

Food Marketing and its Impact on Adolescents' Food Choices

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Abstract

Background : Now-a-days, adolescents and children are considered as a substantial target market by the food industry. This makes marketers to target children and adolescents by designing customized food advertising and marketing campaigns.

Purpose : This empirical study scrutinized the impact of food marketing techniques on the food choices of adolescents.

Methodology : A primary survey was conducted among 560 adolescents in the age group of 10 – 18 years and their parents using a structured questionnaire to understand the impact of various food marketing techniques on the food choices of the adolescents. To understand the impact of marketing techniques on the food choices of the adolescents, I used the multiple linear regression technique.

Findings : The findings of this study clearly showed that repetition of the message, brand image, celebrity endorsements, premiums, product placements, viral marketing, integrated marketing strategies, attention getting products had a significant impact on the adolescents' food choices. The findings from the perception study of the parents showed that food marketing targeted at adolescents affected their food choices and influenced their health due to unhealthy food choices, making them a vulnerable consumer.

Research Limitations : This research was conducted in the city of Pune in the state of Maharashtra. This study was specifically limited to the food marketing techniques targeted at adolescents. To increase the validity and reliability of this study, it can be tested in other cities of India.

Practical / Managerial Implications : This study made both academic and practical benefactions. Academically, it added value to the current literature on food marketing techniques targeted at adolescents. It also helped marketers to understand the impact of food marketing on adolescents' food choices.

Originality/Value : This study tried to connect food marketing and adolescent food choice behavior.

Keywords : food marketing techniques, adolescents, food choice, parent perception, multiple linear regression analysis

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Food marketing and advertising to children is a critical issue as children play a vital element in influencing the food choices of family. The rising spending power of adolescents and their influence in the purchasing decision in any family along with the fact that they are prospective future adult consumers make them extremely enticing and attractive to food marketers. Right from the time that they are infants, a variety of marketing techniques along with advertising channels are used to connect to the adolescents to cultivate brand building of the food products which influence their food choices and purchase behavior. A variety of food marketing techniques which include marketing in school, kids club, products with brands and logos, product placement, advertising on television, adolescent targeted promotion, and Internet affect their food choices (Gunter,

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2016 ; Harris, Bargh, & Brownell, 2009 ; Story & French, 2004). There is a very high content of calories, sugar, and fat in most of the foods marketed to the adolescents, which are incongruent with the national dietary rules and regulations. Food marketing techniques have come under fire as they are targeting children who are a vulnerable market segment and there is a much broader controversy about this topic lurking in the society. As adolescents are vulnerable, the debate is always on the aptness of the marketing strategies used to influence adolescents (Austin, Melly, Sanchez, Patel, Stephen, Buka, & Gortmaker, 2005). Food marketers are always criticized for targeting children through advertisements on prime-time television and showing promotional characters, which influence children (Dalmeny, Hanna, & Lobstein, 2003; Kraak, Gootman, & McGinnis, 2006).

Literature Review

Multiple marketing techniques are used to draw the attention of the adolescents to promote brand building and influence the purchase behavior of food products. Even though the various types of food products advertised to the adolescents have not changed much, but the buying capacity of the adolescents has significantly improved with time (McGinnis, Gootman, & Kraak, 2006).

(1) Repetition of the Message : Almost one-third of the food product advertising is constituted by junk food and fast food, which has gradually grown over time in the recent years (Gallo, 1999). Repetition means mainly echoing the same advertisement message again and again. The rationale is that repeated hammering of the message and awareness of a product improves the chances of purchasing and consuming it (Auty & Lewis, 2004). It has been observed that repeated exposure of advertising of certain food items to children raises the importance of food and it influences them in eating and purchasing that food item (Albuquerque, Brucks, Campbell, Chan, Maimaran, McAlister, & Nicklaus, 2017 ; Desrochers & Holt, 2007 ; Powell, Szczyka, & Chaloupka, 2007).

