the industry as it affects children from the first years of their lives. 'The advertising industry is interested in children for three main reasons: firstly, children are so-called the primary market, they themselves do shopping, and secondly, they constitute the so-called influence market, and thus affect others (especially parents) to make a purchase, and finally, thirdly, they constitute the future market, which in practice means that children will grow up someday and then they will be able to make even bigger purchases' (Nefat, Dujmović, 2012; Starosta, 2012, cited in Hoffmann, 2019p.118-19). Bamfo et al. (2019) have conducted their study on assessing the effect of television advertising on children's purchasing behavior in Ghana. The study reveals that television advertisement plays an important role to influence children's buying behavior, their satisfaction, and brand preference (Bamfo et al. 2019, p. 11). Along with looking out for reliable, timely, and relevant information about the product in television advertisement, children make their purchase decision also can pester their parents to buy the product for them (Bamfo et al. 2019, p. 9)

This is also important to mention that at present shopping culture is entering to the online advertising sphere, that's why people's behavior also get changes in buying foods or anything like that. In research, Priya (2019) finds out that internet advertising has significant relationship with purchase decision of the consumers whereas half of her

respondents were influenced by internet advertising which modified their purchase decision. Internet advertising also can play a significant ingredient in predicting consumer behavior. As for this, she recommends that the quality of ads should be full of variety and reality, attractive and beneficial, no sensationalism in the advertisement because it keeps great impressing on the consumer's head (Priya, 2019, p. 51). Divakar & Raju (2016) have found in research that parents especially from rural areas are more concerned than urban area about the adverse impact of misleading, full of trickiness, and the selling motives of TV advertising which can mislead children pestering them to buy unwanted food products. As children, whose ages of 6-9 years, are not as grown people their minds can't understand the selling motives of advertisements that also can bring disappointment and sometimes quarrel or conflict with parents. This misunderstanding can bring health resulting in all types of future problems and also obesity (Divakar & Raju, 2016, p. 19-27). Ng et al. (2015) have observed a parallel scenario between the food products recognized by children with exposure rates for non-core food advertisements on Malaysian TV channels while most of the children's recognition of non-core foods is partially mediated by the TV viewing duration. Observation shows that Malaysian school children are more attracted to unhealthy TV advertisements than healthier core food advertisements. The study also reveals that children's perception of advertised non-core foods as favorite advertisements reduced as they become older (Ng et al., 2015, p. 9-12).

Iyiola & Dirisu (2014) has shown that children's advertisements have a great impact on children, and consciously or unconsciously children can easily affect the family's purchase behavior for the products seen advertised on TV. The analysis and results of this study also reveal a correlation between children and family purchasing behavior. Researcher state, 'advertisement wins the attention and confidence of the largest population of people (children) with only profit in mind and not the effect it has on them, commercials and advertisements alike are not easily differentiated from television shows by children, buyers and consumers can be the same but according to this research work, the buyers are mostly parents while their children are the consumers' (Iyiola & Dirisu, 2014, p. 15). Costa et al. (2012) also advocate on the issue of TV advertisements, children eating behavior and nutritional status of children and adolescents in studies. Researchers have tried to evaluate the influence of TV advertisements on children's food habits and nutrition. This cross-sectional research is conducted on 116 students in a private school in Brazil. A study finds that more tendency of watching TV can lessen the fruit habits of children in a day and also it increases children's Body Mass Index (Costa et al., 2012). Similar research also has been done by Carsan & Janson (2012) on the mediating effects of dietary habits on the relationship between Television viewing and Body Mass Index among youth. This study also cites that the children who watch TV more than other children have more BMI. But there is no relationship between TV and BMI when children eat something at the time of

watching TV and when they eat unhealthy foods. Watching TV and eating something near in hand at a time can increase obesity also (Carson & Janson, 2012). The same thing Harris et al., (2009) finds in their research that during watching TV advertisements children and adults both eat anything healthy or unhealthy food than as a usual time. But this tendency is not related to children's or adult's hunger (Harris-Hargh & Brownell, 2009).