(2) Brand Image : The ambition to build brand awareness, brand preference, brand recognition, and brand loyalty among the adolescents has driven the food marketers to direct profound marketing techniques towards them. Food marketers deem that brand preference triggers pre-purchase behavior among adolescents (McNeal, 1999). The two significant factors which influence the brand preference in adolescents are the affirmative experiences of the adolescents with the brand and their parents' affinity towards that brand (McNeal, 1999). Marketers always strive to build a brand relationship with young consumers, and they begin these efforts when young consumers are infants. In comparison with brand and price, it has been observed that lower price influences buying behavior of children than brands (Hartmann, Cash, Yeh, Landwehr, & McAlister, 2017).

(3) Celebrity Endorsements : Celebrity endorsements also help the selling of various food products (Calvert, 1999 ; Sharma, 2016). Children who have an affinity and liking for the celebrities are expected to purchase and consume these food products. Famous celebrity personalities which include entertainers, actors, musicians,

Table 1. Celebrity Endorsements of Adolescent Food Products

Sr. No.	Adolescent Food Product Category	Celebrity
1.	Bakery foods	Amitabh Bachchan Deepika Padukone
2.	Snack foods	Parineeti Chopra
3.	Chocolates	Katrina Kaif
4.	Noodles	Madhuri Dixit

Source: Adapted from Roy (2006)

athletes, artists, and other well-known personalities endorse food products of various firms which trigger their choice and consumption among adolescents as shown in the Table 1 (Bush, Martin, & Bush, 2004 ; Dixon, Scully, Niven, Kelly, Chapman, Donovan, Martin, Baur, Crawford, & Wakefield, 2014 ; Ross, Campbell, Wright, Huston, Rice & Turk, 1984).

(4) Premiums : Marketers are trending up with strategies of selling products with toys and products with brand logos to young children and adolescents, which is also promoted in food marketing. It helps in developing good relationship and also creates brand preference and awareness in early age of young consumers. McDonalds offers small toys with a burger so that children and adolescents are vulnerable to the purchase of the burger by getting attracted towards the toys. The most used marketing technique for reaching out to children and adolescents are promotions which include premiums, cross-selling, tie-ins, sweepstakes, coupons, and prizes. Reimann and Lane (2017) suggested that toys provided with smaller meals influence adolescents to choose smaller meals to avoid obesity.

The use of sweepstakes and premiums as prizes is in trend (CARU, 2003) and is regularly utilized to capture the adolescent's tastes and desires (Kraak & Pelletier, 1998). Providing something free with a purchase is a premium ; whereas opportunities to win free products by using scratch cards and coupon codes are promised by sweepstakes and contests.

(5) Product Placement : The popularity of food product placements by the marketers has been accepted as a standard marketing technique. This involves integrating food brands in films, movies, and theatres in return for money and support in promotional campaigns.

The various types of media like television, music, radios, books, comics, videos, songs, and plays (Gupta & Gould, 1997) are increasingly used for food product placements by a wide variety of food marketers (Mortimer, 2002). It was found in previous studies that product placement influences the adolescents' food choices (Nelson & McLeod, 2005 ; Story & French, 2004).

(6) Viral Marketing : Viral (word of mouth) marketing is deployed by food marketers using stealth advertising to engrave food products within program content. This triggers interaction of adolescents with online characters to promote specific brands. This helps food marketers to collect valuable information from adolescents using online channels (Gardner, 2000), and it influences positively on the food choices too (Neyens & Smits, 2017 ; Vandevijvere, Sagar, Kelly, & Swinburn, 2017).

Because of the rapidly sweeping technological revolution in India, online media plays a progressively important role in the lives of Indian adolescents. Marketers are continuously targeting the online adolescents in India as they are growing rapidly and marketers are experimenting with new interactive online food marketing and advertising ideas.

Advertising on television using commercials varies largely from the web marketing and advertising techniques. Food marketing firms use seamless integration of content on the web sites and various forms of advertising by exploiting the unique features of the Internet (Montgomery, 2000, 2009).