However, Totu et al. (2013) show a significant correlation between advertisements and food choice. The study also reveals that TV advertising promotes obesity through interesting, amusing, and entertaining presentations, which allure the children (Totu et al., 2013, p.86-88).

Similar research was done by Calvert (2008) where he advocates that advertisement has commercial motives of influencing children. But after analyzing those motives based on child understanding and their ages, he finds that before age of 8, children think of child food advertisements to help them in making decisions. They really can't understand advertisement is made by producer only for selling or creating temptation for specific foods (Calvert, 2004, p. 214). Age matters but sometimes social barriers force children to change their behavior from childhood in the process of socialization. Schramm et al. (1961) stated in their study that every people have to face different types of social problems in their puberty. For example, children are forced to abide by their parents. In this process, they learn to adapt and learn to be part of a peer group in school or infield. This peer group becomes more important for children when they grow up in teenage age and get the freedom of free-thinking (Schramm et al., 1961, p. 118). An important finding is discussed by McGinnis et al. (2006) which reveal that earlier children's choices are likely shaped by parents and elders while buying any child food but now parents start giving priority to children's decision on buying child foods. Children also get the freedom to buy child foods directly. Foods and drinks are the most preferable choice for children especially Candy and soft drinks (McGinnis et al., 2006, p.5). Díaz-Ramirez et al. (2013) also advocate the same thing in a study about the effect of the TV Food Advertisements exposure on mother and children's foods consumption. All food advertisements of two TV channels are recorded and evaluated for this research. About 365 parents and their children are participants in this research. There is a positive relationship found in research that TV advertisements on foods impact parents and their children's decision on selecting food habits (Díaz-Ramirez et al., 2013, p. 86-88). This condition is confirmed by research, as it turns out that as many as 80% of children want an advertised product and 68% encourage parents to buy it. (Litwińska, 2008, cited in Hoffmann, 2019, p.118-19)

Aktas (2006) also discusses the effects of TV food advertisements and children's food purchasing requests in his study. According to the research, he finds a direct relationship between children's food habits and their food selection which resulted in obesity, diabetics, cancer, high blood pressure, and heart diseases. Another finding of

this study is that TV advertisements directly affect the tendency of children's food habits and their food selection as well. But the main objectives of this study were to find out the relationship between the eating habits of children during watching TV and the advertisement shown on TV and to find out if the children feel interested in buying food after watching TV advertisements. Results of the study also revealed that the majority of advertisements on TV are about fat and sugar foods and children always try to impose their indulgence on their parents buying unhealthy child foods (Aktas, 2006, p. 138-145). Verma & Kapoor (2004) have studied the possible effects of television advertising on children's buying response from their early childhood to early adolescence and the role of parent-child interaction in this process. The study has revealed that parents give priority to children at the first stage of their lives but the priority decreases in the time of increasing their ages. The study finds, 'The amount of parent-child interaction was determined by four variables: (a) the number of restrictions that parents imposed on their children's TV viewing; (b) deciding which program their children should watch on TV; (c) their co-viewing, and (d) explaining the intents and contents of TV advertisements and teaching children about what is real and what is created by the media (Verma & Kapoor, 2004, p. 59). The study also finds that co-viewing and explaining of parents' about the intents and contents of TV advertisements process to children contribute significantly towards the children being influenced by the various audio-visual techniques of such advertisements too (Verma & Kapoor, 2004, p. 60) Wilcox et al. (2004) cited a very interesting explanation in the study. According to the explanation, children can be influenced by any advertisement (on child food) watching only once on TV. But spending more time watching advertisements again and again, TV can impact children's buying decisions more or less. From analyzing all types of researches in this matter, a very mentionable fact is that the selection process of child food can influence on child's buying indulgence and thus, these kinds of indulgence impact on parents buying decision. An interesting fact is proved that parents reject child's indulgence for specific child food when they go in contradiction with their child (Wilcox et al., 2004, p. 6). Utter et al. (2006) work on television viewing and commonly advertised food consumption among New Zealand children and young adolescents. Like other research, this study is conducted for searching any relationship between the time children passing on watching TV and if there any impact of this activity on their food habits. This study finds that watching TV for a long time impacts increasing children's obesity and weight. The children who watch TV more than other children like to choose foods which are shown on TV advertisement such as, soft drinks, juice, sugar foods, fast foods (Utter et al., 2006). But is very alarming that some children suffer from tuberculosis, who receive the temptation of eating soft drinks and ready foods. Ghimire & Rao (2013) found the result those children who were likely to pass their leisure time watching TV are haunted by lots of advertisements and influenced with the messages of those advertisements which can influence on selecting child foods and children's food