In addition to the website of a food marketing company, due to affiliate marketing strategies, there are various other commercial websites that advertise and promote food products to children. The recent years have witnessed a proliferation of Internet-based websites targeting adolescents (Tarpley, 2001 ; Vandevijvere et al., 2017). Popular websites from the cable television network include Disney.com, NickJr.com, Nickelodeon, and Pogo TV from the Pogo cable channel. There is a huge support for advertising on all of these websites. It is mentioned that more than 66% of all Internet based websites are intended for adolescents. Advertising acts as the primary revenue source for all these websites (Montgomery, 2001).

(7) Integrated Marketing Strategies : Although there are multiple factors which influence food choices and eating behavior of adolescents, one potent force to reckon with is food advertising using integrated marketing communication (Story, Neumark - Sztainer, & French, 2002). Now-a-days, adolescents live in an environment flooded with various types of media. A wide variety of integrated marketing channels have been intensively and aggressively used by food marketers to target adolescents over the past decade (Consumers Union Education Services, 1995 ; Kraak & Pelletier, 1998 ; Story et al., 2002).

The vast explosion in the digital media culture is at the centre of exposure to majority of the adolescents. Children and adolescents are eagerly embracing a wide variety of digital devices and ever increasing array of Internet websites as users of this new culture, cultivating a new idea of cultural practices, which are rapidly converting into the mainstream. On online social networks like Facebook and MySpace, which are the drastically increasing online platforms worldwide, adolescents act as keen participants (Arrington, 2008 ; Fortt, 2007). The key targets for digital marketing campaigns online are adolescents (Montgomery, 2009).

The digital marketing space is mainly dominated by the food marketing firms as they develop interactive advertising campaigns, most of these are customized particularly to attract adolescents. The key brands like KFC Burger King and McDonalds are concentrating on digital marketing techniques by using different platforms - online videos, videogames, instant-messaging, social networks, mobile services, and virtual worlds (Chester & Montgomery, 2007).

McGinnis et al. (2006) recognized the increasingly significant role that the Internet and other new marketing techniques are playing in advocating the food products to adolescents. Marketers experiment with the new ideas to target adolescents online using gaming platforms, cell phones, and other digital devices. Pop-up advertisements are sent on mobile devices, and web banners are highlighted on web pages (Alvy & Calvert, 2008). Advergaming for children linked with different product advertisements influence their food choices (Calvert, 2008 ; Flowers, Lustyik & Gulyás, 2010).

(8) Attention Getting Product Features : Attention getting production features are designed to attract children's interest in commercial content (Huston & Wright, 1983). To get attention, the advertisements targeted for children and adolescents consist of movement, action, unique colours, loud music, and unique sound effects and such advertisements are largely and frequently highlighted on television (Greer, Potts, Wright & Huston, 1982 ; Maiti, 2012). Television advertisements are targeted towards children and it impacts their food choices (Agrawal, & Tripathi, 2008 ; Dalton, Longacre, Drake, Cleveland, Harris, Hendricks, & Titus, 2017). It has also been found that children get attracted towards cartoon media characters used in advertising for food items and prefer less healthy products (Ogle, Graham, Lucas - Thompson, & Roberto, 2017).

(9) Parents' Viewpoint : Parents act as a central point of influence on children's food consumption. Hence, parents act as an important target for food marketers to advertise the health effects of food choice and consumption in their diet (Lindsay, Sussner, Kim, & Gortmaker, 2006 ; McGinnis, et al., 2006). It was also found that children influence parents in the purchase decisions (Tripathi & Sengupta, 2011 ; Sharma & Sonwaney, 2015). It was observed that some authoritative parents engage their children in healthier eating (Arredondo, Elder, Ayala, Campbell, Baquero, & Duerksen, 2006).

The research study shows that the consumption of fast-food among adolescents leads to excess calories intake, resulting in increased risk of obesity and overweight tendencies leading to a number of diseases (French, Harnack, & Jeffery, 2000 ; Paeratakul, Ferdinand, Champagne, Ryan, & Bray, 2003). Fast food consumption has a direct association with higher intake of total energy along with percentage of energy from fat among the adolescent customers. However, it is inversely associated with the daily intake of vegetables, milk, and fruits (French, Jeffery, Story, Breitlow, Baxter, Hannan, & Snyder, 2001).

Research studies have shown that food preferences, food choices, and request for food with high sugar and high

fat among adolescents are influenced by prolonged exposure to food advertising on television (Horgan, Choate, & Brownell, 2001 ; Isler, 1987 ; Taras, Sallis, Patterson, Nader, & Nelson, 1989).

Objectives of the Study

This study is based on the impact of food marketing techniques on adolescent's food choice in Pune city in India and this study also highlights the perception of parents regarding the effects of food choices on the health of the adolescents. It has two main objectives :

- (1) To study the impact of food marketing techniques on adolescents' food choices.
- (2) To study the perception of parents regarding the effects of food choices on the health of adolescents.

Hypotheses

The aim of this study is to understand the impact of food marketing techniques on adolescents' food choices. The hypotheses formulated are as follows:

- ↵ **H1** : There is a significant relationship between repetition of the message and adolescents' food choices.
- ↵ **H2** : There is a significant relationship between branded characters and adolescents' food choices.
- ↵ **H3** : There is a significant relationship between celebrity endorsements and adolescents' food choices.
- ↵ **H4** : There is a significant relationship between premiums and adolescents' food choices.
- ↵ **H5** : There is a significant relationship between product placements and adolescents' food choices.
- ↵ **H6** : There is a significant relationship between viral marketing and adolescents' food choices.
- ↵ **H7** : There is a significant relationship between integrated marketing strategies and adolescents' food choices.
- ↵ **H8** : There is a significant relationship between attention getting product features and adolescents' food choices.

Research Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature and it focuses on studying the impact of various food marketing techniques on adolescents' food choices and it also discusses the perception of parents regarding the effects of food choices on the health of adolescents. Primary and secondary data was collected for this research. Intensive literature review was conducted to identify the variables and a structured questionnaire was used as the research instrument to conduct a pilot study. The pilot survey was conducted using the questionnaire among 80 adolescents and also parents of these adolescents were interviewed with reference to the objectives of the study. The responses given by the sample respondents were discussed with the subject matter experts to finalize the choice of the variables to be used in the study. During the pretesting phase, I contacted subject matter experts to validate the research instrument used in the study.

For measuring the variables, the items of the construct were chosen from the literature and questionnaire of the pilot survey was created. After pilot survey, the validity of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha test, and the Cronbach's alpha value is greater than 0.7. The items used to define the construct were considered from the