habits. They also suggested that there should be TV advertisements on the healthy and immune system, which can develop children's health effectively (Ghimire& Rao, 2013, p. 200-266). ARNAS (2006) has analyzed television advertisements contents and has conducted to examine children's food consumption while watching television and their purchasing requests. The study finds that children consume rich fat and sugar food while watching television. It is also observed that the foods which are requested the most by children during shopping are found more in the advertisements (ARNAS, 2006, p. 143)

All researches discussed above are on children's food, their nutrition, buying food habits of children or parents. But there's some research on alternative child foods and the tendency of parents of giving their children alternative child foods. Zahid (2007) also researches to know the impact of cultural globalization on the Upper-Class Youth in Dhaka City. This study also discusses how young people get access to this verities culture through media and how they use those cultures at a time. Respondents of this study showed a preference for western foods more than indigenous foods, western dress, music, and movies as well as were likely to be closed with their peer groups in school and colleges than their family members (Zahid, 2007). Similarly, Khan (2009) remarks from his survey on young people to know the media imperialism and its effects that foreign TV entertainment programs are changing the minds and beliefs of the youth by influencing Pakistani independent channels (Khan, 2009).

### **2.3 Theoretical framework**

This research is framed with cultivation theory which is proposed and developed by George Gerbner (1960) and others later. According to the theory, two worlds exist. One is the practical world and the other is the Television world. The researcher thinks that some people, who are heavy viewers of TV, believe what TV shows actually. On the other hand, the people who are light viewers are less affected by TV than the heavy viewer. So, exactly the people who watch television more are likely to be influenced by television messages more. 'Cultivation is a socio-cultural theory regarding the role of television in shaping viewers' perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and values' (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, 182-190). The people who are considered as the heavy viewer of television, perception of the real world becomes more fictional to them gradually. Shrum (2017) points out 'As cultivation is a socio-cultural theory, the three components—media institutions, message production, and message effects on viewers—are inextricably intertwined' (Shrum, 2017, p. 1). Through the fictional messages television hunts viewers and makes them believe in the fictional world. Griffin (2012) "There was a positive relationship between childhood television viewing levels and the social reality beliefs in young adulthood (Griffin, 2012). Most of the children in Bangladesh are growing watching TV, using the internet, or playing games. They pass their most of time with the media. So, media can easily influence children's practical life as well as

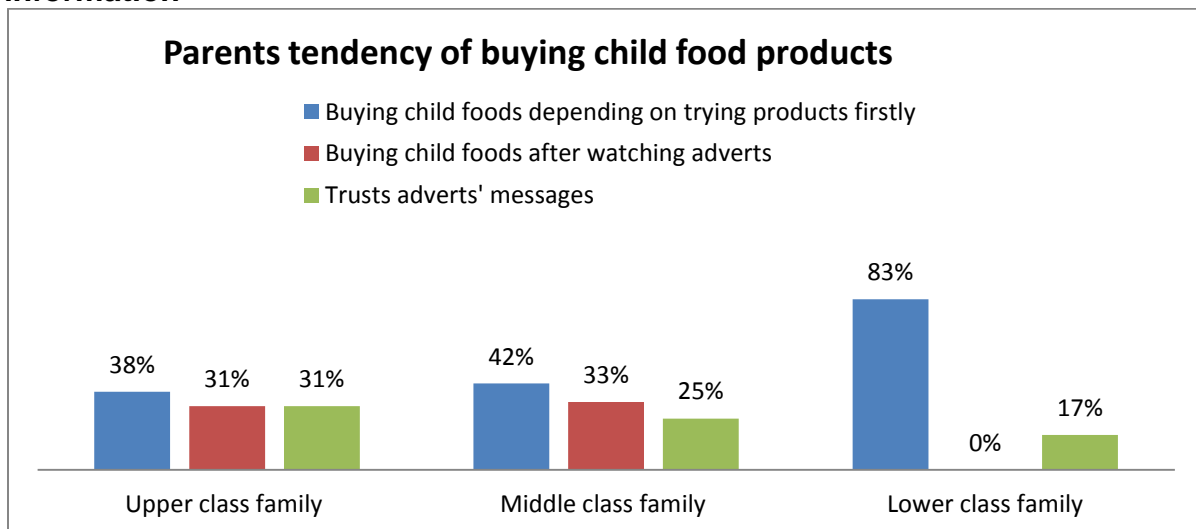
formatting his/her values, belief, way of living, thinking, etc. Thus, TV can impact their behavior of choosing foods and buying foods as well. In this theory, buying behavior of parents and sellers is being analyzed also.

### 3 Research Methodology

This research has followed a survey on 45 consumers and buyers of most populated area in Bangladesh and center city Dhaka region (Mirpur-14). Respondents are 15 parents and 15 children (2-11 years old) from 15 families respectively (5 from lower-income family, 5 from middle income and 5 from high-income family) and 15 sellers who sell child foods as well. Along with the survey, also this study has analyzed some popular child food products content in recent time; these are Shezan Juice, Pran Juice, Maggi Noodles, Horlicks, Dano Powder Milk, Chips, Maggi Soup, Tiffin Cake, Chips and Mr. Noodles, etc have been taken as the sample baby.

## 4. Data presentation and analysis

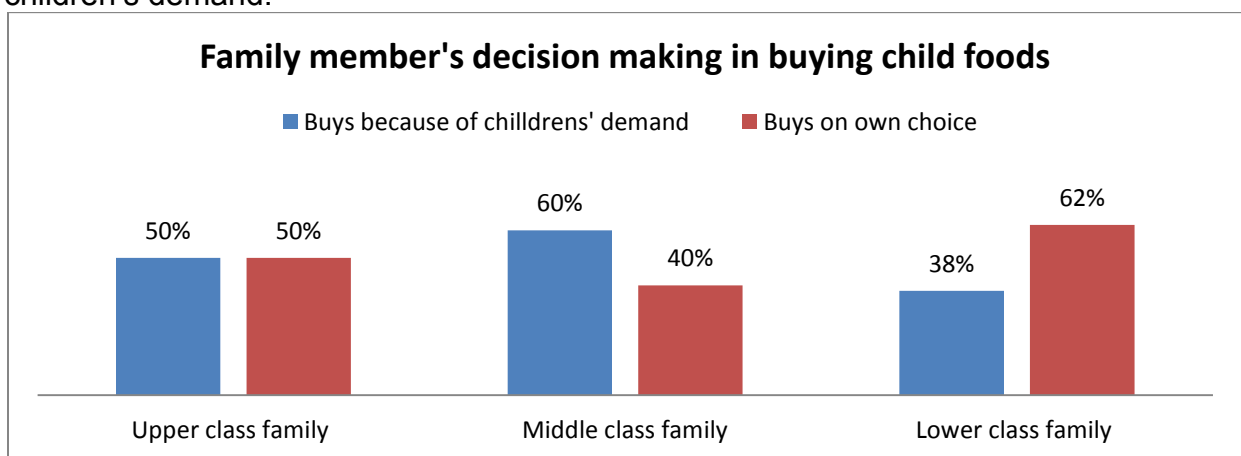
### 4.1 Parents tendency of buying child food products: According to the parents' information