Table 2. Items Defining the Variables

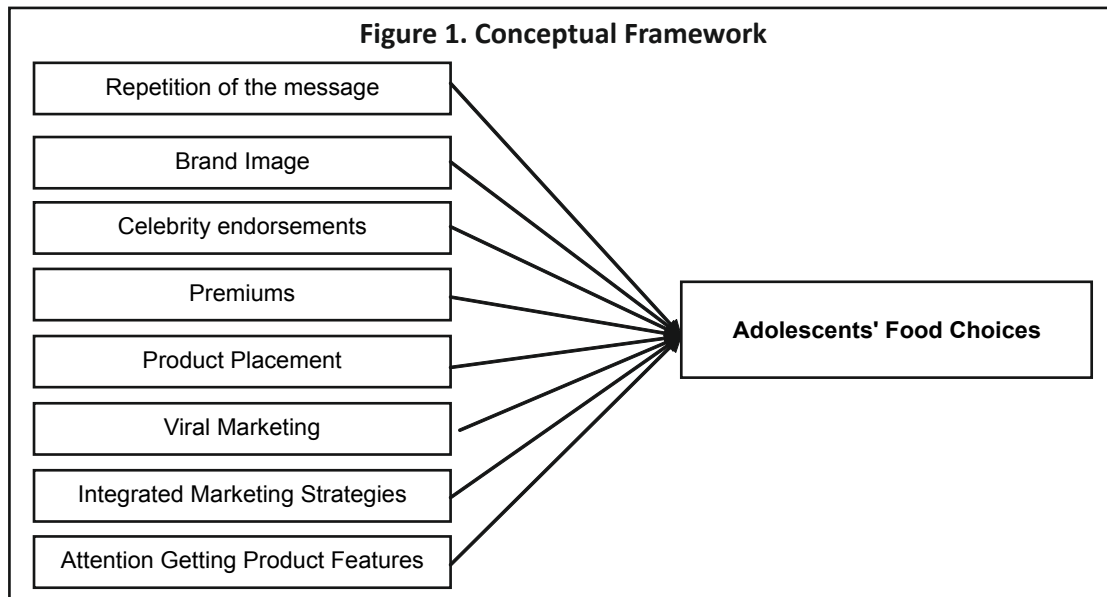
Latent Variable	Manifest Variable	Cronbach's Alpha (Item wise)	No. of Items	Overall Cronbach's Alpha
Repetition of the Message	Messages in the comic books	.767	4	.777
	Hoardings near school premises	.788		
	Messages in the kids channel	.789		
	Posters on notebooks and bags	.767		
Brand Image	Attractive advertisements	.788	4	.781
	Availability of the food products in famous shopping malls	.803		
	Recommendations by siblings / elders	.767		
	Catchy tag lines	.766		
Celebrity Endorsements	Endorsement by favorite celebrity	.802	3	.784
	Product print advt. with celebrity	.765		
Premiums	Contest for meeting celebrity	.785	3	.800
	Gifts attached with product	.734		
	Scratch cards attached to the product	.833		
Product Placement	Scholarships attached to the product	.834	3	.792
	Products placed in retail shops near school	.823		
Viral Marketing	Products placed at point of purchase in malls	.778	3	.766
	Product placed near coaching and tuition classes	.776		
	Catchy advt. on Youtube	.722		
Integrated Marketing	Videos of the product going viral	.771	4	.812
	Advt. shared on Facebook	.787		
	Strategies Advt. in favorite kids channels	.822		
	Advt. in newspaper kids section	.831		
Attention Getting Product Features	Advt. on hoardings near schools	.807	4	.790
	Advt. on various social media	.789		
	Innovation in the product	.778		
	Something new and different	.791	4	.790
	Unique packaging of product	.793		
	Fancy colors/themes used in product	.801		

review of literature. The number of items used for each construct is as shown in the Table 2.

(1) Sampling Method: To survey the adolescents, permission from the school authorities was sought and surveys were conducted using the convenience sampling in various schools in Pune city. The survey was conducted for three months to collect the data. The data regarding the parents of the adolescents were sought from the schools and discussions were conducted with them.

(2) Sample Size, Sampling Element, and Sampling Technique : 560 adolescents and their parents acted as the sample respondents. The sampling elements were adolescents and parents. The sampling technique adopted was non - probabilistic convenience sampling.

A structured questionnaire was used as the research instrument to conduct the primary survey among 560 adolescents in Pune city and the parents of these adolescents were surveyed to understand their perceptions of food



marketing targeting their children. The convenience sampling method was used for the selection of the sample respondents. The research was conducted over a three month period from November 2016 to January 2017.

A primary survey was conducted among the students in the age group of 10 - 18 years using a structured questionnaire to understand the impact of various food marketing techniques on the food choices of the adolescents. Closed ended questions on a 5 - point Likert scale ranging from “*strongly agree*” to “*strongly disagree*” were used in this study.