In this study, all of the family members show some reasonable factors behind buying child foods. Results show that, among the upper-class families, 38% of parents consider buying child food products after trying themselves but sometimes they rely on sellers' advice to make this decision also. Equal percentages (31%) are shown in the reasons families trust adverts' messages and buy them after watching ads. Among the middle-class families, 42% of parents consider buying child food products after trying themselves firstly while 25% of parents trust adverts' messages and 33% of them buy after watching ads. There is a huge fluctuation of choice among the lower class families found that 83% parents consider buying child food products after trying themselves



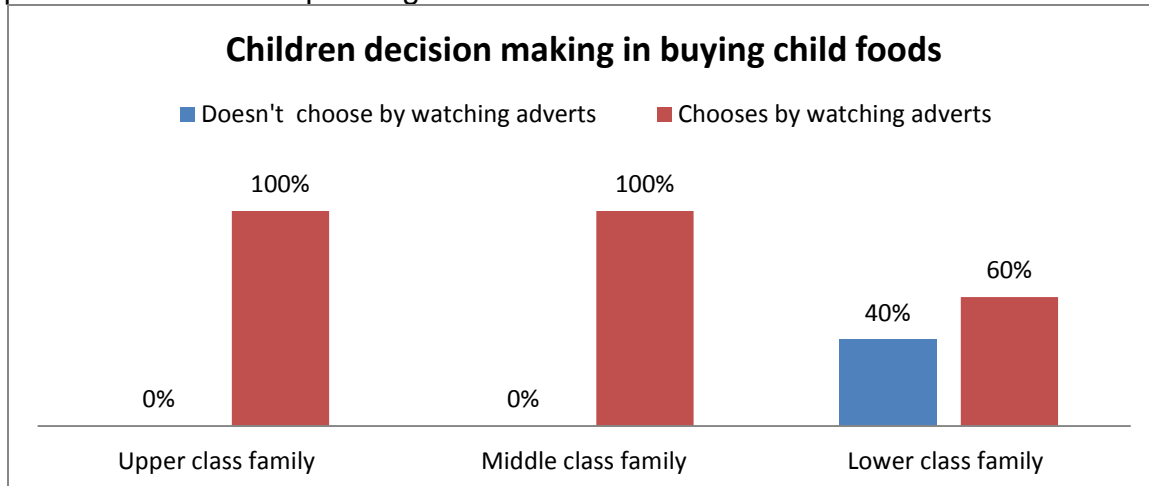
firstly while 17% families more or less trust adverts' messages. But none of them buys child food after watching ads or relying on the sellers' suggestions. Two reasons have been found behind parents' decision-making of buying child foods. According to the survey, 60% of the middle-class family members buy the products because of their children's demand and 40% of them buy depending on their own choice. But the tendency of buying child foods among upper-class family members depends equally on owns choice and their children's demand in one. On the other hand, 62% of parents of the lower class families buy child food products mainly depending on their own choice and decisions but 38% of them are forced to buy these products because of their children's demand.



#### 4.2 Children decision making in buying child foods: According to the children's information

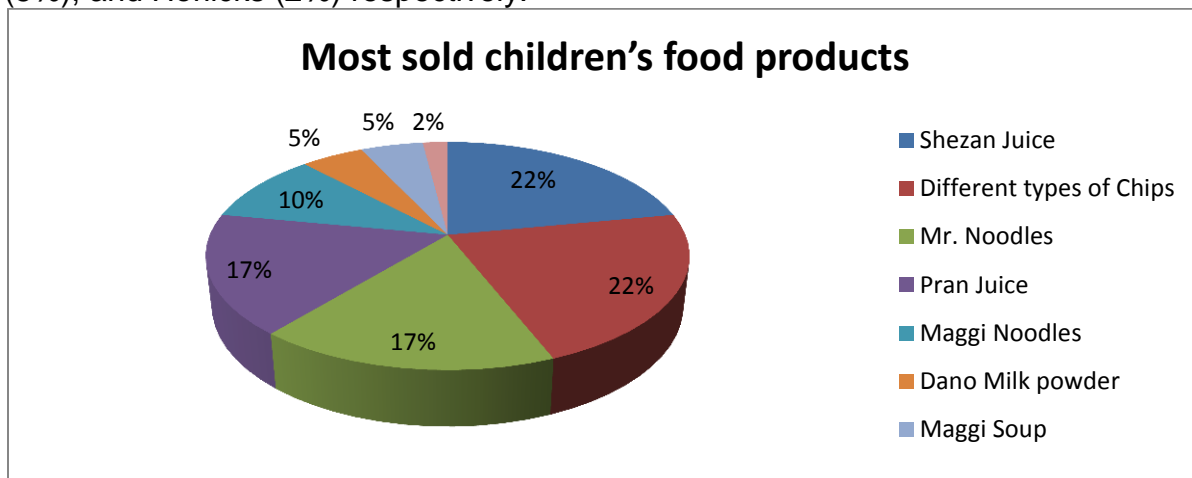
The study finds that all of the children from upper and middle-class families choose products after watching child products. On the other hand, children from lower-class families (60%) buy child food products after watching advertisement and 40% buy food

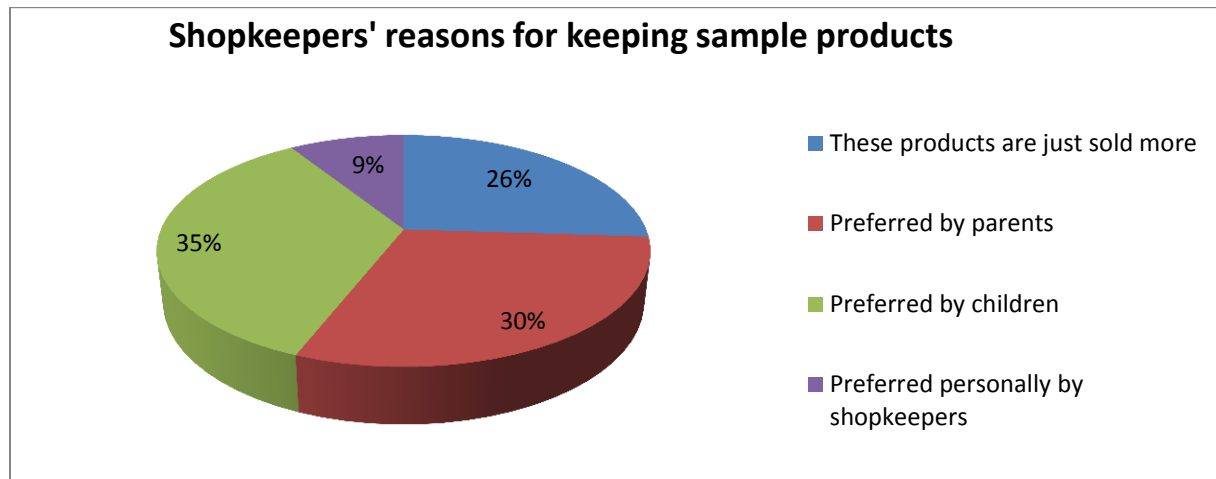
products depending on their own choice.



#### 4.3 Shopkeepers' reasons for keeping sample products: According to the sellers' information

Analysis shows that the most sold children's food products are Shezan Juice (22%) and different types of chips (22%). The next in line is Mr. Noodles (17%) and Pran Juice (17%). Then come, Maggi, Noodles (10%), Dano Milk Powder (5%) and Maggi Soup (5%), and Horlicks (2%) respectively.





This study shows that all sellers keep the (selected) food items at their stores. When asked, they revealed several reasons for keeping those items. Most importantly all of the sellers keep the sample products at their shops because of the children's demand (35%) mostly but also giving preference of the parents (30%) secondly. Besides, sellers keep products that are being sold more (26%) comparatively. For these reasons, sellers' own preference comes last (9%). But another thing is to mention that some agents of production companies encourage the sellers to keep these foods as per supply-demand and so they become influenced by the company representatives' explanations of the benefits of these products.

To identify whether television advertisements create false needs, it has been found that, the majority (80%) of the sellers do not watch ads. So, advertisements do not impose any influence over their decisions to keep those child foods. Children's demands and parents' preferences are of more value to them. And rests (20%) of the sellers keep items after watching adverts.