Also, the information regarding the respondents' parents was collected from the database of schools, and these parents were interviewed and surveyed to understand the perception of parents regarding the effects of food choices on the health of their adolescent children. The collected data was coded and entered for statistical analysis using the SPSS software. Multiple linear regression technique was used to understand the impact of marketing techniques on the food choices of adolescents' behavior. The conceptual framework to understand the impact of food marketing techniques on adolescents' food choices is as shown in the Figure 1.

Analysis and Interpretation

The demographic profile of the respondents is as shown in the Table 3. The statistical test used for analysis of primary data was multiple linear regression to ascertain the impact and influence of these various food marketing techniques (independent variables) on the adolescents' food choices (dependent variable). This test will explain the impact of changes in the independent variables on the dependent variable.

The summary of the multiple regression model along with the fitness statistics is as shown in the Table 5. The R^2 value derived is 0.643 and the adjusted R^2 value of 0.623 means that the regression explains 64.3% of the variance in the data. Since the Durbin - Watson value is not between $1.5 < D < 2.5$, it means that there is first order linear auto - correlation in the data.

Since the F -value in the Table 6 is highly significant, hence it proves that there is a linear relationship among the variables described in the model. The Table 7 shows the multiple linear regression estimates including the intercept and the significance levels. The independent variables are : (a) repetition of the message, (b) brand image, (c) celebrity endorsements, (d) premiums, (e) product placement, (f) viral marketing, (g) integrated marketing strategies, and (h) attention getting product features.

Table 3. Demographic Statistics of Adolescents (N = 560)

Measure	Item	Count %
Gender	Male	56
	Female	44
Age	10 to 18 years	100

Table 4. Parents' Perception Towards Food Marketing to Adolescents

Sr. No.	Particulars	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
1	Food marketing influences adolescents' food choices.	72	12	5	6	5
2	Adolescents end up choosing food items which look attractive.	73	13	4	5	5
3	Adolescents demand snacks like chips, fast food, bakery products, and instant food.	74	11	8	3	4
4	Adolescents choose unhealthy food products.	68	14	7	7	4
5	Adolescents' food choices affect their health.	73	12	7	5	3
6	Need for regulation on marketing of food products to adolescents.	80	10	3	4	3
7	More government intervention is required in regulation of advertising food items to adolescents.	74	12	5	6	3

Table 5. Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.802 ^a	.643	.623	.502	1.224

a. Predictors: (Constant), repetition of the message, brand image, celebrity endorsements, premiums, product placement, viral marketing, integrated marketing strategies, attention getting product features

b. Dependent Variable: adolescents' food choices

Table 6. ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	62.668	6	10.122	38.468	.000 ^a
	Residual	34.376	142	.254		
	Total	98.044	148			

a. Predictors: (Constant), repetition of the message, brand image, celebrity endorsements, premiums, product placement, viral marketing, integrated marketing strategies, attention getting product features

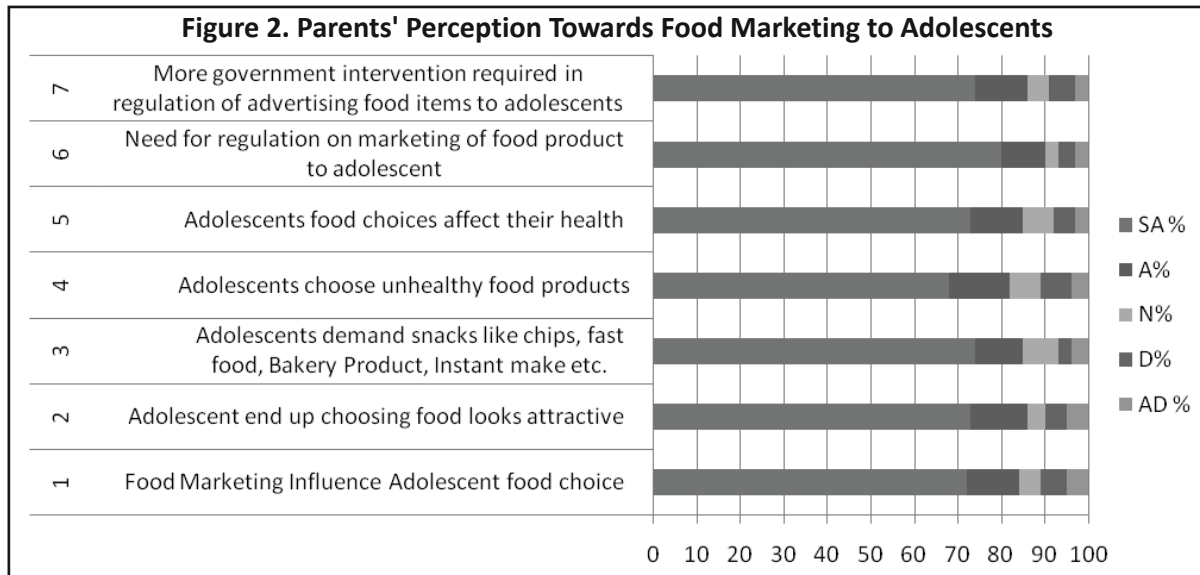
b. Dependent Variable: adolescents' food choices

The *t* - values for repetition of the message, brand image, celebrity endorsements, premiums, product placement, viral marketing, integrated marketing strategies, attention getting product features are significant at the 5% ; hence, the null hypothesis - that there is no significant impact of these independent variables on the dependent variable - adolescents' food choices - is rejected. Hence, we accept the alternate hypothesis, that there is a significant impact of these independent variables on the adolescents' food choices. Hence, all the alternate hypotheses from H1 to H8 are accepted.

Table 7. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
s1	(Constant)	.624	.224		2.785	.005
	Repetition of the Message	.314	.069	.370	4.550	.000
	Brand Image	.280	.079	.244	3.544	.001
	Celebrity Endorsements	.242	.074	.268	3.270	.001
	Premiums	.226	.059	.057	3.830	.003
	Product Placement	.186	.049	.068	3.795	.004
	Viral Marketing	.146	.059	.047	2.474	.002
	Integrated Marketing Strategies	.122	.077	.072	1.584	.003
	Attention Getting product	.114	.076	.068	1.502	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Adolescents' Food Choices



Findings

The results clearly show that repetition of the message, brand image, celebrity endorsements, premiums, product placement, viral marketing, integrated marketing strategies, attention getting product features have a significant impact on the adolescents' food choices (Vandevijvere et al., 2017). The Table 4 and Figure 2 show that more than 75% of the parents felt that food marketing has an influence on adolescents' food choices, and adolescents end up choosing food that looks attractive. Parents mentioned that adolescents demanded food snacks like chips, fast food, bakery products, and instant food. More than 60% of the parents confirmed that adolescents' food choices were unhealthy which affected their health adversely. More than 70% of parents confirmed the need for national regulations on the marketing of food products to adolescents. They also mentioned that more government intervention is required in the regulation of food advertising to adolescents. The parents also expected a ban from the government regarding the unhealthy food advertisements to children. Authoritative parents influence healthy food choices of their children (Arredondo, et al., 2006). Russell, Burke, Waller, and Wei (2017) found that front-

of-pack health labeling system influenced the food choices of the parents too along with some marketing characteristics of the product.

The findings from the perception study of the parents show that food marketing targeted at adolescents affects their food choices and threatens their health, making them a vulnerable consumer. Hence, the empirical findings of this study conform to the previous studies conducted by eminent researchers in this subject (Agrawal, & Tripathi, 2008 ; Berry, Carter, Nolan, Dal Grande, & Booth, 2017 ; Calvert, 2008 ; Horgan, Choate, & Brownell, 2001 ; Montgomery, 2000, 2009 ; Vandevijvere et al., 2017). It is found that child oriented websites promote obesogenic food products, and this finding is line with the results obtained by Hurwitz, Montague, and Wartella (2017).