#### **4.4 Children's behavioral changes over the demand for buying child foods**

During semi-close-ended interviews, the result shows that 30% of children of these families indicated some kind of behavioral change. All the five children of the upper-class families remarked that they are getting influenced by watching TV adverts and like eating outside. They specifically mentioned some foods, chips, juices, noodles, Horlicks, and tiffin cake are popular among them. Most of the children of upper-class families tend to ask their parents again and again for these food products and sometimes force their parents to buy them those products. Parents of these families claim that they face some behavioral changes in their children when they deny fulfilling their demands. Parents of the rest of the upper-class families did not see any behavioral change among the children with the parents' subsequent refusal of meeting their demands. Most of the parents of middle-class families also mentioned not seeing any particular behavioral

change or change in parent-child relationship for such refusals. Five children of middle-class families feel the need of buying child food products when they watch TV ads but not like that they must have to buy these. On the contrary, the tendency of these changes is more visible among lower-class families. Among the lower class families, results show a bit different from upper and lower family whereas children rarely watch television. They usually do express their wish of buying child food products to their parents. Because they do this to want to taste these foods only but not giving pressure to their parents to buy these foods. Sometimes their wish ends with anger and agitation but does not affect the parent-child relationship.

## **5 Discussions and conclusion**

The primary research question was 'Is there any influence of TV child food products advertising on parents, children, and sellers buying and selling behavior?' The answer to this question has found as Advertisements of child food products telecast in Bangladesh TV channels motivate children to buy all those products. After viewing the adverts, children ask their parents to buy those products. Most of the time, parents tend to buy these child foods because of being forced by children's demands. However, sometimes they also buy those on their own. Advertisements although do not influence grown-ups directly, they stimulate the decisions of the children, which is one of the big reasons that force the parents to buy the sample products. The first collaborating question of the study was 'Do child foods' TV advertisements influence on creating a fake needful consumer relationship among sellers, parents, and children?' Surveys and interviews reveal that sellers and parents do not watch advertisements that much. Even when parents do among upper, middle, and lower-class families, on average, most of the parents about 54% choose and buy child foods depending on the satisfaction of first using, 21% of parents buy child foods after directly influenced by TV ads but 24% parents buy after keeping trust on these foods. On the other hand, 87% of the children trust the messages of TV ads and are inclined by them to buy the respective products. So, maintaining the parents' and children's buying flow smoothly, sellers usually give priority to them firstly from their own choice. As most sellers around 80% don't watch TV ads, they give their preference to their consumers first. Among all Sellers, 35% of them give preference to children demand and 30% of them give preference parents demand. Thus a false need and demand build up among sellers. This kind of false needs and demands create irrespective of the product's benefits and their quality. So, the study proves a complete buying chain that interlinked parents, children, and sellers together. Most of the time parents do not have any other choice but to buy these items. And because of the false needs of children and their parents, sellers keep these child foods at their stores. So it can be said that these are all obvious fabricated needs and demand for child foods. So, the study proves a complete buying chain that interlinked children parents, and sellers together.

The second collaborating question of this research was 'Do parents willingly choose the child foods, or are they forced?' In this case, the survey says that among all upper-middle and low-class families, 49% of parents choose child food items depending on their children's preferences and 51% of them depend on their own choice. And the third collaborating question of this research was 'Do TV advertisements play any part in changing children's behavior?' The answer to this question can be explained as TV advertisements create false needs among children. As a result, 30% of children of these families indicated some kind of behavioral change.

The fourth and final collaborating research question was 'At what extent sellers, parents, and children rely on TV advertisements of child foods products?' Research reveals that 80% of sellers don't watch television child foods ads. Most of them only rely on parents' and children's choices. Like as more than half of 54% parents choose foods only after using firstly don't trust ads' messages while 87% children trust on TV ads. So, this picture shows the variety of dependency on TV ads among parents, children, and sellers. Finally, all the collaborating questions have met the main question's answer and all the objectives simultaneously. The study also demands and opens new doors to research in this field.

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