Discussion and Managerial Implications

This paper provides empirical evidence to understand the impact of the various food marketing techniques on the adolescents' food choices. The present study makes both academic and practical benefactions. Academically, it contributes to the existing literature on the food marketing techniques targeted at the adolescents. It also helps marketers to understand the impact of food marketing on the adolescents' food choices. From a managerial view point, the contribution of the study is that it identifies the marketing techniques used by food marketers to target adolescents. Food marketers use an endless parade of food advertising and marketing tools to target the adolescents by using catchy rhymes and jingles, charismatic cartoon characters, superheroes, and famous celebrities to get them hooked onto their food products.

By offering premiums - such as freebies, gifts, toys, scratch cards, and discount coupons, the food marketers are successfully able to capture the personal information of the adolescents. Using this data, the food marketers leverage the technology to target food marketing campaigns by sending customized offers and personalized messages to the adolescents. The food marketers adhere to omni-channel advertising and repeated bombarding to trigger a lifetime of brand loyalty for their food products among the adolescents. They are brainwashing the adolescents to think that these food products are good and healthy for them, without disclosing the side effects of the unhealthy junk food that are high on sugar, fat, and salt. The objectives of the food marketers are to make their food products more tempting, so that adolescents are enticed towards them, so that they end up consuming more of these food products. Food marketers are exploiting the pestering power of the adolescents by targeting them with aggressive marketing campaigns. As food marketers are using integrated marketing strategies and making a paradigm shift towards online channels and social media for pushing their products, parents fear that things are going out of their control.

The parents are concerned as the adolescents are more susceptible to the obsession of food products and are being exploited for profit by the marketers. Many parents expressed their desire for more restraint and constraint on the aggressiveness of the food marketing campaigns carried out by the food marketers. The parents believe that the government intervention has a crucial role to play in this regard by imposing strict regulations – such as a ban on the food advertising in schools. The parents are worried about the health of their adolescents as diet related illnesses and obesity among the adolescents are steadily on a rise. The parents are paying the price for this crisis in terms of mounting healthcare costs. Parents are unhappy with the fact that food marketers undermine and disrespect their parenting by intervening in the lives of their children, giving rise to debates and clashes in the family about food choices and eating habits. The results of this study can help parents change the social norm by putting pressure on policy makers and food marketing organizations to protect and foster healthy food habits among the adolescents.

This study provides insights for managers in the food marketing companies to understand the factors influencing adolescents' food choices and eating behavior, which would help them to formulate successful food marketing strategies to target adolescents. This study also provides vital inputs to help the government and policy makers formulate regulations against aggressive food marketing of unhealthy junk food, which influences the food

choices of adolescents. This study would help the parents to take positive steps towards improving the food choices, diet, and eating habits of the children. Nutritionists, dieticians, and teachers can help counter the effects of unhealthy food advertising by educating adolescents to develop critical thinking, which are essential to evaluate these advertisements.

The unique findings emerging from this study depict that, although parents have the general perception that adolescents get attracted by the attention drawing features of the food products, but on the contrary, this research shows that there are various other factors, which are more important for the adolescents than the product features, namely - repetition of the message, brand image, celebrity endorsements, premiums, product placement, viral marketing, and integrated marketing strategies. These findings have important implications for understanding the ways in which adolescents respond to the interactive food marketing techniques.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

This research was conducted only in Pune city in the state of Maharashtra. To improve the reliability and validity of this study, it would be important to investigate and scrutinize these measures in other cities and parts of India. During the analysis, it was found that there were some differences pertaining to the area and locality of the schools. This data may be separately evaluated as a further extension of the study in the future. Future research may be conducted to evaluate whether the adolescents' food choice behaviors are influenced by advertisements that make nutrition based claims. Food marketers' ability to reach and influence adolescents' behavior by integrating knowledge from semantics, neuro marketing, artificial intelligence, and many other scholarly areas, which are not included in this study, can be considered by future researchers in further studies.

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